

Follow the Son



June / July 2026

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Intercultural Ministry at St. Andrew's

A New Covenant between English and Nuer Speaking Congregations

Are you aware? In 1998, many Nuer-speaking people from South Sudan arrived in Calgary looking for a worship space. As Presbyterians in South Sudan, they found a home at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church. They have been worshipping at St. Andrew's and integrated into the work of St. Andrew's minimally, usually through a liaison member or group.

While at times St. Andrew's has seen the Nuer congregation as a mission sharing space, St. Andrew's has also baptized and ordained elders, led communion, and been the fiscal agent for donations for the Nuer congregation. We have now created a Covenant between our communities to clarify our relationship. We trust that God is in our midst. "There is one Lord, one faith, and one baptism. One God and Father of all who is above all, through all, and in all." (Ephesians 4:5-6).

As we grow into relationship, the Covenant clarifies how we will intentionally integrate our ministry with youth, mission, communication, celebration, and leadership.

Here are some things that you might find interesting about the Nuer Community:

- There are 35 youth in the Nuer youth group who meet on Saturdays. They learn the Nuer language through song. This is one way to keep the language alive because most children/ teens born in Canada are more fluent in English. There are 12 youth and 5 leaders from both Nuer and English communities attending the Youth Collective Conference in St. Catharines this August. There are up to 20 youth in the weekly Friday English youth group. Plans for joint youth gatherings are being made – quite a group with a potential of 55 youth!
- There are approximately 75 people in the Nuer community who worship weekly Sunday afternoons (most often in Trinity Hall, occasionally in the Sanctuary). The Nuer congregation has more children and youth than adults, and seniors are the minority.
- There are 5 women elders, with Thomas to be ordained shortly. The elders' primary role is leadership and pastoral care of the community. Two elders from the Nuer congregation will now be invited to participate in our session meetings. The primary mission for the Nuer congregation is to support refugees from South Sudan, both sponsoring and welcoming new arrivals as well as supporting those who have lost family in Sudan. We intend to support this work and our Sudanese brothers and sisters.

- The minister of St. Andrew's will support the Nuer worship and communion (4 times per year), ordination, and special functions as needed. We anticipate a joint service in early fall to celebrate the covenant and to hear from the youth and leaders returning from the Collective Conference.
- We seek to be a blessing to each other and to the world as one community: St. Andrew's Presbyterian. As an inclusive community, we make space for different languages, cultures, and expressions of worship.

Laurie

Elder Profile - Desíree Henrichsen

Arriving in Calgary from Argentina in 2003 with my family, we immediately started looking for a church. From the Yellow Pages we found St. Andrew's Presbyterian and made a decision to visit. Reverend Peter Coutts was the minister, and we were immediately and warmly welcomed by Reverend Peter and the congregation. We decided then and there that this would be our new church.

During our early years at St. Andrew's, our children Douglas and Lilwen attended Sunday School and participated in the Christmas pageants and youth groups and made many new friends. This was our church home where they grew and enjoyed so much!

I have been involved in St. Andrew's in many ways; as a Sunday School leader, an adult advisor with Canada Youth (CY), Inn from the Cold volunteer, and as a leader on The South of Fish Creek Team. I have also participated in Bible study and performed liturgical dances in some of the Sunday services.

I am grateful that during the last twenty-two years, St. Andrew's has helped me grow in my faith and as a Christian. I love how our church has been so dynamic and still offers so much to our congregation and the community.

During my time as an elder, I have seen St. Andrew's grow in so many positive ways with Reverend Laurie's ministry and how she is helping us to be open to embracing diversity. God wants our loving hearts and spirits to be open to change and growth.

I believe that God is working through us and our church to make a difference by welcoming and strengthening our relations with the Indigenous, 2SLGBTQIA+, and newcomers. I also believe in the importance of supporting our youth through building their faith, empowering them to take church leadership roles and creating new ways for them to build and strengthen relationships with other youth groups.

For anyone aspiring to be an elder, I recommend coming with an open heart and mind. Share your godly beliefs to help St. Andrew's be a safe and open space to grow our relations with faith, love and acceptance.

As for a little-known fact about myself, I enjoy nature very much. Camping, swimming, bike riding, dancing, music, arts and travelling are some ways I connect with God. This brings me much happiness and peace.

