

Abundant Life

October / November 2025



703 Heritage Drive SW Phone: 403.255.0001

Calgary, AB

T2V 2W4

Email: office@standrewscalgary.ca

CONNEXIONS



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JESUS WANTS TO GIVE US ABUNDANT LIFE!



Cultivating Spiritual Wellness: A message from Rev. Geoffrey

People. What motivates me and keeps me grounded in my ministry? People. I love hearing about people's journeys through life. I long for us all to feel well in our lives. I hope and trust that God will provide us with strength and hope no matter what we face or have experienced in the past.

Spiritual wellness is something we all can strive for and cultivate in our lives. For some people, such a goal might seem as natural as breathing; for others, it might seem as distant as a faraway planet. Distant or close, God still provides light so that we can find a path forward.

In my ministry focus for this fall, Rev. Laurie and I have agreed that it would be good to focus on spiritual wellness and mental health. To this end, I will be offering a series of weekly workshops this fall focusing on mental health. This is in addition to a one-evening program on Medical Assistance in Dying (MAiD), which will have taken place by the time you read this report.



I am grateful to [Sanctuary Mental Health Ministries in Vancouver](#), which have graciously provided films, workbooks, and discussion guides that will enable us to offer eight weekly sessions on mental health. One in four people in Canada will experience mental health challenges in their lives. Yet there can be a stigma about talking about these challenges. Sanctuary ministry's educational materials emphasize that churches can become a place (a sanctuary) where it is okay to talk about mental health and to feel safe while doing so. Talking about mental health in a safe, supportive setting helps promote spiritual wellness and encourages people to experience their church as being a sanctuary. In their promotional materials, the Sanctuary Ministry team write: "How can a church become a sanctuary - a place where individuals living with mental health challenges feel safe, supported, and a sense of belonging? The Sanctuary Course was created to inspire and equip communities of faith that are asking this important question. Developed in consultation with mental health professionals, theologians, and people with lived experience, this eight-session study guide explores key mental health topics and examines meaningful ways to offer companionship, support recovery, and promote wellbeing."

One of Sanctuary Ministry's main teachings is that mental health is a continuum. A person can feel spiritually well for much of their lives, then a particular event, or a loss, can upturn their stability. This kind of ebb and flow of wellness is part of life rather than being something we should seek to avoid.

I am excited to be able to facilitate this program, and I look forward to bringing some of the insights that the program offers into my sermons. Sanctuary Ministry has commissioned The Porter's Gate, a well-known fluid team of musicians, to create some excellent music which Evan Mounce, our Director of Music Ministries, has already started to program into our worship services. You can hear "You are my Sanctuary" [by CLICKING HERE](#). The album is available from all the streaming services.

I offer a diagram that I have been working on as a way of helping me understand how we can seek and find spiritual wellness.

**Submitted by
Rev. Geoffrey**



Session Highlights

- Session will hold their annual retreat on October 3 & 4, 2025. Please keep them in your prayers as they gather to discern and prioritize the work of St. Andrew's for the year ahead.
- We also want to celebrate the ways St. Andrew's is supporting our youth. The Ladies Guild has increased the scholarship amount for post-secondary students from \$1,000 to \$1,500. In addition, our Faith Formation team will now be sending birthday greetings to our children and youth to mark these special milestones with them.
- Partnering with our Indigenous neighbours: Heritage Park's Annual Truth and Reconciliation Day on September 30th. Further information can be found in the article from the Indigenous Relations Team.
- This fall St. Andrew's is offering the opportunity to participate in a couple of programs. MAiD (Medical Assistance in Dying) and Sanctuary Mental Health. More information can be found in Rev. Geoffrey's article on Cultivating Spiritual Wellness.
- Finally, Session extends heartfelt thanks to Debby Dorcas for her faithful ministry as Executive Assistant over the years. We are blessed that she continues to share her gifts with St. Andrew's in her role as Communications Connector.

God is FAITHFUL



ELDER PROFILE ***Sheri Coutts***

Sheri arrived at St. Andrew's in 2000 when her husband Peter accepted the call to ministry here. She grew up in London Ontario, it was a big decision to relocate and start a new journey as her family are still in Ontario. Their two children were young and adapted quickly, Peter and Sheri found a new family at St Andrew's.

