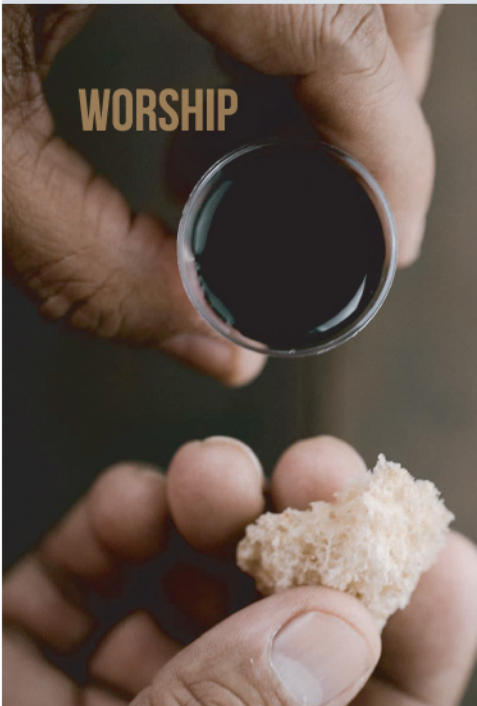




# CONNIXIONS

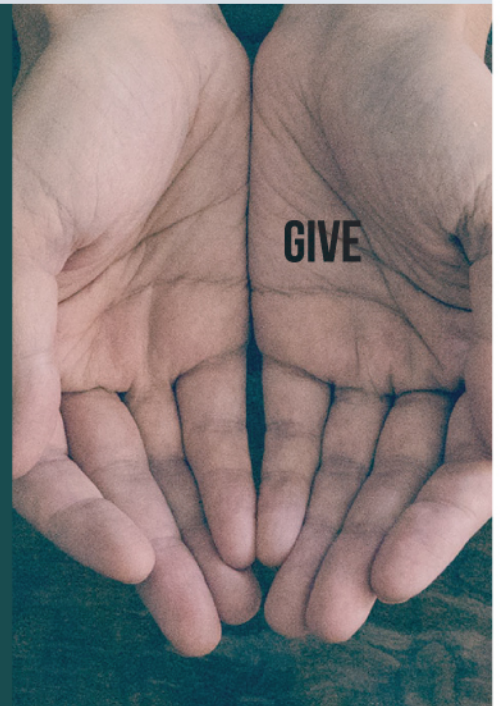
FEBRUARY/MARCH 2021 ST. ANDREW'S CHURCH CONGREGATIONAL NEWSLETTER



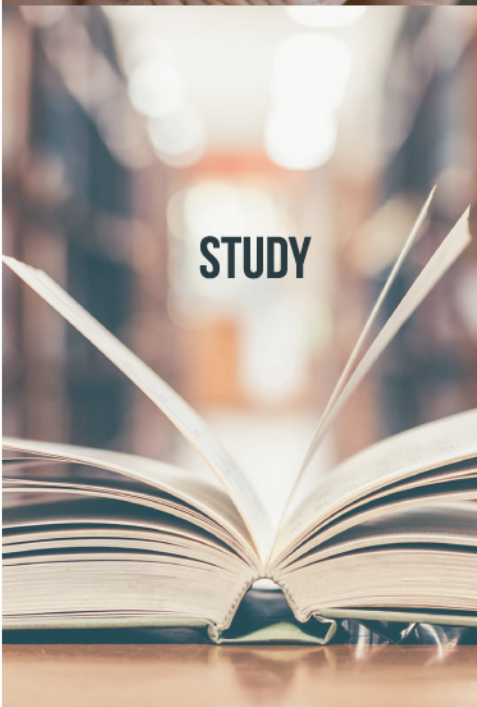
WORSHIP



GROWING  
*Spiritual*  
ESSENTIALS



GIVE



STUDY



SERVE



SHARE





GROWING  
*Spiritual*  
ESSENTIALS



## CONNIXIONS FEBRUARY / MARCH ISSUE

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Dear Friends,

*“God can do anything, you know - far more than you could ever imagine or guess or request in your wildest dreams! He does it not by pushing us around but by working within us, His Spirit deeply and gently within us.” Ephesians 3:20 (The Message)*

I expect that most of us still have some learning to do when it comes to the reality of this truth from Ephesians; both in our lives and in our community of faith. “God can do anything, you know...”

