



CONNEXIONS

DECEMBER 2020/JANUARY 2021 ST. ANDREW'S CHURCH CONGREGATIONAL NEWSLETTER

INCARNATION

REDISCOVERING THE SIGNIFICANCE
OF CHRISTMAS





CONNIXIONS DECEMBER / JANUARY ISSUE

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Dear Friends,

We're heading into Advent/Christmas seasons this year that are going to be dramatically different. Our in-person times of worship, community, and celebration are such a source of healing, strength and peace; and we are so thirsty for these in-person interactions. Yet the safety of our community—especially our most vulnerable—requires that physical distance and other health protocols be maintained at this time.

Fortunately for us, Advent comes at just the right time with its resources to nourish in us both a capacity to mourn/lament the losses, and also to plant hope in the most difficult of circumstances. Isaiah says, "The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners; to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour... to comfort all who mourn; to provide for those who mourn in Zion-- to give them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit. They will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, to display his glory (Isaiah 61:1-3)."

Even during this Covid-time we can "creatively" celebrate a meaningful Advent / Christmas together. As the old saying goes, "Necessary is the mother of invention." At Thanksgiving in our household we invited our family members on the East Coast to sit down with us to a "virtual dinner together." The plan—across three time zones—was to have food ready and lifted at the same time. Then, to say grace together and eat with each other, sharing time and conversation at table the way we would in-person. There was some skepticism about the plan on the other end of the country, but we were determined and "hungry" for such togetherness. The results were truly amazing. So, let's continue to imagine and try new ways of celebrating.

Even during a time like this there are ways to deepen our experience of Christ and the meaning of His birth. As we consider the Incarnation this Advent / Christmas, plan to join us each Sunday for live-streamed worship. You can go deeper by accessing a devotional each day of Advent on the Incarnation. Or, you can sign up for one of our two study groups available on Tuesday morning/Wednesday evening, or by joining the Monday Meditation Group.

It will indeed be a different Advent/Christmas this year--yet the promise of Jesus' presence in our midst will still offer us the hope, peace, joy, and love that we need.

Joy and peace to you,

Dr. Tim

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GROWING. LIFE. TOGETHER. WITH GOD

11.29	Advent 1 Incarnation: Messiah	Isaiah 9:2-7; Luke 1:26-38	Dr. Tim
12.06	Advent 2 Incarnation: Saviour	Matthew 1:18-21; Romans 7:18-25	Dr. Tim
12.13	Advent 3 Incarnation: Emmanuel	Isaiah 7:14-16; Matthew 1:20b-23	Dr. Geoffrey
12.20	Advent 4 Incarnation: Light of the World	Isaiah 58:6-8; John 1:1-5	Dr. Tim
12.24	Christmas Eve		
12.25	Christmas Day		Dr. Tim
12.27	Christmas 1		Dr. Tim
01.03	Epiphany: Jesus is Lord	Matthew 2: 1-2, 8a, 9-11	Rev. Jared
01.10	Baptism of Jesus	Mark 1:4-11	Dr. Tim

A HOLY Interruption

COVID: A Holy Interruption
by Rev. Jared Miller

“Who touched me?”, Jesus asked as he felt power go out of him. In the throng of people pushing into him, on the way to tend to the dying daughter of an influential leader, Jesus noticed a broken woman’s desire to simply touch the hem of his clothes. Not only does he notice, but he stops and is present in the moment of interruption.

A recent article circulated among Presbyterian churches this fall, encourages congregations to consider the toll that COVID has had on ministers and pastoral leaders in churches across the country. The average Presbyterian congregation is small (under fifty) and the most recent stats reveal that nearly one in five congregations have no paid staff. When COVID hit; and overnight churches became independent media companies (often without the budget or skillset to make that realistic) the result may well be a wave of burnouts, as more and more ministers throw up their hands and say, “This isn’t what I was called for.”

They’re right! No one in seminary when I was there thought they’d be leading church online. YouTube was still in its infancy. No one had heard of Zoom, and the first iPhone had just come out. We focused on voice projection, in case the microphones cut out, and the structures of leading a physical gathering; but never thought about what online might mean for the church.