Submitted by David Townsend





Faith Formation Update

Church School

As the school year winds down, our church school year is wrapping up as well. The children enjoyed a wonderful end-of-year celebration on May 31. Although the wrap-up party has taken place, our dedicated Faith Formation leaders will continue teaching through Sunday, June 21.

There will be no church school during the summer months. We will resume our regular schedule in September. During the summer, children are warmly welcomed to stay with us in the sanctuary during worship. If they need a break or a quieter space, the nursery is always available. Activity sheets can also be found at the back of the sanctuary for children to enjoy during the service.



Graduating Grade 6 & 12 Students

On Sunday, June 7, we will joyfully recognize the Grade 6 and Grade 12 graduates in our congregation as they celebrate this important milestone. These students have grown in faith and wisdom within our community, and we look forward to supporting them as they take their next steps.

We are grateful for the opportunity to honour their achievements and surround them with prayer and encouragement as they move forward.

Collective 2026

Collective is a spirit-filled gathering for youth, young adults, and their leaders – a space to grow in faith, build community, and reflect on shared experiences. This summer, 11 youth and 5 leaders from St. Andrew's will be attending Collective at Brock University, taking place August 12-15, 2026.

On Sunday, June 7, Rev. Peter Coutts will commission these participants and offer a blessing as they prepare for this meaningful time of learning, worship, and connection. A friendly reminder: June 7 is also the final day to purchase cookies in support of our youth as they fundraise for their conference costs. Your generosity helps make this experience possible.



Bible Study

Our dedicated Bible Study group, which meets after the Sunday service, will also be taking a break for the summer months. The last day of Bible Study is May 31, and the group will resume its regular gatherings in the fall.

We are grateful for the thoughtful discussions and faithful learning shared each week, and we look forward to beginning again after summer.

Submitted by the Faith Formation Team: Rhonda Wishart, Inge Murray, Deanne Barrett, Debby Dorcas, Lorna Andronikou, Lauren & Matt Nolette,



***Seeking Grace
& Clarity***

A clear glass sphere, similar to a crystal ball, is held in a hand. It reflects a beautiful autumn landscape with trees in shades of yellow and orange, a river, and a blue sky. The background behind the sphere is a blurred outdoor scene with similar colors.

September 2026

CONNIONS **SA** **ST. ANDREW'S**
GROWING LIFE TOGETHER WITH GOD

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**We invite you to
submit your summer
photos for our
September 2026
issue of ConnXions
by August 15, 2026**

Smile!



SunShine

The Gratitude & Generosity Team

Thanks to everyone, the young and the not-so-young, for your participation in our 2026 Lent project, **THE BALL IS IN YOUR COURT**. While the project may be over, we know that our participation is **NEVER** over, and that the **BALL IS ALWAYS IN OUR COURT**. As followers of Jesus we know that loving and caring for others is what is expected of us all the time.

The Gratitude & Generosity Team is pleased to share with you the many ways the people of St. Andrew's chose to "Play Ball" by extending love and kindness in a variety of ways to friends, neighbours and strangers in our community. Here are a number of ways we shared kindness with others:

- * making soup and Bannock for WellBriety
- * shovelling snow for neighbours (4)
- * helping an elderly neighbour through hospitality, by driving or visiting (8)
- * charitable donations (6)
- * paying hospital bill for someone in Kenya
- * invited neighbour to church for Easter* helped with Food Bank
- * fixed neighbour's downspout without them knowing
- * provided a dozen cookies for residents of 2 apartments who needed both physical and emotional support
- * Provided a meal for new parents
- * met a new neighbour and took over banana bread
- * gave my teacher a compliment
- * invited a recent widow over for Easter
- * invited a neighbour to Easter lunch
- * paid it forward at Tim Horton's
- * organized a welcome party for a new work colleague
- * volunteered at Ronald McDonald House
- * played in a hockey tournament for United Way
- * took friend to medical appointment and lunch
- * took a neighbour who needed to talk about her kids for ice cream
- * baked cookies for neighbours and cupcakes for friends
- * helped someone in a wheelchair
- * looked after a neighbour's dog as a favour



The Ball is in Your Court project provided an excellent opportunity for all of us to engage in our Mission to "Grow Disciples Who Love Like Jesus." Thank you to everyone who took the time to participate by sharing God's love with others.