I saw this truth vividly played out in my friend, Marshall. Early in life, he had been deeply wounded by his father’s alcoholism, and the resulting poverty, abuse, and foster care. To be able to deal with latent resentment and anger, Marshall began to drink. “Like father, like son,” some people said. Soon Marshall lost his marriage. Alcoholism nearly destroyed him. Most looked at him and simply saw a drunk. Then Marshall discovered the truth that “God can do anything.” When Marshall finally allowed the Spirit to work “deeply and gently” in him, he was gradually healed and recreated. It was amazing. Years later at Marshall’s funeral, it was incredible to witness 50, of the 400 people in attendance, standing as an act of gratitude for the way that Marshall had helped them to transform their lives. All because Marshall knew that “God could do anything.”

As our ministry went completely online last March, there was fear and anxiety about how St. Andrew’s would weather the COVID-19 storm. Would people adjust to online worship? Would givings be enough to sustain our valuable ministry? We prudently planned; and did I say that some worried? In October, the search for our Associate Minister, Growth and Care was suspended. Session wanted to see end-of-year results for 2020 before proceeding.

Yet in the end, 2020 is yet another visible reminder to us that indeed, “God can do anything.” We reached more people through online ministry in 2020 than ever before. As our end-of-year financial reports began to come in, we saw a planned-for deficit of \$18,000 (approved pre-COVID) reduced to practically nothing. It was amazing. Working “deeply and gently within us,” the Spirit had accomplished far more than we “could ever imagine or guess.” Truly, God can do anything.

What transformation do you think that God can do through our community of faith in 2021, when we invite the Spirit to work even more “deeply and gently within us?” What healing and renewal are you praying for? How might God expand our capacity for “Growing. LIFE. Together. With God”? Is God asking us to continue with renewal at St. Andrew’s and now proceed with the search for our Associate Minister, Growth and Care? Do you believe that “God can do anything?”

I do believe it; because I have seen it and experienced it.  
God is good. All the time.

Peace, dear friends,  
Dr. Tim



## History of the Banners

(This is the first in a series of short articles describing the story and the history of the Liturgical Banners, which have been an integral part of worship at St. Andrew's since 1982. Ed.)

### Part 1: From Passover Through to Palm Sunday by Sheila Kirkland

Easter is the greatest and oldest of the Christian Festivals and regarded as the chief and most joyous observance of the church. There was a long and complex dispute in the early Church about the day on which Easter could be celebrated. The Western Church agreed to the decree by the Council of Nicea 325 AD. Since then, Easter is determined by the Paschal (Passover) moon, the first Sunday after the first full moon after the spring equinox (March 21). This year Easter is on April 4.

The Council of Nicea also recognized the forty-day period of Lent, beginning on Ash Wednesday and concluding with Holy Week (excluding Sundays). It was to be a time for contemplation, repentance, penance, and support of the poor. This year Lent begins on February 17.

Our Lenten Banner reflects the sombre and meditative period of the Liturgical year with the use of a muted background colour and simple fabric. The various colours of the crosses represent the many moods of meditation as we contemplate the suffering and sacrifice of Christ. The brighter colours portray the hope and promise of eternal life. The banner was made by Chris Welch, an artist in Toronto.

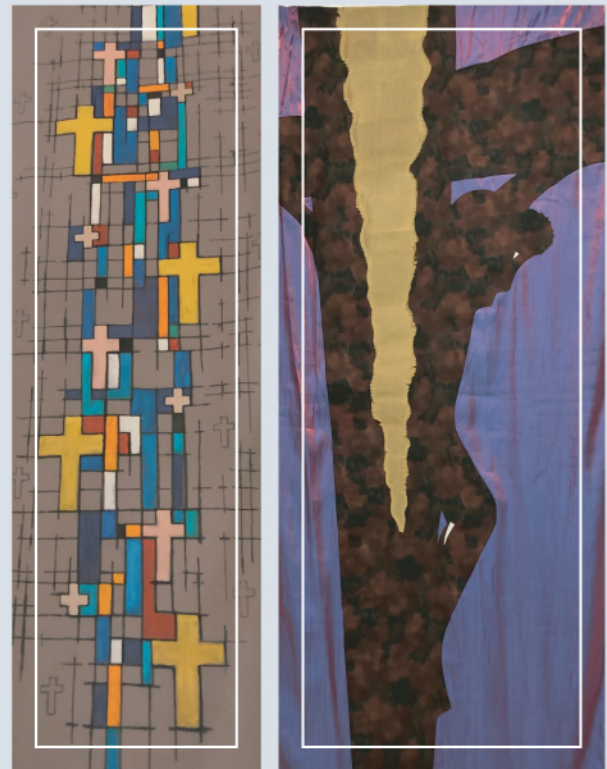
Holy Week begins with Palm Sunday and the celebration of Christ's entry into Jerusalem. Waving traditional palm or olive branches, the crowd exclaims "Hosanna" (a Greek translation of the Hebrew words "save now").