COVID has been an interruption to all of us, but especially to the pastor who wants nothing more than to just love the people he or she have been called to serve. This article graciously provides some concrete ways to support ministers through a season like COVID.

I’ve been fortunate enough to suck at that part of ministry. I’ve always wished that the church would spend more of its time, talent, and treasure connecting with those who aren’t in the church than with those who are. After all, isn’t the church supposed to be the only organization that exists for the benefit of its non-members? But I’ve also struggled with how to build those connections. How do you go from zero to one? Ministry for me often felt like I was out of place. I wanted to build something new; but I lacked the organizational skills to do anything by force of will.

For me, I’ve been privileged enough to be able to consider COVID a holy interruption. It’s set me free to do something that I’m not only excited by, but something I am also learning to be better at every single day. What if we stepped away from all of our assumptions and our “shoulds”, and let the interruption move us into learning where we are planted?



A New Email Address For Prayer Requests by Lorie Nielsen, Convenor

In the last month, a new email address has been installed in my computer to receive prayer requests and updates.

prayer@standrewscalgary.ca
can now be used by anyone wanting to reach me. This is in addition to my personal address flnielsen64@gmail.com which can still be used the same as before; as well as **587-777-2444**.



Moral Fatigue by Barbara Kearnes

In the past few months, we have had to adjust our minds to a new vocabulary of words and phrases which were previously foreign to us: coronavirus, physical distancing, flattening the curve, self-isolation. This “new normal” can cause added stress that some term moral fatigue. Experts in stress management say it can be exhausting!

What is moral fatigue? One definition suggests it is trying to make decisions when the right thing to do is unclear. It seems as if even the mundane decisions we need to make to sustain our daily lives may cause a moral dilemma. Should we go to the grocery store? Should our children attend school? Should we visit our grandparents?

Our new normal involves physical distancing, washing, and sanitizing our hands, wearing masks, and walking down the proper aisle when shopping. It can also mean explaining to others the rationale behind some of the decisions we make. The symptoms of moral fatigue can sneak up on you; symptoms like tiredness, decreased productivity, irritability, loss of concentration, and the list goes on.

Dr. Carolyn Leaf (a well-known Christian author) writes that not all stress is bad for us. To guide us through the issues of life, she advises us to remember the nature of God, which is love. She writes that her research shows caring for others in our state of need increases our resilience and extends our lives.

Sometimes laughter is the best medicine. Having a friend with whom we can bare our souls and share our most intimate thoughts is such a treasure.

May we as a faith community recognize when we are in need, and make known our vulnerability to someone we trust; and may we be receptive to the needs of others as we **GROW. LIFE. TOGETHER. WITH GOD.**

Isaiah 41:1 (The Message)

Sit down and rest everyone. Recover your strength. Gather around me. Say what is in your heart. Together let's decide what's right.

Equally as important, we also need to remember to practice self-care. Self-care means knowing our limits and who we are. Some important principles of self-care from a Christian perspective are:

REST

Sometimes we need a period of time to recharge.

BE OK WITH FAILURE

We can learn a lot from our mistakes.

WITHDRAW

It's okay to need time alone.

STUDY

Self-care is not all about pampering and rest. We need to use our minds.

PRAY

Remembering that talking with God keeps us connected to His will for us.

SLEEP

The amount of sleep we need may depend on a variety of factors including age and genetics. If sleep is not restful, there may be a need to seek medical advice.

EXERCISE

We all know the benefits of getting the blood circulating and being as physically active as we can.

FIND SUPPORT

Instead of struggling alone, why not seek out existing supports, Alberta Health Services website for instance? You may type “Help In Tough Times” on your computer search button to find a list of resources available. Another good resource is a book called Turbulence, which consists of 150 daily devotionals by Matthew Ruttan, a Presbyterian minister in Barrie Ontario, available online from Amazon.

Spiritual Moments
God is Everywhere
by Flemming Nielsen

In mid-June of 1968, I had the opportunity to travel to Cree Lake in northern Saskatchewan with a small film crew. Accessible only by float plane, we had flown there to make a film about a fishing lodge and the small, isolated community of indigenous people living and working there. Their income is generated by fishing and trapping, and during the summer, employment at the lodge. A busy place in the summer, the community is isolated in winter, and at that time, was only accessible by dog sled, snowmobile or planes equipped with skis. An old Swedish trapper named Nels had arrived there in 1946 after the end of World War II, and had become an unofficial mayor, medic, and caretaker for the small indigenous community.