When Sheri arrived, Debby Dorcas was leading a group of "musical friends" that organized concerts and musicals at the church. Sheri joined the group and they played a big part in helping with her personal transition. She worked in the Sunday school introducing St. Andrew's to the Young Children and Worship

Program and later joined the choir. Although involved in many aspects of church ministry, Sheri had decided that she would not take on an elder role while Peter was minister. So, her election as a St. Andrew's elder four years ago was a big milestone in her life!

As an elder, Sheri has served as a care connector as well as on the Worship and Welcome teams. She especially enjoys working with Rev. Laurie and the Worship team and using her creativity to help plan the weekly worship. When they remember, Peter and Sheri look after the banners in the sanctuary.

As a session member, Sheri continues to learn about church governance and finds it rewarding to have an opportunity to look at the big picture. In her words, "being on session with such great people helps me to understand the history, current reality and plan for the future."

Sheri strongly believes in St. Andrew's missional work and the goal of being "Woven into the Neighbourhood." She is active at the Claire house ministry. However, she is also sensitive to remember the needs of members and how best to take care of them.

When Sheri retired from medical lab work in 2020, she took up acrylic fine art painting again. She enjoys the creative outlet but has found that she is now running out of walls. Anyone looking for some nice art? Gardening and Mahjong also keep her out of trouble!

Thank you for all your valuable contributions, Sheri!

Submitted by David Townsend

Our church school leaders were delighted to welcome the children back to class this September! Our younger age group started the year in a refreshed classroom, now complete with new furniture—a cabinet, table, shelving unit, and stools. A heartfelt thank you to our youth, Braeden and Kaitlyn Werle and Douglas Hendrichsen, for lending their time and energy to help build and set up the room. The space is bright, welcoming, and faith-filled—a wonderful place for our children to learn and grow.



Our Junior High class is looking forward to wrapping up the final lessons in ***The 13 Most Important Lessons*** before beginning a new Cokesbury curriculum, ***Fathom***, with a focus on the “Birth of the Church.”



Our youth group resumed meeting on Friday, September 19, and the energy was wonderful. The youth remain enthusiastic about gathering together and are eager to invite friends—which is such a joy to see! Youth leaders Lauren and Matt were equally excited to launch another year of connection, faith, and fun.

We are proud to recognize our two post-secondary scholarship recipients:

1. Marcos Aburto (above with family) (Faculty of Arts – English, University of British Columbia) and
2. Kierra Huthersall (at right) (Bachelor of Arts – English, University of Calgary).

Both expressed deep gratitude for the support of this award. As they settle into their studies, we wish them every success and continue to hold them in our prayers.



Our adult Bible study has resumed with a new focus on the book of James, using Margaret Feinberg's study, *James: What You Do Matters*. We were delighted by the large turnout for the first session—it was a joy to see so many gathered to learn together! If you're interested in joining, please connect with Bill Judd. The group meets after the service in Trinity Hall.

A reminder that TAKE 150 is approaching. It is scheduled for Saturday, October 25th from 5:30-8:00 p.m. Children in grades 1-6 are welcome to register. More details will be coming soon. We are looking forward to hosting a spooky Hallowe'en theme. Contact the church office if you are interested and join us if you dare!



By the Faith Formation Team:

Rhonda Wishart, Inge Murray, Debby Dorcas, Deanne Barrett, and Lorna Andronikou



Pave the Way Update

As of September 20, 2025, we have \$106,000 in the bank from this campaign.

A lot of people to thank, and this has truly been a group effort. The Ladies Guild started things with a donation of \$4,000 back in the early spring. And then many members supported Craig Murray and his bike ride in May, and the Corn Fest organized by Terry Basaraba and his team in August. And of course, the anonymous donor who challenged us to raise \$40,000 to receive a matching contribution. Others supported the cause by donating a dollar a day. The congregation has been very generous and supportive over the last six months...we are blessed to have such great people!

Cathy Millar has been tireless in promoting the campaign! And let's not forget that something like this means a lot of extra work for Dolly to track all the donations and expenses. Thanks Dolly!

Let's all keep up the momentum!

Submitted by David Townsend

Parking Project Update

Permits are now in place to commence physical project work and the original desired approval schedule has been achieved. Mandatory prepayment of driveway rehabilitation and underground street lighting cable upgrading has also been submitted to the City.

With work due to commence on one of the adjacent multi-family properties this month and possible early loss of concessionary parking next door, vigilance will have to be exercised to minimize the impact on St Andrew's. If adjacent parking is lost, guidance will be presented through pulpit and church electronic communication.