Our banner, which features these elements, was made by Grace Geren, a fabric artist from Oromocto, New Brunswick.

The falls for the pulpit and Communion table also portray the palm leaves and the crown "Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord" (Luke 19:38).

Our Good Friday banner is a very moving one of Christ on the cross. It was made by Sibbie Borden, a member from Trinity now at St. Andrew's.

The falls on the pulpit and Communion table feature the crown of thorns and the cross in deep red on a black background. The falls for Palm Sunday and Good Friday were made by Judie Coleman, Pam Livingstone, Pat Pollard and Jean MacDonald, all members of St. Andrew's.





## A COVID Christmas: Christ the Child Comes by Rev. Fiona Swanson

Christmas came without ribbons and tags,  
it came without packages, boxes, or bags.

Well, it came with all of those, but up until days before Christmas, we weren't too sure what was going to happen. We had to wait for the government to decide whether we could get together or not. We had plan A, B, and C – and perhaps we ended up doing plan Z. What I do know, is that the Spirit was upon us as we welcomed God Incarnate.

The Incarnation by Adam Hamilton and its resources were used in various ways. A Bible Study was held two days a week, in advance of worship. An Advent Devotion Booklet, based on Scripture from the study, was created and went out to every household at St. Andrew's. Each package also included a 3D printed advent nativity wreath.

The youth, on behalf of theCreek, a Ministry of St. Andrew's, placed "Mitten Trees" around S.W. Calgary to provide donation opportunities; and thus, also allowed those in need to pick items from the trees.

On Christmas Eve, we had a terrific Family Service, where families told parts of the Christmas story from their homes. We had acting, a Lego stop action movie, singing and narration by people of all ages. Families then met on Zoom to light their candles and sing Silent Night together.

Christmas Eve and Christmas Day services were about welcoming the "Light of the World" and the blessing of family, especially our "Family of God". We had great musical selections with two special soloists; choir members of St. Andrew's, Knox, and Grace sang a beautiful rendition of Mary Did You Know, which included artwork done by St. Andrew's young people. Laura Brandt and her sister Maren did a duet of an angel song, and Maren and Evan provided some Christmas Day piano duets.

December 26, we began the "12 Days of Sharing". Using the song, The 12 Days of Christmas, we donated items to create food hampers. On the first day of Christmas, I will share with those in need – a bag of pet feed; on the second day of Christmas – 2 bottles of salad dressing; and so on. This ended on January 6. To close our Advent / Christmas / Epiphany season, on the evening of Epiphany we had a Service of Light for a dark world on Zoom.

Thank you to everyone who worked hard to make this a great Christmas.

Like the Grinch, COVID could not steal Christmas. Then the Grinch thought of something he hadn't thought of before. What if Christmas means doing a little bit more? Christ incarnated in us, that we may bring His light to the world!

As this edition arrives, we will be starting Lent on our way to Easter. I hope you find many meaningful ways to celebrate, to serve, and to praise God in Jesus Christ during this Holy Season. God bless you all.







## Helping People Find Themselves in God's Story by Kim McLachlan

theCreek is the reimagined South of Fish Creek ministry, inspired by the image of a gentle creek that brings new life. We have been hard at work moving to a primarily online model in the realities of COVID; though our focus remains on communities located south of Fish Creek. We are bringing church to our neighbours in new ways to help people find themselves in God's story.