”

... it was yet another affirmation
that God is good
and God is everywhere.

Catholic priests would visit once or twice a year by plane, and it was at the urging of a priest, that Nels had built a little log church on a small hill at the edge of the village, complete with pews, a steeple and a church bell. When a priest visited, he would hold mass at the church, hear confession, baptize babies and perform any other spiritual and ceremonial tasks. In his absence the devout little community would hold services on their own, led by elders, using the Roman Missal and hymn books printed in the Cree language and brought to the community by the visiting priests.

One evening we filmed a service, and I was amazed to hear the congregation singing in Cree. The tunes of familiar hymns were sung in what felt like a higher register, which somehow gave them an increased spiritual impact. Watching the emotional faces of the participants was deeply moving. This was a truly devoted “family” of Christians engaged in a service of worship.

As people were leaving the church, many gathered outside, curious about our equipment, and asking about our activities. Most of these people had never even heard a radio broadcast, so with assistance from Nels, we did our best to explain, and then our sound technician suggested that he play back his recording of the singing for everyone to hear. When those gathered heard themselves singing on the tape, exactly as they had done in the church a few minutes before, it was like a miracle; another emotional and moving experience for them. They were mesmerized, some to the point of tears. Even Nels was moved; and for me it was yet another affirmation that God is good, and God is everywhere.



No More Lying Low by Fiona Swanson

When I first came to St. Andrew's back in 2014, I laid low; I didn't really want to be involved. On the Sunday morning when Rev. Kevin said he was going back to Ontario; I felt a need to pray for him and the congregation. I offered to do the prayers of the people; and the cat was out of the bag. I have been glad to help out as I have been able to; but as one who has been burnt out, and burnt by the church, I pick and choose what I do.

Why do I mention this? As Interim Moderator for the position of Associate Minister: Care and Growth, I see how much we need this role to be filled. COVID has made the reality of the personal cost of ministry very much a challenge. Around the world churches are trying to reimagine and reinvent how to do worship, pastoral care, faith formation; and all the other social activities we enjoy with our Christian family.

The impacts of COVID, real or predicted, are beginning to be researched and written about. I found an article by Laura Stephens-Reed entitled *The Coming Tidal Wave of Pastoral Departures*. She writes: "Prior to the pandemic, a significant number of clergy were working under unrealistic expectations; whether those came from their congregations or from their own internal "should do." Now, not only do many Ministers' jobs look very different than they did before mid-March; but they may no longer align with these leaders' senses of giftedness and call. They are doing work they did not sign up for; or at least there has been an increase in work they didn't particularly love; while the aspects that energized them have all but evaporated."

For congregants, we miss the fellowship and friendship of people on a Sunday morning. The minister, however, has lost so much more:

preaching to a camera and not being able to gauge the response of parishioners requires extra energy to convey God's message. The loss of "coffee time" or the act of shaking hands at the door has taken away the ability to know who is sick or has experienced loss; or to hear news of joy and thanksgiving. A calling has suddenly become more of a job weighed down by policy, procedures, and figuring out how to move forward in a world that is standing still.

This time is hard for everyone. It's hard for you, certainly. It's also hard for ministers. They have experienced many of the same things you have; but also new feelings of inadequacy and failure as they struggle with technology and the inability to minister in the traditional way. They pray for those who have lost jobs; and for the finances of the church, knowing that their stipend is the largest line item in the budget.

GROWING. LIFE. TOGETHER. WITH GOD

requires each of us to no longer lie low. To recognize that God is calling all of us; not just Dr. Tim or Rev. Jared, to do our part as we are able. This is a time for creativity and innovation, a time for new ideas and bold decisions, not from the top down or the bottom up. All together; sharing the joyous burden of ministry.

If a "tidal wave" of departing pastors is on its way; then we must be bold in our faithfulness and call someone to ride the tidal wave into St. Andrew's. Also be bold in our faithfulness to the ones we have called, so no one rides the tidal wave out.

Pray for them. Be a friend to them. Encourage them. Give help to them. Love them.



