

Hope Springs

April / May 2026

CONNECTIONS



ST. ANDREW'S

GROWING. LIFE. TOGETHER. WITH GOD

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Have you ever wondered if your voice makes a difference?

As a preacher, I have often felt like Jeremiah (Jeremiah 1:6) or Moses (Ex. 3:11) or Isaiah (Isaiah 6:5)- “Who am I, Lord? Pick someone who speaks better, is wiser, has more authority – heck! Is taller!” And yet I trust the Holy One, whose “power working in us to do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine.” (Eph. 3:20) What gives me confidence to speak is to know that there is a choir that sings the same song – echoed in Scripture.

In the best choirs, the voice that blends well requires listening to others to find the pitch and harmony. Together they make a joyful noise as they exercise both their ears and their voice. And sometimes, solos take the lead before the choir joins once again.

What about the voices that aren't able to be heard? Not because they are not willing or capable, but because they have been silenced. In these situations, as Christians, we are called to use our voice on behalf of others.

*“Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute.
Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy.”*

– Proverbs 31:8-9

This brings me back to the first thought... “Who am I to speak for God or anyone else?” Again, listening and speaking are practiced together.

Effective listening

- Requires our whole body – turn off the screen!
- Encourages without interrupting – nodding and “uh huh” is acceptable.
- Reflects back to clarify – get a nod in return.
- Asks for clarification without judgment.
- Ponder together what might happen next.



Some may think this is too “justice-oriented” for comfort, and that it's not appropriate for your Christian practice or understanding. I would invite you to consider what prayer is. Is this not how God listens to us? I imagine God nodding as we pour out our complaint, our supplication, our petition for others, and our lament. And in the end, we sing – trusting that both God and we are actively engaged in listening and speaking.

As we enter Holy Week, may we have a lively faith that engages God, our world, and our inner longings and questions. Jesus walks among us still, bringing us to the situations that most need our attention and our voice. The call to follow might lead us through uncomfortable valleys where death threatens, but it will always lead to life. Whether you are a soloist, a choir member, or one whose voice has been silenced, God is listening, calling and equipping us.

Your voice makes a difference.
Your prayers make a difference.
So use both ears and voice for God's glory!
May the Risen Lord bless you today!

Laurie





Elder profile Lauren Nolette

Lauren grew up in St. Andrew's attending Sunday School, singing in church choirs, and playing roles in Christmas pageants. She has been part of St. Andrew's her entire life!

Past minister Rev. Jan Hazlett had a profound influence on Lauren's journey. Rev. Jan strongly believed that younger voices were important, she supported and encouraged Lauren to help provide that. Lauren still carries this belief deeply in her heart and is thankful to be part of the wonderful church home and family built at St. Andrew's.

Rev. Jan's influence has led to Lauren's focus on St. Andrew's youth. She is enthusiastic about the incredible group of young people learning to love Jesus and one another. One of the favourite parts of Lauren's week is attending the Friday night youth group; she finds the enthusiasm and friendship contagious. She is grateful to have learned so much by listening to the insightful questions and answers discussed in the group.

Lauren says that she used to think change was scary but now she welcomes it with an open mind. During Lauren's time as elder, her favourite positive change has been the ministry of Rev. Laurie. In Lauren's words, "she supports and challenges us to embrace change, I think that helps with the ever-evolving ministry at St. Andrew's."

Lauren's advice to any aspiring elder is to embrace the diversity of the congregation and session. "God walks with us. We are a team who can lean on one another for support and learn and grow together."

Going forward, Lauren sees many wonderful opportunities to continue St. Andrew's amazing ministry. Listen to where the spirit is leading us; youth, the Indigenous people, the 2SLGBTQIA community and beyond. These are things that we have decided are important to us and now we need to walk the talk.

To close, Lauren was asked for a little-known fact about herself. She said that having grown up at St. Andrew's, there is not much that people do not know about her. She has a cute Corgi puppy, enjoys reading war history, is a big Disney fan and cannot do anything without music in the background. She and husband Matt love to travel and go on road trips.

Thank you, Lauren for your insight, energy and enthusiasm. St. Andrew's is blessed to have you as part of the Session team.