Thinking about past years of St. Andrew's mitten trees in Advent, and the little free libraries in some neighbourhoods, theCreek tried a new initiative by putting up a total of four mitten trees in December. Neighbours were invited to take what winter gear they needed and leave what they could not use for someone else. Trees located at three southern c-train stations were filled with at least 100 items and cleared ten times over, with a fourth tree well stocked in a local park. We are thrilled to see that a need was being met, for toques, mittens, and scarves; but, also, that people could find a way to give. Signs by each tree identified theCreek, and a video about this project was viewed on Facebook over 3,000 times and shared by Mayor Nenshi!

We began the new year with a covenanting service to solidify our commitment to each other on the team, to St. Andrew's and especially to the work of theCreek. If you missed it, you can watch the service on theCreek's YouTube channel. Alpha is a guided program designed to facilitate honest conversations about God and faith. Alpha, through theCreek, has begun online, with twelve participants and five volunteers. Video content has been ongoing on YouTube as well.

Looking ahead, we hope to begin AfterWords, an in-person gathering of liturgy and fellowship.

Forming these relationships and worshipping together is a main goal for theCreek. Pending COVID restrictions and weather, the plan is to begin meeting outdoors in February. Find out more at <http://thecreek.life>.

### How can you help support theCreek?

- Pray that our work will have impact south of Fish Creek; and pray for the leadership team.
- Download theCreek app.
- Follow theCreek on Facebook, Instagram & YouTube, and share content with your own circles.





## Spiritual Moments

**Adversity can strengthen your faith -  
if you seek it.**

**Kevin MacFarlane**

Barbara and I were blessed to come from families of faith. Her dad, Harry, sang in the choir at Westworth United in Winnipeg, as he did in later years at St. Andrew's Presbyterian. My dad was a member of the building committee in the late 1950s for St. Andrew's United, which used to be located a few blocks west of our church on Heritage Drive. Church school planted the seeds for a fledgling faith when we were young, but it was the challenge we faced as parents of a one-year-old Jennifer that really showed us what reaching out to God and the people he works through can do to make our lives so much richer.

We were married at Riverview United Church in Calgary but had not really "connected" until we came to have our little Jennifer baptised. A wonderful gentleman, Rev. Gordon Daley, had taken over from the minister who officiated at our wedding. His warmth and the kindness of others helped us recognize the importance of a church home to support Barbara and me, as a couple, as well as the family we had started. Little did we know the challenges we would go through, even before our next child, Pamela, had been born and baptised.

On a vacation we took with Barbara's mom and dad as Jennifer was attempting her first few steps, Flora noticed a bump which had formed on Barbara's neck. When we returned to Calgary, her doctor, who was chief surgeon at the Colonel Belcher Hospital, examined her and concluded that he should book her for surgery.

Within the month, a right sub-total thyroidectomy was performed, and an encapsulated follicular tumour was removed. Our prayers for peace during these times of stress were followed by prayers of gratitude. Gratitude that the surgery was successful, gratitude that continued checkups over the decades since have been cancer-free. Most of all, gratitude that at this same time we had become fully engaged in a faith community; first at Riverview and, subsequently, at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church.

”

Little did we know the challenges  
we would go through, even before  
our next child...

Our desire for even more of God's resources to strengthen the faith of our family is what brought us to St. Andrew's Presbyterian in 1992. Programs of music, fellowship, and Christian education, all directed to youth, were the "magnet" which pulled our young family in. It is our prayer that we all work to reinforce this focus - for our kids and our grandchildren, as we become the church we need to be in the future.





## St. Andrew's History

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

### Part 3: Growth spurts by Kevin MacFarlane

On Easter Sunday, April 15, 1906, Rev. J. A. Clark of Knox Presbyterian Church conducted the first service of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in East Calgary.

Rev. Alexander Dunn had come to Calgary to assist in the establishment of the Church, and he was eventually called to be the first minister of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church.

Three lots located on the corner of 9th Avenue and 13th Street in Inglewood had been donated by NWMP Major John Stewart, and the congregation moved into its own church building in time for the first service to be held there on September 23, 1906. It was conducted by Rev. Dunn and Rev. A. O. MacRae.

On August 29, 1907, the congregation called Rev. A. Mahaffy from Ontario, and he was inducted on October 10. In 1911, a new sanctuary was completed for the expanding congregation of Rev. Mahaffy. Located on the South East corner of 8th Avenue and 13th Street, it cost \$25,000 and remains standing today.