Contractors are extremely busy at present and paving remains the vulnerable component that may dictate completion this year. However, one contractor preparing a quote indicated a possibility of completion in early October if the weather cooperates. We remain hopeful.

Meanwhile, the volunteer component of the work has started on the south lane exit. Sean Pepper and Terry Basaraba wrestled with a drill while encountering several stubborn boulders in the native prairie clay strata, but eventually overcame the impediments and completed the task. The result is a new reduced exit matching the Heritage Drive entrance that will now be fenced off on either side of the new opening outlined by prominent yellow posts.



Volunteers also started removal of tree branches and a lilac tree to allow widening of four existing parking spots in the southwest corner. Following foliage removal, pressure treated wood curbs will be laid to define the wider parking profile.

Work on both these volunteer projects is expected to be completed this month but the remaining volunteer landscaping work cannot be started until paving and concrete curbs have been completed.

While fund-raising is principally led by the Finance Team, the Project Team is appreciative of the contributions from the congregation. Your donations are respectfully welcome.

Submitted by Tom McIntyre

A graphic of a road with a dashed white line curving upwards, with the text "pave the way" in orange and yellow.

**pave
the way**



**EVERY MOMENT THAT WE
LIVE IS A CHANCE TO
ENCOUNTER GOD.**

God Moments

I've had a couple of God moments while visiting my husband in the hospital these last weeks. They have stayed with me.

Recently I was sitting in the coffee area waiting to be picked up by a friend for lunch. As I sat in the booth a fellow sat down across from me. He was an indigenous man probably in his 40's. He sat there and put his head in his hands and was in distress. I spoke to him and asked "if he was all right?" We spoke for a while and then I asked if he would like me to pray for him? He indicated that he would and really appreciated the gesture. We connected in that Holy moment!

I've always felt that God places people in our lives for a purpose. Feeling someone's pain and responding from our hearts is a caring way to share God's Love.

My husband's roommate had had surgery and when he arrived in the room he was experiencing a great amount of discomfort. Over the next couple of days I helped him with his meal trays and each time we had a conversation I realized he was wincing in pain. I asked him if I could pray for him and he smiled and said, "I would really like that!"

A smile and words of comfort and prayer can make a difference in other's lives. We have the opportunity and it comes second nature when God Lives In Our Hearts. We get back so much more than we give!

God's Blessings - Judy McKearney



Once a man was asked,
"What did you gain by
regularly praying to God?"

The man replied, "Nothing... but let me tell you what I lost: anger, ego, greed, depression, insecurity, and fear of death. " Sometimes, the answer to our prayers is not gaining but losing, which ultimately is the gain.

~ Amen ~



Share your
God Moment

Indigenous Relations Team

Oki to our St. Andrew's family.

Lovely to be back. I hope everyone enjoyed their summer with family, friends, and found ways to enjoy the fruits of this season as well as places and sights that could offer tranquility and awe. The Indigenous Relations Team (IRT) has been very busy and engaged in various new initiatives since we last shared our works in the June/July ConnXions.

Prior to taking a break for summer the IRT was able to collaborate with several of our Indigenous friends and neighbours to celebrate June's National Indigenous People's Day at two separate events.

1. National Indigenous People's Day Sunday June 15th Service at St. Andrew's

It was such an honour to have as our special guest, The Reverend John Snow (United Church minister and Scottish Lord from Stoney First Nation) to bring the message of the day. As well, we had Layne Kilbreath from The Lantern Church, along with Alphonse Nepoose, our Indigenous friend from Claire House, lead us in the 4 direction prayer. Trish Snow offered the Scripture for the sermon. The IRT all took a role in leading the service with land acknowledgement, prayers, and the Gratitude and Generosity portion of the service.

I feel the Choir's performance during this service, with not one but two indigenous pieces, truly brought all of us together as one kindred spirit. The whole service felt like a gift as we heard the words, and received the teachings from our Indigenous friends.



2. Heritage Park National Indigenous Day June 21st

"Wow, St. Andrew's church sounds amazing." Those were the words from Anita Crowshoe, Senior Indigenous Engagement Advisor of Heritage Park when she heard all the various initiatives St. Andrew's has been working on to connect, help and support our Indigenous friends and neighbours. Through continued conversation, where trust and respect were established, Heritage Park reached out to St. Andrew's to request a team of volunteers to help out with serving food to their Elders at their June 21st Powwow event.