Ladies Guild Update

Our Spring fundraiser took the form of a baby shower for Basically Babies and coincided with Mother's Day. It was a tremendous success with over 650 articles donated – everything from clothing and shoes, soft toys and books, blankets, towels, toiletries as well as financial donations. We had fun sorting all the donations at our May Guild meeting (see the photo above) and are very grateful to everyone who contributed. These gifts given in love will be gratefully received by families who have a brand-new baby and are in great need. Thank you for your generosity.

June is the month for our Guild lunch and this year we've chosen The Selkirk Grill at Heritage Park. There is no charge for parking and we'll meet at St. Andrew's for those who wish to car pool. There is a limit on space so please confirm as soon as possible. Date is Tuesday, June 9th at 12 noon. Details on carpooling to follow. To confirm your attendance please contact Pam Livingstone at 403-815-3775.

Although we're looking forward to the lazy, hazy days of summer it's never too early to think about our annual Christmas Bazaar! This year it'll be held on Saturday, November 14th. So, while you're enjoying those summer days, please keep in mind the books, puzzles and treasures you're willing to part with so someone else can enjoy them. Also, as you tend your garden, remember that the fruits of your labours - turned into jams and jellies, pickles and preserves - are regularly sought after items in our bake room. We're always grateful to have our wide mouth, 500ml Christmas pudding jars and rings returned so we can fill them again for you this year! Please check your cupboards for any empties which can be returned. As always, this fun congregational event relies on many volunteers so please start thinking of ways you can contribute this year. Thank you!

Submitted by Sylvia Shaw

Meal Train

A Simple Way to Love One Another

Recently, I went through surgery, and in that season I was reminded—very personally—what it means to be cared for. What I needed most wasn't only medical attention, but the steady support of prayer and encouragement from people who truly felt invested in my recovery.

I was also blessed to receive meals while I was healing. In a way, that help was more than food. It took pressure off of my husband Mark, it allowed me to rest, and it served as a visible sign of God's care working through God's people. I can honestly say that being prayed for and encouraged, and having a meal provided, became part of the ministry of healing.

That's why I want to invite our church family to consider volunteering with 'Meal Train'. Meal Train is a practical ministry that helps coordinate meal support for congregants who are dealing with illness, recovery, or welcoming a new baby. It's a way to say, "we're with you," without needing to do anything complicated. Even one prepared meal - at the right time - can make a real difference.

If you're willing to serve, please sign up with me to provide a meal when it's needed. Let's come alongside one another with kindness, consistency, and love - just as we would want others to come alongside us.

How to Get Involved:

- Contact me by phone or email to put your name on my list of volunteers. We can discuss how this online hub provides efficient contact to know of, and sign up for, needed meals. Meals are often a simple casserole, soup, or purchased and easy to heat dinner.
- Volunteers are contacted by email to be aware of new needs.
- Choose dates and days that work for your schedule when you receive the request email.
- Pray for the person or family as you serve - small prayers paired with practical care go a long way.

Let's make Room for God's love in action, one meal at a time. I'd love to hear from you!

Joan Rowe - CareShare Meal Train Coordinator - Ph. 587-223-6243 - Email: mjrowe@telus.net



Parking Project Update

When City Development Permits and subsequent competitive bids were received last year, the eventual start of construction was optimistically established in mid-October with a wary eye on weather forecasts.

However, late favourable weather prevailed and allowed a number of tasks to be completed ahead of the first snowfall. The power of prayer was vindicated.

Demolition, concrete curbs and pavement were undertaken, along with placement of imported topsoil, fencing, parking realignment and planting of seven potentilla bushes.

Some of the work was completed by volunteers and your help is recognized and greatly appreciated.

During the coming months, additional tasks that remain part of the conditions of the Development Permit will be undertaken, including:

- Relocation of the large shed northward to provide a turnaround area.
- Regulatory enlargement of the garbage enclosure to meet current standards.
- Completion of landscaping.
- Regrading the southeast corner to improve storm drainage and containment.
- Improved parking identification to provide better parking efficiency.
- Painting of parking lines on paved areas.
- Realignment of disabled parking spots in east lot.
- All necessary signage.



Many of these tasks are within the capability of volunteers and it is hoped that a final push over the summer can successfully conclude this work.

External to the listed additional work associated with the parking project is the mandatory upgrading requirement imposed by the City, for a new access crossing from Heritage Drive, and contribution for street lighting electrical improvement. These conditions are non-negotiable.

Initial enquiry was established with the City and a follow up meeting is intended prior to month-end, whereby it is hoped to obtain costs and construction schedule.