Rev. Mahaffy resigned in 1913 to enter the law profession, and he was succeeded by Rev. Alexander McTaggart, who took up his position in May of 1914. During his time, Canada entered into WW I, and Rev. McTaggart became very active in public life. He served five terms on Calgary City Council, and he also sat on the Special High Cost of Living Committee, which in 1918 looked at affordable food for everyone. Special attention was given to the high cost of milk, and he investigated the possibility of organizing a sale of milch goats to Calgarians. As a strong prohibitionist, his promotion of milk appears very appropriate!

Rev. McTaggart and his wife, Edith, moved to Montreal in 1925. During his time the congregations of St. Andrew's decided to remain Presbyterian and did not enter into the new United Church.



### The Benefits of Exercise by Anne Greco, Nursing Health Ministry

Exercise comes in many forms, from running a marathon to stretches while sitting in your favourite armchair. All forms are beneficial with more obvious benefits gained from a more vigorous activity. A sedentary lifestyle has been compared to smoking, with the negative impact it has on your health; but keep in mind it is wise to check with your doctor before starting any aggressive activities.

Finding an exercise partner, whether virtual or in person, is a great motivator and increases your chances of successfully staying active. New technology such as Fitbits, Apple watches and Garmin trackers are an easy way to monitor your daily activities. Setting realistic goals is critical, whether it be the amount of weight you wish to lose, the number of times a week you will exercise, or the intensity of the workout. Start small, experience success, and build on it. Strangely enough, when feeling tired and run down, even gentle exercise can be energizing.



## Keeping St. Andrew's Sanitized and Secure by Don Koch

Although our sanctuary remains closed for in-person worship due to the pandemic, there remains a need to keep the building clean, sanitized, and secure. Our staff live streams worship services on Sunday mornings, volunteers from our congregation distribute hampers for the Calgary Food Bank on Saturdays, and, until they recently purchased their own building and ended their use of St. Andrew's, the Coptic congregation conducted limited and live stream worship on Saturdays. We needed to ensure that all these individuals would be in a safe and clean environment while at St. Andrew's. We had, however, discontinued our contracted custodial service in April. What could we do?

We put out an appeal, and six St. Andrew's volunteers stepped forward! Ellah Chishakwe, Kate Azuma, Alfred MacRae, Jessy Babs, and Brad Chalmers each generously offered their time. St. Andrew's purchased PPE, an electrostatic disinfection sprayer and also provided training in its use. Starting in November 2020, and working in teams of two, our volunteers began to clean and disinfect commonly used areas on a weekly basis, including the washrooms. While one worker uses the electrostatic sprayer, the second volunteer hand sanitizes all touch points, vacuums the carpets, and cleans glass surfaces. In addition, Flemming Nielsen offered to empty waste containers and keep the washrooms restocked with paper towels, toilet paper, and soap. This is one more example of the spirit of St. Andrew's hard at work until we can again worship together in person. Thank you, team!

There is also a need to make sure our building is secure during the pandemic. Since March 2020, volunteers from the Facilities team have been conducting exterior and interior security patrols daily. They ensure that all doors are locked, that there has been no damage or vandalism on the property, and that the interior plumbing, sumps, and electrical systems are all working normally. Thank you to Bob Shaw, Flemming Nielsen, Don Koch, Sean Pepper, and Mark Rowe for helping to keep our church building safe and secure.

## History Repeats Itself

In 1720 it was called the Plague. In 1820 it was Cholera, and in 1920 it was Spanish Flu.

The following poem was written in 1869 and reprinted during the 1919 Pandemic.

### And people stayed at home

And read books  
And listened  
And they rested  
And did exercises  
And made art and played  
And learned new ways of being  
And stopped and listened  
More deeply  
Someone meditated, someone prayed  
Someone met their shadow  
And people began to think differently

### And people healed

And in the absence of people who  
Lived in ignorant ways  
Dangerous, meaningless and heartless,  
The earth also began to heal  
And when the Danger ended and  
People found themselves  
They grieved for the dead  
And made new choices  
And dreamed of new visions  
And created new ways of living  
And completely healed the earth

### Just as they were healed





# GROWING Generous LIFE. TOGETHER. WITH GOD.

Growing. GENEROUS LIFE. Together. with God.  
by Kevin Macfarlane

As we continue to live out our Vision of Growing. LIFE. Together. with God., St. Andrew's Stewards by Design team is always seeking ways to provide our church family an opportunity to reflect on the importance of generosity in our lives and in our congregation. To that end, we have prepared a short, and hopefully useful, booklet that has been approved by Session. We offer this to you as a guide on the subject of financial stewardship within our congregation.