Raising the bar at St. Andrew's by Cathy Millar

This bar graph has been provided for your information because a number of you have asked to see a snapshot of our congregational donor profile. Please check it out to see where you fit.

With an additional 10 - 15% increase in your donation in 2021, we can raise the bar in every category. Each one of us can pay it forward by making a significant investment today to live into our new vision of GROWING. LIFE. TOGETHER. WITH GOD. What we do today will have a big impact on those who come after us, just as those who came before us paid it forward to allow us to enjoy flourishing life at St. Andrew's today. If each of us individually can raise the bar a little, then together we can raise it so much higher!

As you consider raising the bar, we strongly encourage you to support St. Andrew's in one of the following two ways: through PAR or through a recurring online donation using your credit card.

1. PAR (Pre-Authorized Remittance)

Can you imagine running your household without knowing what your income for the year is going to be? It would be almost impossible, and no doubt would add a lot of stress to your life. Knowing what you can count on for income makes managing your spending and expenses so much easier.

St. Andrew's is a family household too, but the church never really knows from year to year what its income is going to be. There are financial obligations associated with our Ministry and Mission that must be met regardless of our income. Giving through PAR offers greater financial stability so we can focus on our call to share the love of Christ with those we encounter, both within and outside the church.

PAR (Pre-Authorized Remittance) is a monthly giving program, which involves filling out a form to indicate the amount you wish to contribute each month through your bank account.

This amount will be withdrawn at the same time each month (20th) and you never have to worry about missing a contribution. It also makes life simpler because you don't have to make the effort to mail your cheque during this time of COVID-19.

Already a PAR subscriber? If so, then we encourage you to take this time to review your annual commitment and prayerfully consider the possibility of a 10 - 15% increase in your monthly giving for 2021. In this way you too can help raise the bar!

If you would like to sign up as a new subscriber, or increase your PAR monthly contribution, please contact the church treasurer, Dolly Forcade, by email at treasurer@standrewscalgary.ca or call the church office at 403-255-0001 to speak with Dolly. PAR forms are also available for download from our website at standrewscalgary.ca

2. Online Giving Through Tithe.ly

You may wish to give regularly online with your credit card through Tithe.ly by accessing our website, and then selecting the recurring donation option. It is secure and easy to use. Tithe.ly is an online giving platform specifically designed for use by churches across North America. Look for this donation option at www.standrewscalgary.ca

Your commitment to PAR or to recurring online giving through Tithe.ly enables you to give your offering intentionally and faithfully all year long. It is a symbol of the investment we are inviting you to make in GROWING.LIFE.TOGETHER.WITH GOD.

Recent studies have proved that giving leads to improved mental and physical health; and who wouldn't want that!!! So please help us raise the bar and improve your physical and mental well-being at the same time.

Your Stewards by Design Team.

Twelve Days of Sharing by Rev. Fiona Swanson

Boxing Day began as a day off for servants and staff who had to work on December 25. They were given a small “Christmas Box”, often filled with modest gifts, money, and leftovers from Christmas dinner.

One idea behind the words to the song “The 12 Days of Christmas” suggests that it was created to share some of the tenets of the Christian faith. The first day is for Jesus; the second for the New and Old Testaments. Can you guess the third? Between Christmas and Epiphany, we will let the light of Christ shine as we remember and care for others. If you would like to participate; find a box (or two). You can decorate it with stickers, encouraging words of comfort and care, wrap it, colour it, or whatever you choose. You can add more or less; or put in substitute items. We will use December 26 as the first day. You are not expected to do it like the song and give 364 items, but 78 +/- items of food.

26 – On the first day of Christmas I share with those in need . . . one bag of dog or cat food.

27 – On the second day of Christmas I share with those in need. . . two bottles of salad dressing.

28 – On the third day of Christmas I share with those in need. . . three tomato sauces.

29 – On the fourth day of Christmas I share with those in need. . . four jars of jam.

30 – On the fifth day of Christmas I share with those in need. . . five cans of tuna.

31 – On the sixth day of Christmas I share with those in need. . . six packages of pasta

J1 – On the seventh day of Christmas I share with those in need. . . seven boxes of “fake” potatoes, rice, or pasta.