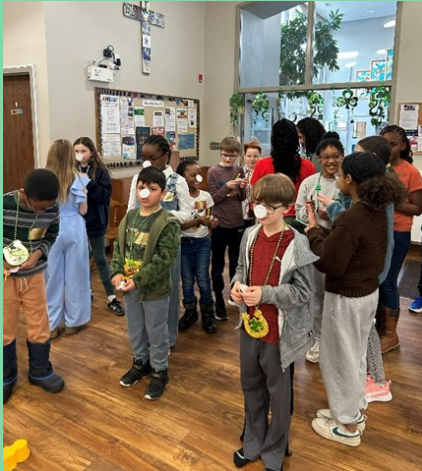
Submitted by David Townsend

Faith Formation Update

– by the Faith Formation Team

St. Patrick's Day TAKE 150

The evening was alive with laughter and excitement as children gathered for a St. Patrick's Day Take 150 celebration filled with fun and games. The event kicked off with relay races where participants raced to drop a white coin into a pot of gold at the end of a rainbow.



Slime is so much fun! The children created the best, most stretchy slime in neon colours. It even stretched across the entire width of Trinity Hall!



The highlight of the night was the beloved leprechaun game played in the dark, adding an element of mystery and thrill. The enthusiasm was palpable as Josh, Inara, Ceana, and Jessica, the youth helpers, brought boundless energy and agility to the event, chasing and catching leprechauns with great enthusiasm. Douglas played a crucial role in setting the leprechauns free, using some clever trickery to delight the kids. Children also competed in a race to see who could swallow a rainbow the fastest, which turned out to be a fruit roll-up challenge.



Terry, our amazing chef, served up a hit with tacos in a bag, providing a delicious treat for all. Meanwhile, parents enjoyed a well-deserved guilt-free date night, knowing their children were having a fantastic time.



We couldn't have done it without our adult helpers, Rhonda, Delisa, Craig, and Inge. We truly appreciate your time and commitment to the children.

The evening was a resounding success, leaving everyone with cherished memories of a magical St. Patrick's Day TAKE 150





Faith Questions from Sunday School

On February 1, 2026, our church school story was Jesus Teaches Nicodemus – John 3:1-17. In the story, Jesus teaches that God’s love is for everyone, regardless of status, background, or any other identifier. Nicodemus, although he is confused at first, is invited to learn and grow in his understanding of God. In the same way, every person is welcomed to come to Jesus, ask questions, and grow in faith. During our response time, we had the children write out some of their questions about faith. Here is the list of questions the children came up with – we would love to hear from anyone if you have an answer! Email us at ConnXions@standrewscalgary.ca and we will publish the responses in an upcoming issue. Please remember to highlight which question you are answering.

- **What does faith mean?**
- **What does heaven look like? When will Jesus come to earth again?**
- **Can you help me to be more humble?**
- **How long have you had faith?**
- **How does Jesus show kindness and how can we show kindness as well?**
- **What does it feel like to have faith? Is it fun to have faith? Do you like having faith?**
- **How does showing kindness to others show kindness to God?**
- **What should I do to be accepted into the Kingdom of God?**
- **How does God change your life?**
- **What should I do when I doubt my faith?**



Ladies Guild Update

Our kitchens are busy, well-used spaces so we inventory them once in a while. In February some Guild members got busy on this task in our three kitchens – main kitchen off Trinity Hall, Karl English Lounge, and the Upper Room. Good fun working together on this task. Thank you ladies!

At our February meeting we welcomed Tracy, the Director of Development at Luna Child and Youth Advocacy Centre. For a child who has experienced abuse, Luna is a light in the darkness – a place of safety, compassion and healing. This organization grew out of the former Sheldon Kennedy Child Advocacy Centre.

Some heartbreaking statistics Tracy shared with us:

- Since 2012 there has been a 310% increase in the number of kids in need of help;
- last year 5,000 children were helped - this represents only 15% of the top needs in Calgary;
- the average age of the children they work with is 10.5 years;
- of those they help, girls mostly suffer sexual abuse and boys mostly suffer physical abuse.

Child abuse is one of the most devastating widespread challenges facing families in Alberta. The impact can be lifelong and rob children of their health, their trust and their sense of safety. As profound as the harm can be, so too is the power of healing when the right support is there. Luna has about 140 staff – pediatricians, nurses, psychologists, counsellors. They work closely with schools, child services, Calgary police (children at risk section), RCMP and the justice system, with a focus on Restorative Justice.

Due to the stressful nature of the work at Luna there is a high focus on staff wellness. We've been invited to tour their current space in May although they're planning a new space to open in December of this year. There are opportunities to support the work of this group in various ways – they hold an annual Golf Tournament in June at Springbank, and a Music Night at the Bella Concert Hall in November. More information on this organization can be found at www.lunacentre.ca.