St. Andrew's volunteers went all out in preparing food trays. We were able to assemble eight very creative displays of fruit and veggie trays as well as ginger/vanilla feather cookies, plus home baked bannock. Our volunteers also had to brave the start of the day as Calgary received enough rain fall amounting to a month's worth of rain. Heritage Park quickly pivoted moving all events to indoor event tents.



The weather didn't dampen the spirits of anyone that day. What an incredible day of spectacular dancers, and as participants we got to witness and even participate ourselves. We were able to be host to so many indigenous guests offering nutritious plates of food. It really felt like Jesus' feeding of the 5000's. What a pleasure it was to trust in God and share resources to serve our Indigenous neighbours.

Events Happening in the Fall

1. Reconciliation Journey Walk, September 21, 2025

2. A walk at Glenmore Park in support of Truth and Reconciliation. This event is supported by the Lantern Church of Calgary as well as Alphonse Nepoose with whom St. Andrew's has a long-term relationship through the Claire House. Prior to this upcoming event, on August 21st Alphonse shared his thoughts on Reconciliation and taking action at St. Andrew's as an open community event. The community event was expected to have maybe 12 -15 attendees but as the evening progressed the circle continued to expand. There were about 35 people from the various groups and communities who attended. This was an excellent lead up to his September 21st walk where he is encouraging all to participate. We are hoping that Alphonse's initiative will expand as well. In Alphonse words when asked by a listener, "what action can we take," his answer was "learn the truth." If you are able to participate in this walk, look for opportunities to chat with Indigenous participants so that you can learn the truth.

2. Neechi Mart Blanket Exercises Workshop September 25, 2025

Neechi Mart is offering a Blanket Exercise workshop on Wednesday, September 24th downstairs in the Trinity Hall from 11:00-2:00.

3. Heritage Park National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, September 30, 2025

Reverend Laurie McKay has been asked to be a guest speaker for the segment of the day titled "Beyond the Apology". Together with Reverend John Snow, Laurie will be speaking on "the evolving role of faith communities in truth-telling and reconciliation." What an opportunity for Laurie to share stories of St. Andrew's actions in response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commissions' call to action. Heritage Park's full day of events in honour of National Day for Truth and Reconciliation will be open to the general public at Heritage Park at a reduced ticket price.

Submitted on behalf of IRT by Margaret Bruhjell-Holmes



Hearts Exchanged – Expression of Interest

The Hearts Exchanged helps prepare Christians to build relationships with Indigenous communities based on mutual respect and reciprocity. This program is for anyone wanting to know more about the challenges and opportunities of reconciliation, with a mind and heart open to transformation. It starts with exploring the impacts of colonialism but also provides examples of how many Christian churches and individuals are building positive and meaningful relationships with their indigenous neighbours.

The Indigenous Relations Team would like to have the program offered at St. Andrew's this fall for both church and community members. Layne Kilbreath of Lantern Church will be co-leading the program with Alphonse Nepoose.

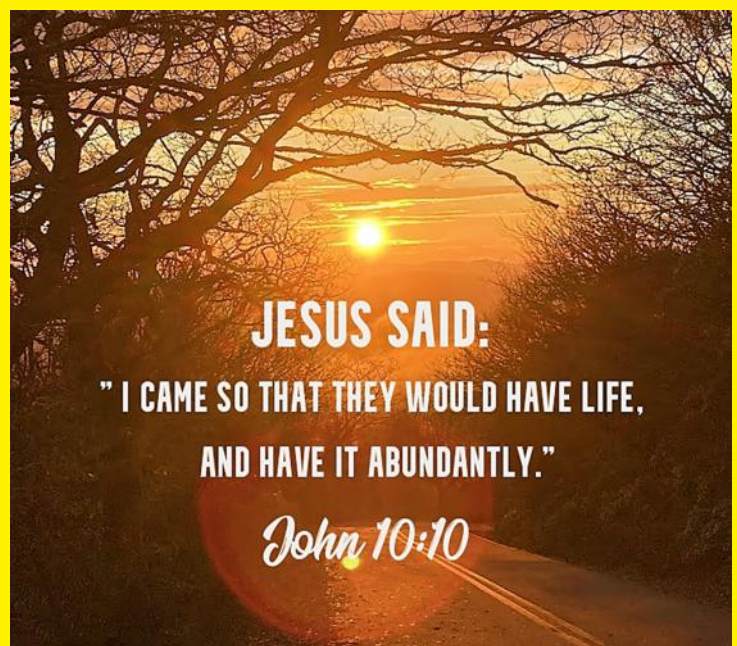
This is an 8 month journey including:

- Attending and engaging in once a month sessions (2hrs/month)
- Completing self-guided activities between sessions, e.g. journaling, reading articles, watching documentaries, etc. (2 to 5 hrs/month)
- Completing a reconciliation action plan in the local community at the completion of the learning journey

Here's how you can get more information:

- Put your contact information on the "Hearts Exchanged" form in the foyer and someone from the Indigenous Relations Team will contact you
- Fill out the Participate form at (<https://www.crcna.org/hearts-exchanged>).
- Email Layne Kilbreath at layne.kilbreath@gmail.com

Submitted by Linda Humphreys





THE CONNECTION BETWEEN FOOT CARE & FALL PREVENTION

Studies from the National Institute on Aging, have shown that inappropriate footwear is a direct contributor to falls in all ages, but especially in the elderly.

Muscle strength diminishes and balance becomes more of an issue, as people age, so inappropriate footwear such as loose slippers, flip flops, high heels, or tight fitting shoes with poor tread, amplifies the risk of falling.

Foot pain from bunions, hammer toes, arthritis and peripheral neuropathy (damage or disease affecting the feet nerves resulting in impaired sensation and movement) are all additional factors that impact balance.

Another factor that affects balance is a medical condition known as postural hypotension, a sudden drop in blood pressure, when a person goes from lying down to sitting up and from sitting to standing, can cause dizziness and even fainting.

FOOT CARE: Feet that are healthy and pain free can help you keep your balance.

Regular foot inspections – look for signs of redness, swelling or infections, especially important for those with diabetes.

Foot hygiene— reduce the risk of skin infections and fungal issues by ensuring feet are clean and dry. Use warm water and make sure to dry between toes.

Trimming toe nails – long toenails can interfere with balance and gait. Trim toenails straight across and not too short. Pedicures are an option for those who might have trouble trimming their own toenails. If the salon has not been recommended by a friend, ensure that the place is clean and that proper sterilization techniques are in place. Not all salons are inspected by Alberta Health Services. There are several registered nurses specializing in foot care who offer private toe trimming services in the city.

Moisturizing skin – cracks and blisters can create pressure points.

When sitting put your feet up on a stool to reduce swelling.

FOOT WEAR: prioritize stability, traction and a secure fit.

Wear supportive foot wear inside and outside your home.

Avoid walking in bare feet, stockings or floppy slippers with an open heel.

Wear shoes that allow for your feet to swell.

Wear shoes with a non-slip tread, low heels and good arch support.

Buy shoes with laces or Velcro closures to ensure a snug fit.

Add ice grips to your footwear in the winter and wear winter boots that will grip snow and ice.

Consider consulting with a podiatrist if you have specific concerns about your feet related to balance and falling.

Investing in footwear with proven safety features is a practical step towards a safer living environment. When combined with proper foot care and attention to physical fitness, footwear can become one of the most effective tools in reducing the risk of falling.

COMPRESSION STOCKINGS: not just to prevent blood clots but help with faster recovery during exercise, to reduce muscle cramping and discomfort. The main purpose is to improve circulation which keeps oxygen rich blood flowing to your body.

Compression stockings can also:

Help prevent and reduce pain in your legs.

Reduce swelling in legs, feet and ankles.

Protect against blood clots when sitting or standing for long periods – recommended for air travel.

Support veins to prevent or treat spider and varicose veins.

Lessen muscle strain when exercising.

Compression socks and stockings come in different lengths and pressures to cover different parts of your body. For deep venous thrombosis most stockings come to just below the knee but other options include thigh high and waist length tights as well.

For people who require compression stockings and are unable to put them on / take them off, a health care aide can assist with this procedure.

Compression stockings are available at most pharmacies and medical supply stores.

Submitted on behalf of the Wellness Team by Alice Williams



Ladies Guild Update

The Ladies Guild met on Tuesday, September 9 for our first meeting of the 25/26 church year. Our executive members are:

President – Pam Livingstone
Secretary – Margaret Bates

Vice President – Audrey Cole
Treasurer – Elizabeth Dolan

Bazaar Update

The 2025 Bazaar will take place on Saturday, November 15 so mark your calendars! Once again, the Ladies Guild will be hosting a Vendor Marketplace with approximately 20 tables for a variety of vendors, and we need your support! Do you know someone with an interest in selling their unique product? We are hoping to attract bath and body products, wooden crafts, home décor, handcrafted goods, etc.