J2 – On the eighth day of Christmas I share with those in need. . . eight bags of potato chips.

J3 – On the ninth day of Christmas I share with those in need. . . nine cans of soup.

J4 – On the tenth day of Christmas I share with those in need. . . ten cans of vegetables.

J5 – On the eleventh day of Christmas I share with those in need. . . eleven “ichiban” noodle soups.

J6 – On the twelfth day of Christmas I share with those in need. . . twelve rolls of toilet paper.

On January 6 - Epiphany - there will be an “event” – yet to be determined. The items will go to anyone in need from St. Andrew’s and then to the Food Bank. You can drop your box off at church on **January 7 or 8**; or call the church for pickup.

*Thank
you!*

Thank You
by Rev. Fiona Swanson

I want to take a few lines to say thank you to those who supported the Curbside Concert in support of Mikail and Emerson, who suffer from a terminal disease called Friedreich Ataxia (also called FA). It is a rare inherited disease that causes progressive nervous system damage and movement problems. It usually begins in childhood and leads to impaired muscle coordination (ataxia) that worsens over time. They have been in and out of the Flames Rotary House for pain management. They were very thankful for the “stuffed full” treat bags they received for Hallowe’en.

Speaking of Hallowe’en – thank you once again for stepping out into the community and providing a great day (Praise God for the glorious weather!!) for the children of Haysboro and their extended cohorts. We had about 140 registered, and about 65 made the trek from the community hall to the church, where they were met by a group of terrific volunteers – some delightfully scary.

I am very thankful to be of service with the people of St. Andrew’s.

St. Andrew's History
by Flemming Nielsen and Kevin MacFarlane,
with a special Thank You to Grant Paterson.

(This is the second in a series of articles, highlighting significant events in the life and growth of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Calgary.)

Part 2: Community Concert

A mere five years after the establishment of St. Andrew's in Inglewood, the congregation erected a new building on the corner of 8th Avenue and 13th Street; a building which still stands today. It was officially opened and dedicated in August of 1911, and according to Session minutes, it cost \$25,000, although it did not include an organ, which was installed later.

As both the congregation and the neighbourhood grew, the church became a significant centre for social and community functions in Inglewood. A cultural fraternity also blossomed, artistic talents emerged; and concerts and fundraisers were presented at St. Andrew's, sometimes in cooperation with other neighbourhood churches.

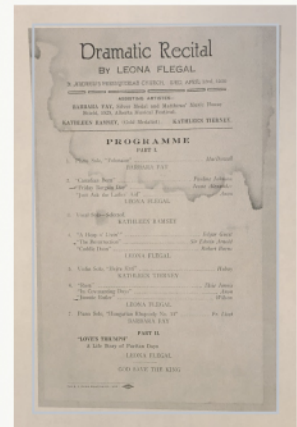
A few doors down 8th Avenue near the church manse, lived a lovely young lady who was known as "a talented young reader." Leona Flegal was an "elocutionist," and was also known for helping neighbourhood children with their speech problems. She had memorized the entire "Anne of Green Gables" book and could recite from it without notes.

On the evening of April 23, 1930, according to a local newspaper, every seat in the church was occupied, when 17-year-old Miss Flegal, along with a pianist, a violinist, and a soloist appeared and were greeted by an enthusiastic audience. Rev. A. Mahaffy, who had served St. Andrew's as minister from 1907 to 1913, before entering the law profession, acted as chairman and opened the proceedings.

"Then followed a programme replete with clever moments, in which Miss Flegal proved a versatile reader with her charming interpretations of the various numbers, and she contributed towards one of the most successful affairs of this kind held during the season."

In 1944, now Dr. Leona Flegal Paterson, this revered speech and drama teacher founded the Speech Arts and Drama Department at Mount Royal College Conservatory. She served as the department head until 1972, and then became the director of the Conservatory until her retirement in 1977. She died on April 4, 2004, at the age of 91 years.