In it you will find:

- A brief discussion on being stewards of God's grace.
- Practical guidelines for financial giving.
- Some questions frequently asked about financial giving.
- Consideration given to legacy planning.
- Ways we can respond.

Please watch for it on our website under OFFERING/DONATE. It is identified as "Growing Generous Life Overview". It may answer questions that you never even thought to ask!

Finally, Stewards by Design would like to offer all of you a great big THANK YOU for your very generous support in 2020, which left us with a deficit of less than \$10,000. This is truly something to celebrate given the challenges of a COVID year.

## Coptic Church Departs by Don Koch

For almost three years St. Andrew's has provided a home for the congregation of the St. Mary and St. Paul Coptic Orthodox Church. In 2018, the church, which is one of two Coptic or Egyptian congregations in Calgary, needed a larger church for their growing membership, and at St. Andrew's available rooms and times fit their needs very well.

They began using our church building in March 2018. Initially we put out signs to help their congregants find their way in the building, but they soon felt at home. They worshipped in the sanctuary on Tuesday and Saturday mornings. Trinity Hall was used on Saturdays for their fellowship time. Church school classes for children were accommodated in our CE wing. Bible study was in the upper room, holy bread was prepared in our kitchen, and so on.

St. Andrew's was a vibrant and busy place, accommodating the activities of our own congregation, those of the St. Mary and St. Paul parishioners, and the activities of the Sudanese congregation. Our office staff had quite a job ensuring that there were no space conflicts. I'm sure that God must have been pleased to see His home at 703 Heritage Drive so well utilized for three distinct communities of faith.

The St. Mary and St. Paul Coptic congregation departed St. Andrew's in early January and moved into their new building, which they had purchased in Glengarry. We wish them well!





## Music in a Worship Service by Elizabeth Dolan

Have you ever gone for a walk in the woods and not heard birds chirping? The silence lets you know that something important is missing. Music in a worship service serves the same purpose: it provides a filling out of the air space within the sanctuary.

The Bible encourages everyone to sing: Psalm 98:4-6, KJV "Make a joyful noise unto the LORD, all the earth: make a loud noise, and rejoice, and sing praise. Sing unto the LORD with the harp; with the harp, and the voice of a psalm. With trumpets and sound of cornet make a joyful noise before the LORD, the King."

We're thankful to have music in our worship services. Our hymns and anthems help us be joyful and thankful, to mourn, to ask for forgiveness and for help, to express gratitude, to celebrate the seasons in the church calendar.

Have you ever been curious about what happens behind the scenes at a St. Andrews choir practice? For a start, a dedicated and enthusiastic group of choristers (larger than what you see here) meet on Zoom on Thursdays. Evan delights us with his self-described "music nerd-ness" thereby keeping our practices interesting. We learn all sorts of incidental information about the music we're singing, for example:

Who can tell us what key the music is in?  
How many beats to the bar? Who can find the "Scottish snap"?

We sing together, muted mind you, rehearsing the hymns for the upcoming Sunday service and practice music for the next Virtual recording. Currently we're working on a jazzy rendition of "This Little Light of Mine". You'll get a chance to hear it February 14 when you tune in to the Jazz Vespers.

We have plenty of space in our Zoom room during Thursday choir practices. Whether you're interested in singing along muted, learning music theory, or whether you want to be part of the YouTube clan, join us on Thursdays.

You are more than welcome!! St. Andrew's choir always has a challenge and an opportunity for us to GROW. LIFE. TOGETHER. WITH GOD.



(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 07)

As we age, muscle loss is inevitable; but staying active slows the process and ensures that we are able to sustain our independence. There are many free and readily accessible exercise programs available on-line, or simpler yet, to purchase on a CD.

The many benefits of exercise include, but are not limited to:

- improved circulation
- assistance with weight management
- decreased risk of heart attack, stroke and diabetes
- improved mental health through the release of endorphins
- lowering blood pressure
- reduced stress
- improved mental alertness
  - all forms of exercise can be modified to accommodate your physical abilities
- can improve quality of sleep

Keeping mentally active is as critical as physical exercise. Crossword puzzles, jigsaw puzzles, word searches, sudoku as well as many other mind stimulating games are readily available at no cost online; as well as books found in any dollar store. Solve that Rubik's cube at long last!! Phone a friend, read a good book or learn a new hobby or a new language. Stay connected with the community through volunteer activities, joining like-minded groups and connecting with neighbours.