At our March meeting we were treated to a joy-filled **presentation on learning and teaching Braille**, by our very own Pauline Dowell! Pauline shared her experience as a Braille assistant within the Calgary School system working with children from Grades 1 to 12. Pauline had been a teacher in England before her move to Canada and once here she was given the opportunity to learn and teach Braille. While she did so, her 8-year-old daughter learned alongside her mum.

And she is now a teacher herself and is able to teach Braille to a visually-impaired student presently in her class! Pauline brought along samples of books and teaching tools which were used by blind and visually impaired students and she encouraged us to think of blind and visually impaired children and adults as “differently abled” and not disabled. Thank you Pauline for your interesting and joy-filled presentation!

Keeping our focus on sight-related issues we also had a presentation from Rheanne, Program Manager at **Alberta Sports and Recreation Association for the Blind (ASRAB)**. Rheanne talked to us about the importance of sports for this differently abled community of all ages. We learned about the various sports opportunities offered such as; Walking and Running, Dragon Boat Racing, Indoor Rock Climbing, Bowling, Curling, Hockey, Gymnastics, Cross-Country Skiing and GoalBall – very popular in schools where sighted participants wear eye masks to “even the playing field” as it were! More information on this group can be found at www.asrab.ab.ca.

All of these presentations were well received and are appreciated as they help to educate our group and allow us to spread the word among the people of St. Andrew’s about the wonderful work they do.

Looking ahead, and as previously announced, we’re planning a fundraiser with a difference for Basically Babies Calgary. This will take place during the first two weeks of May and will coincide with Mothers’ Day. We are asking for your support in providing baby’s clothing, from birth to one year. New, or very gently used will be acceptable! More information will be forthcoming in our weekly editions of LinX.



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For more information on any of the above please contact a member of the Ladies Guild.



Do you know Anna & Lawrence Anderson?

Anna and Lawrence have attended St. Andrew's since about 1987. Both originally from Manitoba, Lawrence was a lineman with Manitoba Hydro and Anna was a teacher when they met at a boarding house in rural Manitoba in the early 1960's. After getting married in 1962 and moving around Manitoba for several years, they decided to try Calgary. Lawrence signed on with City of Calgary Electric System and bought a house (sight unseen to Anna) in 1973.

It must have been a wise purchase...their three children grew up there and Anna and Lawrence are still in the same Willow Park bungalow today! They now have six grandchildren and one great granddaughter.

Lawrence worked for the City Electric System until 1996 and retired just before they became Enmax. Climbing hydro poles was a dangerous and physically demanding job, but Lawrence seems none the worse for it. He is still in excellent condition!

After joining St. Andrew's, Anna and Lawrence first got involved in the Alpha program and then attended a bible study discussion group for many years. They have fond memories of other long-term members and enjoy visiting with some of them on the east side of the sanctuary most Sundays.

They have a 1993 St. Andrew's directory for which Lawrence was a photographer...it has a wealth of interesting history and photos. Both long-term and newer members would enjoy it.

A very pleasant and engaging couple, it was a pleasure to share some stories and spend some time with them. Thanks Lawrence and Anna for being dedicated members of St. Andrew's!

Submitted by David Townsend



Please join members of our Wellness Team for our next South Centre Mall walk starting on TUESDAY APRIL 7 UNTIL TUESDAY MAY 26, 2026. We will meet at the lower East Mall entrance opposite Starbucks at 9.30 am. Walk at your own pace and then join us for coffee and a chat afterwards. For further information and to register, please contact Alice Williams 403 - 281-4247 or alicemwilliams@shaw.ca

Library Resource Spotlight

Transforming:

The Bible & the Lives of Transgender Christians – Austen Hartke

Did you know that the St. Andrew's library has a number of titles available to help us better understand our faith and inclusion of 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals? One such book is Austen Hartke's **Transforming: The Bible & the Lives of Transgender Christians**. I chose this title because of its focus on gender and what the Bible says about transgender folks, which hasn't been the primary emphasis in other books I've seen.

Transforming really was a transformational book in my understanding of the Bible and gender. The author, who is transgender and a seminary graduate, seamlessly weaves his own story and stories of other transgender Christians with thorough study of the Bible. His writing is engaging and accessible to those without seminary training or even a deep understanding of gender identities (one of the early chapters is titled *The Beginner's Guide to Gender*).

I've heard many Christians defend their non-affirming position by pointing to Genesis 1:27 where God creates male and female, presuming this implies there are only those two genders. In a chapter titled *And God Said, Let There Be Marshes*, Hartke demonstrates that while Genesis 1 lists binaries when telling of God's creation, the world is full of diversity and range. Simply because dusk and dawn, stars and comets, mud and marshland weren't included in the binaries of light/dark, sun/moon and land/sea in Genesis 1, we know they were created by God – just like all expressions of gender.