She is one of 30 women honoured in the "Wheel of Women," an installation at the new "East Village" just south of the bridge to St. Patrick's Island.



theCreek Celebrations Corner by Rev. Jared Miller

Here are some of the things that theCreek is celebrating this month!

theCreek's YouTube Channel reached its first benchmark by passing 100 subscribers! Now we're halfway to our second (300 subscribers). You can subscribe by going to YouTube.com/TheCreek

theCreek is committed to becoming a leader in digital ministry within the PCC. We've redesigned theCreek.Life from the ground up and submitted a BRAND NEW app to both the Google Play and Apple App Store. Soon, you'll be able to take TheCreek with you anywhere.

theCreek team is finalizing its new Working Group structure and will be holding a Covenanting service during Advent this year.

As we mentioned in worship on Thanksgiving, Presbytery has given theCreek the green light to pursue its new Ministry Plan. We're leaning hard into this plan in the New Year including:

- Forming ecumenical partnerships with other churches south of Fish Creek.
- Planting mitten trees in every neighbourhood south of Fish Creek.
- Launching Online Alpha (stay tuned for more information to come in January!)
- Our first AfterWords gatherings will begin to take place this December.

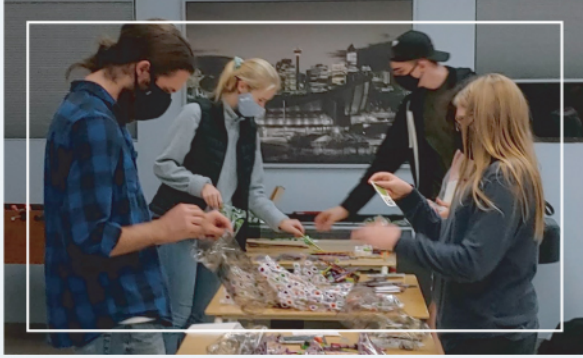
Whether or not you live south of Fish Creek, if you'd like to find out more information about any of this, we'd love to hear from you! You can email Jared@theCreek.Life or the [CreekComms group](https://CreekComms.group) at SFCreekLife@gmail.com for more information. We love hearing from you.



St. Andrew's Covid Re-opening Team by Mark Rowe

The St. Andrew's Covid Re-opening team has been preparing for a safe reopening of the church. There has been Covid Protocol training for convenors and volunteers. The church has purchased an electrostatic cleaner, and people are being taught how to use it. This is to enhance our cleaning and ensure the areas where people meet are sanitized.

The team is closely monitoring the Calgary Covid numbers, and this is driving our decisions. Given the recently reported Covid numbers, the team has decided, in consultation with the ministers and church staff, to postpone the reopening for in-person worship indefinitely. We will continue to monitor the situation, and when we do reopen, we will begin with one service at 10 am. This is so the livestream can continue at a time people are used to. If it becomes evident that we need more than one service, that discussion on times will come back to Session.



What does the Lord require of you?
by Carolyn Jerrard

Covid has stopped a lot of great things from happening, and we all know how hard this has been. The Surge Youth group, however, has not let this pandemic dampen their spirits. Outdoors with masks, indoors with masks and six-foot separation; the group has done what is necessary to move forward and enjoy its time together. Let me tell you about some of the things the group has been up to.

We did a bottle drive in September to raise funds for new furniture for the youth lounge and Upper Room (for use once Covid is over). Thanks to the generous donations by the congregation the youth hauled over **\$700 worth of bottles into the depot van! Wow!**

Every year we do a community clean up; where we go around the church, the block, and over to the small playground by the train station to clean up all the garbage we can find. This is one of the youth's favourite events. We missed it in the spring, so this fall we made it happen. We collected four huge garbage bags full!

We did a prayer walk around St. Andrew's. Starting on the north side of the building, we laid hands on the outside walls and we prayed for faith. We then moved to the south side and prayed for hope. Next was the east side, where we prayed for love. Finally, on the west side, after walking the sign of the cross, we laid hands on the building a fourth time and prayed against doubt, despair, and hate. Then all God's youth shouted "AMEN!"

With the amazing donations from the congregation, we packaged 150 Halloween bags for the kids of Haysboro. It took 12 of us over an hour, and we had a blast! Then on Halloween day many of the youth came dressed in awesome costumes to help hand out the goodie bags at the front doors of St. Andrew's.

As a group, we are continually asking what the Lord requires of us. This group, Surge, is filled with remarkable young people who are stepping up to serving those around us. Praise God for these opportunities to serve and be served!