St. Andrew's will have their own craft table complete with items crafted and donated by the congregation. That's you! A poster and vendor registration information are posted in the Karl English Lounge. Please contact wendy.mcnaughton@shaw.ca or kathyslimmon@gmail.com for more information.

For information on contributing to the St. Andrew's craft table contact Shelby Cole at shelbyc@live.ca.

For our other venues we're looking for donations of the following items:
Baking, Jams, Jellies & Preserves

Crafted items

Gently used books & jigsaw puzzles

(NO ENCYCLOPEDIAS, TEXTBOOKS, MAGAZINES)

Gently used household items & jewelry (NO ELECTRONICS, FURNITURE)

Gently used children's books, games & toys.



Details regarding dates and times for drop-off will be published in LinX nearer the date of the Bazaar. We're all looking forward to another exciting and successful day. Thank you in advance for your continued support of the Ladies Guild.

Brown Bagging for Calgary's Kids Update

Many of you will know that we've partnered with this organization since 2019 by providing school lunches for children in our city who are at risk of food insecurity. Due to changes at BB4CK brought about by new Alberta Health Services regulations, small community groups like ours are no longer practical. In order to continue this outreach, we'd be required to double our efforts which we're just not able to do. We are very appreciative of the support this congregation has provided to us in this initiative both in time and financially. If you wish to continue supporting BB4CK you can do so by accessing their website at: bb4ck.org.

Upcoming Meetings – to which everyone is invited!

Tuesday, October 14 at 1:30 pm in the Karl English Lounge when we'll welcome a representative from the Samaritan Club of Calgary, an all-women led group in existence since 1910, which provides short term assistance to Calgarians in need. Everyone is invited to join us in learning about this organization. No meeting in November due to the Bazaar.

Tuesday, December 9 – Christmas Lunch (at a venue TBA).
Mark your calendars!



VENDOR INVITATION

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church

Location: 703 Heritage Dr. SW

Saturday, November 15, 2025, 10am - 2pm

This annual sale has operated for many years and includes a Vendors Marketplace, Giant bake sale and tearoom, Candy Table, Second Time Treasures, and Books. The Marketplace will be on the main floor.

Vendors: 1. complete the registration form on the next page and email to wendy.mcnaughton@shaw.ca or kathyslimmon@gmail.com
2. e-transfer \$30 to ladiesguild@standrewscalgary.ca.

To ensure the success of the Marketplace and a pleasant day for everyone, please observe the following guidelines:

- \$30 includes one 70" x 30" table, 1 chair and table cover (you may provide your own)
- Max 2 persons per table
- Due to limited space no add-ons to your table
- You must attend your table from 10am until closing at 2pm.
- Signage identifying your product/company is encouraged.
- No Sale of food items, including candy or chocolates
- Due to allergies and sensitivity, scented material must be discreet.
- No open lit candles.
- Power outlets are limited. Please provide your own extension cords.
- Set-up will be available on **Friday, Nov 14, 3-7pm and Saturday, Nov 15, 8am-10:00am. There is overnight security.**
- Unloading can be done from the temporary parking area at the back of the church. Due to construction, regular parking in lot or on street only.
- Lunch is available for purchase
- St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church will not be responsible for any lost, stolen or damaged goods.
- Please direct questions or concerns to the email addresses above
- Your attendance will be confirmed after receipt of completed registration form and fee.

VENDOR REGISTRATION FORM

NAME _____

EMAIL ADDRESS _____

PHONE _____

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF PRODUCT _____

- Vendors: 1. complete the registration form and email to wendy.mcnaughton@shaw.ca or kathyslimmon@gmail.com
2. e-transfer \$30 to ladiesguild@standrewscalgary.ca.

***The information you have provided is for the sole use of the
St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church Ladies Guild Christmas Bazaar***



Joy
TO THE
WORLD

Dec 2025 / Jan 2026

Watch out for our next issue of

CONNECTIONS





is published every 2 months.
We welcome articles for the next issue
to be submitted by Nov 15, 2025 to:
ConnXions@StAndrewsCalgary.ca

Editorial Team

Coordinator: Lorna Andronikou

Team Members:

Judie Coleman

David Townsend

Thelma Wagner

Graphics and Formatting:

Kevin & Barbara MacFarlane

Delivery Coordinator: Flemming Nielsen