One section reveals and explains a surprising change in God's approach from banning eunuchs in the community (Deuteronomy 23:1) to promising them a name and a place within the temple (Isaiah 56:3-4) and the context behind these passages. Elsewhere in the book, I learned that Jesus spoke specifically about eunuchs – the most notable gender-expansive group of the time – in positive terms, far from seeing gender nonconformity as something from which to be healed or fixed. Other chapters cover topics such as gender roles & expression in the Bible, names and name changes and much more.

Borrow and read this book to be impacted by the vulnerable, personal stories, to understand how the Bible speaks to gender, and what we as the church can do from here.

Kim McLachlan for the Rainbow Team



transforming

The Bible & the Lives
of Transgender Christians

Austen Hartke

The Indigenous Relations Team Update

The Indigenous Relations Team (IRT) is very grateful to the congregation of St. Andrew's Church (StAC) for the continued support of our Indigenous initiatives within our own neighbourhood and communities. Various meaningful programs and activities which got their start in 2025 are continuing into 2026. In particular the monthly making and delivery of the soup program for the Aboriginal Friendship Centre and the weekly volunteers that help out at the Neechi Mart.

This past February a new Indigenous initiative was spearheaded by the IRT – the “Feast Honouring Indigenous Children.” Let me take this opportunity to tell you a little more about all that went into planning this first-of-its-kind event and the final outcome.

This Feast idea originally emerged from Rev. John Snow and Heritage Park's Senior Indigenous advisor, Anita Crowshoe, as they together were formulating plans for the Park's September 2025 Truth and Reconciliation (TRC) day. Rev. Snow shared his story of remembering the food scarcity and being fed last in his time at Residential Schools.

On that September TRC day, Heritage Park invited Rev. Laurie to be a guest speaker where she spoke on “Beyond the Apology: St. Andrew's Church Addressing Food Scarcity” to an audience of 130 people. Following her presentation Laurie was given a monetary gift from Heritage Park. She was asked if St. Andrew's could use it towards reimagining the past by creating a commemorative feast that honoured those children from Rev. Snow's shared memory, while reclaiming food as a source of dignity, culture, and community.

With the support of Viviana Reinberg who is with the City of Calgary as community social worker, we secured the Kingsland Community Hall and began planning our first ever Indigenous Feast, choosing Family Day Monday February 16th as our event date. The event was to be focused on Indigenous families with their children from our neighbouring communities. It would be a 3-hour event where we would be offering free food, children's games and activities, and Indigenous dancers. The menu was carefully selected to be children-friendly food: Mac' n Cheese, chicken fingers, veggie and fruit trays, Bannock, feather cookies, and popcorn.



There were many complexities to planning both the logistics and learning about Indigenous customs and protocols for such an event. We had already established within our Indigenous Relations Team to be mindful to always include Indigenous voices at the circle. We were fortunate to have those voices among us for this event planning. We received personal invitations to Rev. Snow's home to sit with him and Alphonse Nepoose to listen to their shared knowledge. There were lunch meetings with Anita Crowshoe where we understood that personal invitations were key. Anita and I spent a Saturday afternoon going door to door within various targeted neighbourhoods speaking to Indigenous families to invite them to our upcoming event.

Linda Humphreys, a member of our team, had always maintained a personal connection with an Elder at Siksika Nation, Vincent Yellow Old Woman. With this connection Linda was able to source out Indigenous dancers from Siksika Nation; Vanessa Old Woman and her two nieces, and acclaimed dancers Shirley Hill and Luke Whiteman. Linda was also able to share the feast initiative with St. Andrew's Ladies Guild in which they responded with an unexpected \$500 gift to the Feast from their Christmas Bazaar funds.

Two weeks prior to the event we reached out to StAC's congregation through LinX and during the Sunday announcements for volunteers for the making and assembling of the Mac 'n Cheese and fruit and veggie trays. We received a great response to fill our needs plus more. We received a willing response from StAC's men's group when we asked them to help us with set up and take down at the Community Hall and to manage the kitchen during the event. We also asked for volunteers from our StAC families to bring their young kids to help us by engaging and serving our Indigenous kids and families.

On the day of the event, we had no knowledge of how many guests would show up, but we still set up the Hall with tables and chairs to receive the maximum capacity of 85 guests. Our volunteers arrived at 10:00am setting up, and delivering food. Then at 11:00am our guests started to arrive. Our Lord was with us and certainly blessed the day. The sun was shining that morning and the guests including lots of children arrived filling every seat in the Hall!