(EDITOR'S MESSAGE CONTINUED FROM PAGE 14)

Judie Coleman invites you to investigate Grief-Share and consider whether this might be a ministry in which your particular talents might be useful and fulfilling for you; and I share a private Spiritual Moment of mine from the sixties.

In preparing the next instalment of the St. Andrew's history series, I came across an event which took place at the church in Inglewood on April 23 in 1930. This sent me on an archival research exploration at the Public Library and the archives at Mt. Royal University; and then led me to Grant Paterson, a professor in the theatre department there. The subject of this instalment is his mother, and I will say no more.

Happy reading, and have a blessed Christmas and a happy, healthy New Year.

Flemming Nielsen

Prayer Shawl Ministry by Judie Coleman

Even during Covid-19, prayer shawls can be distributed to those in need. They may be needed now more than ever.

Some history:

This ministry's message of caring is simple and enduring, and like all acts of generosity enriches the giver as well as the recipient.

Shawls have been made for centuries. In 1998 two women, Janet Bristow and Victoria Gallo, started the "Shawl Ministry" – a program which has spread around the world. Known as Prayer Shawls, they are symbolic of an inclusive and unconditionally loving God.

The use of Prayer Shawls as ministry at St. Andrew's began in 2008 and continues to be a blessing. Prayer shawls were first knitted by our WMS members and continue to be created by women attached to this congregation. We also offer lap rugs for men.

Some uses:

Shawls can be shared with people who are dealing with illness or surgery, loss or bereavement, personal upheaval or other times of great stress. They can also bless happy times like graduations, weddings or new babies.

Blessings & Prayers

As the shawls are knit or crocheted, the women pray for the person who will receive the shawl and for all who have received shawls. The shawls are kept in the office and given out to those who are experiencing difficult times; who are experiencing major changes; who are facing struggles in life. When the shawls are given, they are accompanied by a card that includes a verse from Psalm 139.

"Everyone is a beloved child of God."

If you identify a need for a prayer shawl, please contact:

Annette Shaw (Coordinator) or Judie Coleman (pastoralcare@standrewscalgary.ca).

You may deliver it or ask that Rev. Geoffrey visit and deliver the shawl. These shawls are not exclusively for members of our congregation.



GriefShare by Judie Coleman

If you've grieved the death of a loved one, you know the grief process is overwhelmingly painful, lonely and confusing. If you found healing through God's comfort and the help of others, you may have the desire to help grieving people; but you may not be sure how. That's why we want you to know about GriefShare.

GriefShare is a video-based support group that equips people like you to help the bereaved. It helps grieving people make sense of their suffering. The GriefShare videos, workbook exercises and small group discussions give participants useful information and beneficial perspectives that help them heal from grief. If you have a desire to help and care for grieving people, GriefShare may be a great ministry for you to serve in. To learn more about becoming a Leader in the GriefShare program that St. Andrew's will be offering early in 2021, please contact Judie Coleman, Pastoral Care Coordinator (pastoralcare@standrewscalgary.ca), to find out how to get involved. You can also visit the website griefshare.org for more information about the program.



A MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR

As we approach the Christmas season, thanks to COVID-19, it is shaping up to be unlike any other. Social distancing, shuttered churches, small social gatherings, facial masks and so on will change the festive season into something not yet known.

This issue of ConnXions reflects this new reality. With church group activity substantially curtailed, there is a lot less to report upon and talk about, and so a lot fewer articles have landed in my inbox this time. However, there are interesting situations and perspectives arising from the COVID reality, and some of these are explored in this issue.

Moral Fatigue, an article by Barbara Kearnes, deals with the effects of isolation, in which we find ourselves, and then suggests various ways we can reduce the anxiety, and possible loneliness of the situation.

Rev. Fiona Swanson looks at how the closure of churches and cancellation of services affects many ministers and changes what their normal duties involve, and Rev. Jared explains how the altered demands upon his ministerial talents have brought him new inspiration and challenges in communicating the Gospel in new ways via social media.

Carolyn Jerrard reports on the activities during the last few months of the Surge Youth, who have found ways to keep their mission alive and purposeful amidst the restrictions, and Rev. Fiona Swanson takes on the twelve days of Christmas and turns them into a project. **(CONTINUED ON PAGE 12)**

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