This brief summary provides an overview of present status, but in the event you have any additional questions, please contact Tom McIntyre or Mark Rowe for further information.

Submitted by Tom McIntyre

Pride Month & Pride Week Did You Know?

Questions have been asked of members of the Rainbow Team; why do we have Pride Month in June and Pride Week in August/September?

The June celebration of Pride is now known as Pride Season. The occasion used to be referred to as Pride Month as determined by the federal government.

Pride Season is the term referring to the wide range of Pride events that take place over the summer (June to September) across Canada when 2SLGBTQI+ communities and allies come together to spotlight the resilience, celebrate the talent, and recognize the contributions of 2SLGBTQI+ communities. Although special attention is paid to the Pride events during the summer months, they happen throughout the year in many communities.

Historically, Pride gatherings emerged from the first large-scale protests for 2SLGBTQI+ rights. In Canada, the first demonstrations took place in Ottawa and Vancouver in 1971. By 1973, Pride events were held in several Canadian cities, including Montréal, Ottawa, Saskatoon, Toronto, Vancouver and Winnipeg. Toronto's Pride weekend in June is now among the largest Pride events in North America.

Source: [Pride Season - Canada.ca](https://prideseason.ca)

For Calgarians this year, Pride Week is taking place August 31 to September 6, 2026. For over 35 years Calgary Pride has brought communities together to celebrate visibility, creativity, and belonging.

Beyond the Festival Market site downtown there will be a network of venues across the city hosting Pride events. This will include performances, discussion panels, and art markets, each event contributing to the larger celebration of queer arts and community life.

Of special interest is the Citywide Pride Interfaith Service; which is an annual inclusive worship service celebrating the intersection of faith and 2SLGBTQIA+ identity. The service is organized by Affirming Connections and Calgary's Network of Affirming Faith Communities. This interfaith event is inspiring in learning from other faith communities how they embrace each other. The date has not yet been published.

The Pride parade is set for September 6, 2026 – route and start time information is not yet available. For more information about Calgary Pride visit: [Home Page - Calgary Pride](#)

Submitted by Linda Johnson & Stephanie Werle.

Making Friends with P.I.E.

... with the help of The Rev. Dr. Patricia Dutcher-Walls

We are grateful for The Rev. Dr. Dutcher-Walls' sermon on Sunday, March 15th, which reminds us that being Public, Intentional and Explicit (P.I.E.) about the church's welcome and inclusion of queer folks in all aspects of congregational life is not simply a matter of our witness for justice but also a matter of how we live out our identity as Christ's followers.

Over the past year, St. Andrew's Rainbow Team has hosted events as we build community and capacity for full inclusion here at St. Andrew's.

1. March 2025 Keynote speaker Pam Rucker explained the terms 2SLGBTQIA+ and talked about creating safer spaces for ALL families.
2. We hosted a paint night where our youth painted rocks with rainbow imagery; the rocks now adorn our foyer.
3. We hosted 2 movie and conversation nights: [Fish out of Water \(2009\) by Ky Dickens](#) and [1946: The mistranslation that shifted culture](#).
4. We published an article in ConnXions about the "clobber passages" in scripture which are often used to support a viewpoint against inclusion in some Christian communities.

At these events, we often hear participants asking, "How can I talk to my friends about this?" and "When someone quotes those hurtful lines from the Bible, how can I respond?"

As a response to those persistent questions, we asked biblical scholar Dr. Patricia Dutcher-Walls, Professor of Hebrew Bible, Emerita, Vancouver School of Theology to lead us in a deep reading of the Bible in a workshop here at St. Andrew's on March 14th.

Rather than looking at single passages, Dr. Dutcher-Walls (Pat) guided us through studying seven biblical texts, in both Old and New Testaments, to read across the Bible stories to identify the over-arching message of inclusion. This was a powerful activity which counters the use of singular "clobber texts" that can be used to support a viewpoint against inclusion. With Pat's leadership and the guiding of the Holy Spirit, these seven biblical texts create a picture of who God is. Together we were able to put into words that:

God is a God who is always expanding the boundaries of who is included.

God is a God who challenges our assumptions about who belongs.

God is a God who understands that it can feel uncomfortable to open our hearts to all people.

God is a God who loves unconditionally.

God is a God who helps open hearts.

God is a God who is intentionally inclusive.

God is a God who knows no boundaries,

God is a God who is forgiving and accepting.