Take care and stay safe until we can all be together again.



## Side by Side - Then and Now by Alice Post

Side by Side is a program that cares for families living with dementia. As a respite ministry, the program sought to meet “side by side” needs simultaneously. By providing a warm, inclusive fellowship time for family members with dementia (the participants), respite was also provided to care partners by facilitating personal time. At the church, participants in the program were paired with volunteers who would walk through the day with them, and provide encouragement and guidance as needed. Over time, friendships formed, and care partners would often report that they were being asked every morning if it was time to go to Side by Side.

When the pandemic was declared, and we were no longer able to meet, it was a significant loss, especially to care partners, who were then providing care 24/7 without a break, because all the other day programs in the province were also closed.

Before the pandemic, there had been five families taking part in Side by Side, with two more families intending to join in April. Efforts were made to keep in touch with all care partners, to connect families with online resources being offered in the community, and to offer some resources for at-home activities. In April, spurred on by a John Wooden inspirational quote “Do not let the things you cannot do interfere with the things you CAN do,” we began to develop our own online program.

The “Side by Side Online” format incorporates familiar elements and activities from the respite program, such as conversation time, seated exercise, devotion time, music, and word searches (using annotation tools on a shared screen).

While some elements are familiar, there are also significant differences! As a respite program at St. Andrew’s, we had 4.5 hours of social time and activities, and we were able to have our conversations over coffee or a meal. For the online program, the care partner needs to be present, or at least nearby. A lengthy Zoom call would not be helpful, so we opted for a one-hour online gathering twice a week. This seemed to balance the need for connection with the burden of setting up for a Zoom call.

There are some positive differences too. We can incorporate images in a more meaningful way in our devotion times, and with a clear view of the screen, participants can read along with scripture verses and prayers, and sing along with music videos.

One-to-one Zoom training is offered for care partners and volunteers, as needed. For some, the online format does not work, so we continue to keep in touch, mostly by phone or email. For the two families that have taken part in the online program, it has fostered continued connection and has been deeply meaningful.

If you are interested in taking part in Side by Side Online, please send an email to Alice at [sidebyside@standrewscalgary.ca](mailto:sidebyside@standrewscalgary.ca).





Congrats

**On the Retirement of the Rev. Dr. Marion Barclay MacKay**  
by Barb English

Marion became part of the life of St. Andrew's in 1979. Shortly after her designation to the Order of Diaconal Ministries, she came to Calgary to serve as the Presbytery mission worker, and later as the educational consultant. During her ten years as a Presbytery worker, Marion considered St. Andrew's to be her church home. She sang with Musical Friends, where she made life-long friends, and was involved with the College and Careers group, as well as being a go-to person for teachers and leaders.

Following six years as the Director of Christian Education at St. Andrew's, Lethbridge, ordination was the next step for Marion. After graduating from Knox College in 1997, and already known and appreciated at St. Andrew's, she served our congregation as co-minister until 2005. She was involved in all aspects of congregational life, and her expertise in Christian education was an extra blessing. People who worked with her remember her as upbeat, organized, innovative, and enthusiastic.

Some of Marion's own memories of St. Andrew's include Musical Friends, church renovation projects, trips to Youth Triennium, sharing times of transitions in people's lives, and "always, always Sunday worship, special services, the Christmas service marathon..." One of her brightest memories is her wedding at St. Andrew's in 2005 to the Rev. Dr. Donald MacKay.

It was truly an enthusiastic and joyful congregational undertaking, which included bridal showers, creative song lyrics, unlimited food and decorations, and a packed congregation.

After serving two years in Ghana with International Ministries, Marion and Donald settled in Cape Breton, NS. where they each served a congregation until Donald's death two years later. Marion stayed on in the Sydney Mines congregation until retirement. Her extensive and varied service was recognized when she received an honorary doctorate from Presbyterian College in 2016.

Two years ago, Marion married the Rev. Grant Johnston, a retired Presbyterian minister, and there is little doubt that their lives will continue to be busy and a blessing to the church.