There was a strong sense of joyful community amongst all of us together in the Hall. The food was well received. The children were busily engaged in the various activities and games. On behalf of Heritage Park, Anita Crowshoe provided several draw prizes for our event; 20 Heritage Park day passes, 2 Cineplex movie and popcorn tickets, and a Family & Friends Annual Heritage Park pass valued at over \$230. Just about every family there received a prize.



The last portion of our Feast was the spectacular Siksika dancers all dressed in their respective, elaborate, and colourful regalia providing many regal dance demonstrations. This was followed by everyone participating in the friendship circle dance, holding hands with each other. What a feeling of celebration and friendship that moment was. It was a heartfelt way to end our Feast.

Rev. Laurie's initial words to all of our guests at the beginning of Feast, shared that St. Andrew's Church has made it part of its mandate to choose not to forget the past and also, importantly, to be in partnership in a good way with our Indigenous neighbours moving forward. This event certainly demonstrated those truth telling words.

We are becoming more and more woven into the neighbourhood. This Feast really demonstrated this. With Bill Judd's weekly connection at Claire House, he was able to reach out to Charlotte Nagy, a resident at Claire House, who willingly volunteered to make all of the authentic Bannock for our Feast. As well, several other Indigenous residents at Claire House came to the Feast. Neechi Mart's operating director, Willy Anderson, as well as several weekly Neechi Mart participants also showed up at the Feast. One of Anita Crowshoe's personal invitations during our neighbourhood door knocking did bring an Indigenous grandma to the feast. Then the following Wednesday we heard that grandma came to the Neechi Mart. The mart's valuable food source helped grandma, her daughter and five kids living in a two-bedroom apartment with food security.

This feast could not have happened without the many St. Andrew's volunteers that helped us on that day. Thank you so much to every one of you, both adults and children alike, for your time, talents, hospitality and financial support. It was encouraging to hear and receive affirmation at the 2025 St. Andrew's Annual Congregational Meeting that one of the many wishes that was communicated by the congregation from the list of wishes was "continued work with Indigenous communities."

St. Andrew's you ARE the Salt and Light Woven into the Neighbourhood.

**Submitted by Margaret Bruhjell-Holmes
on behalf of the Indigenous Relations Team (IRT)**



God loves a cheerful giver.

2 Corinthians 9:7 NIV

Perhaps you were unable to attend the Annual Congregational Meeting to see all the amazing things happening at St. Andrew's or to see the plans for 2026. This note focuses on our 2026 financial plan which is posted online under Annual Reports and Financials and has more detail.

[CLICK HERE FOR THE ONLINE POSTING OF THESE DOCUMENTS](#)

Due to your generosity, we were not only able to pay for two capital projects last year (the flicker damage and Pave the Way) but exited the year with a surplus. This was due in part, by decent investment income, funding provided by some of our designated reserves (think Legacy Fund, the South of Fish Creek Fund) and an uptick in our core givings (envelopes, electronic and PAR). This latter reason illustrates the importance our congregants place on maintaining their annual support even in the face of the 2025 challenges trying to fund two unplanned capital projects at the same time.

Using slightly conservative estimates, in 2026 we are forecasting a deficit of approximately \$41,000. However, the good news is that we will cover \$30,000 by applying that amount from our 2025 surplus leaving us with a projected \$11,044 deficit.

A very small, broad-based increase in congregational annual givings would eliminate that deficit. Will you meet that challenge?

Submitted by John Cuthbertson

Watch for our next issue!

Follow the Son



June / July 2026



This is an activity for all ages during Lent and if you haven't picked up your ball yet please take one from the bowl at the Welcome Desk in the foyer. Everyone is encouraged to Play Ball by demonstrating "love for one another" and "love for neighbour" over the coming weeks as Jesus commanded. To participate all we ask is that you engage in completing at least one act of kindness (or more!) for someone in your community. This can be someone you know or a complete stranger — all we ask is that your act of kindness involves someone outside your own family and outside our church family.

On Sunday April 19 we want everyone to bring their ball to church. We will provide pens and ask you to write on your ball one special thing you did to share God's love during Lent. We will read out a few of them during the Children's Time. Please remember — the Ball is in Your Court. How far can God's love be spread through us? It is time to take action so "Let's Play Ball!!!"

Our next issue will highlight some of the "special things" you did to share God's love during Lent.

We welcome any related pictures you may have for us to be submitted by May 15, 2026 to:

ConnXions@StAndrewsCalgary.ca



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CONNIXIONS



**We welcome articles for the next issue
to be submitted by May 15, 2026 to:
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