## Rev. Dr. Peter Coutts Retirement by Elaine Cantlon

At the end of January Rev. Peter Coutts began his retirement from ministry at Varsity Acres Presbyterian Church here in Calgary. His career as an ordained minister in the Presbyterian Church had spanned 29 years, and in his own words he describes his ministry background as “eclectic”.

Before beginning seminary training, he was a naval officer. Following his ordination, he went on to serve congregations in Sidney BC, London ON and Calgary AB, including 13 years spent as lead minister here at St. Andrew’s.

After leaving our congregation, Peter served as general presbyter of the Presbytery of Calgary - Macleod. He was a consultant to the thirteen congregations in southern Alberta, as well as working with congregations, denominations and theological colleges in both Canada and the U.S.

He earned his Doctorate of Ministry at McCormick Theological Seminary in Chicago, where he went on to be an adjunct professor, teaching courses in understanding congregations and leading change in the doctoral program.

With an academic interest in motivation psychology, and its application to organizational change, Peter received a research grant from the Louisville Institute given to “support the intellectual work of pastoral leaders, who have the capacities for research, teaching and writing that can reach broad audiences”. The grant enabled him to take a sabbatical in 2009, and to begin working on his book, “Choosing Change: How to Motivate Churches to Face the Future”, which was published in August 2013.



On the Varsity Acres Presbyterian Church (VAPC) website, he describes himself as a husband (to Sheri), a father to two grown sons (Paul and Danny), a photographer, a guitarist (acoustic finger-style), movie fan, and bread baker.

What he doesn’t mention, is his incredible culinary skills, especially in Thai cuisine, and a passion for travel which he and Sheri share. They have travelled in western Canada and abroad to places such as the Greek Islands, Hawaii, and Mexico. Peter researches each destination, carefully preparing a travel itinerary in what Sheri has referred to as “The Binder”. They seek to go for adventures like caving or swimming with the manta rays, and yet they are happy to just laze on a beach with a book.

Now that both are retired, who knows what lies ahead for Peter and Sheri. Congratulations to The Rev. Dr. Peter Coutts on his retirement. May God richly bless him, Sheri and their family in all future endeavours.







## A MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR

Back in July 2020, as we were putting finishing touches to the August / September issue of ConnXions, it was decided that rather than mailing out some 130 plus copies of the newsletter, we would resurrect the old custom of doing direct deliveries. The savings could be as much as \$300 per issue.

Using postal codes, delivery routes were created, and the call went out to potential volunteers, as we needed 15. Armed with the church directory, I worked the phones, and do you know that, in the true spirit of St. Andrew's volunteerism, not a single person turned me down. I had explained that routes had been worked out, and the appropriate number of individually addressed copies would be delivered to the driver's home, along with a printed list of the recipients.

This is the fourth time the drivers have been called upon to deliver to their districts, and I would like to acknowledge the service provided by Bill and Lynn Judd, Kevin MacFarlane, Roger DeGraff, Ron Horwood, Pat and Duane Tritter, Bob Fuenning, Brian Hawco, Garry Swanson, Dan Duncan, Rob Goss, Christine and Sean Pepper, Don Koch, Brent Forcade and Noel White.

A BIG THANK YOU to each one of you; drive safe, and may God bless you.

Flemming Nielsen

## GET SOCIAL WITH CONNXIONS

-  703 Heritage Drive SW T2V 2W4
-  [news@standrewscalgary.ca](mailto:news@standrewscalgary.ca)
-  403.255.0001
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## EDITORIAL TEAM

- |                            |                  |
|----------------------------|------------------|
| Editor                     | Flemming Nielsen |
| Team Member                | Lorie Nielsen    |
| Team Member                | Barbara English  |
| Team Member                | Judie Coleman    |
| Communications Coordinator |                  |





The church building is closed until such time as Alberta Health advises meeting together is once again appropriate.

Please watch for communications from St. Andrew's mailchimp congregational emails, and our website at [www.standrewscalgary.ca](http://www.standrewscalgary.ca) to stay in touch with our latest updates.

At this time we are not scheduling "in-person" meetings. However, ministry teams and groups are meeting through online Zoom meetings.

If you do not have computer access and would like to have a copy of Sunday's sermon mailed to you, please contact the church office at 403-255-0001.