God is a God who simply accepts people as they are.

God is a God who wants us to learn from others.



After our biblical study, Pat encouraged us each to write an “elevator speech,” a short statement to have at the ready for those conversations where we’re needing to summon our biblical understanding of why inclusion is important. Here are a few of those statements:

“God’s love is always expanding the boundaries of who is included. The Bible has many stories of Jesus crossing the boundaries of insiders and outsiders in his culture to show us that God’s household of grace includes everyone. God is a God of unconditional love.”
Deanne Barrett

“I think God is a God who challenges our human assumptions around who belongs in God’s household of grace. The Bible has many stories in which diverse people are loved and included. This leads me to think St. Andrew’s should continue its commitment to be Public, Intentional, and Explicit (P.I.E.) about embracing queer folks in the life of our church because if God challenges assumptions around who belongs, we should do the same by challenging our own assumptions and simply accept people as they are.”
Lorna Andronikou (she/her)

“When I follow Jesus and remember how he welcomed outcasts and the marginalized, I realize that I too need to meet people where they are and offer unconditional love. I also think it’s important to be open and welcoming to everyone. We need to remove boundaries and intentionally open our hearts to learn from others. Personal growth often happens when we step out of our comfort zone.”
Someone from St. Andrew’s

“As God’s people we are called to love one another as God loves us. We are all God’s children and God loves each of us for who we are. His (God’s) love knows no boundaries and does not discriminate. We are all included — so let’s celebrate that!”
Cathy Millar

“I know that God is a God who made and loves us all. My support for P.I.E. is based in what we are called to do. The Bible inspires us to treat one another as we would treat Jesus. I ask each day to live my life this way.”
Linda Johnson

“I think that God is a God who is accepting of everyone just as they are. God shuns no one. Because of this belief, and because of my love for God and the empowerment I experience from God’s love of me, I believe everyone is entitled to feel the love and grace from God and each other.”
Rhonda Wishart

Hallelujah!

That is just a sample of the powerful statements of faith that were shared by each of the workshop participants that day. As a group we also identified ways that St. Andrew’s can be Public, Intentional, and Inclusive (P.I.E.) about participating in God’s diverse and welcoming household by:

- Coming together to examine what we’ve been taught about gender and sexual orientation and what the Bible says, or doesn’t say, about those topics.
- Continuing to publicly, intentionally and explicitly affirm the identity of 2SLGBTQIA+ folks, even if it meets with some resistance because we understand that discomfort is part of this work.

- Participating more in city-wide events like Pride parade, city wide service during Pride week, inquiring of queer community what they would find to be meaningful.
- Continuing to take steps to ensure that all people feel welcome.

The Rainbow Team is grateful for the incredible sharing that occurred during the workshop, which affirmed our direction as a team, and as a congregation.

The next step in our work funded by a grant from Presbytery is to refresh the Lower Fireside Room including paint, an electric fireplace, soft seating, and affirming Christian artwork in order to create a welcoming space for a 2SLGBTQIA+ family support group.

The Rainbow Team will be leading worship on June 14th as we celebrate Pride Month.

God is good!

Written by Deanne Barrett on behalf of the Rainbow Team

Affirming Christian Art Contest

St. Andrew's is taking the next step in being Public, Intentional, and Explicit about affirming the identity of 2SLGBTQIA people.

Anyone in St. Andrew's church family is invited to submit their original piece of art for the opportunity to have their art piece showcased on the wall in the Fireside Lounge for years to come.

Wall art could be created in any way:

Fabric Art (quilted, knit, crochet, etc) 8.5X11 inches

Drawing hand-drawn or digitally drawn 8.5X11 inches

Painting If you would like an 8X8 inch canvas, or 24X30 inch canvas to paint, please e-mail Deanne Barrett thegratitudeworkshop@gmail.com

Wall art **MUST** use affirming and Christian symbols.

AFFIRMING

Uses symbols or images that affirm the identities of people who may be under-represented, for example:

- Rainbow flag
- Family with two moms
- Family members living with disability
- Non-binary people, etc.

CHRISTIAN

Uses Christian symbols, for example:

- Cross
- Burning Bush
- Celtic trinity knot
- Jesus
- Faith words
- People in worship
- etc

All art pieces must be submitted to the church office before **Sunday, September 13, 2026**. The Rainbow Team will determine the winning pieces which will be used in the Fireside Lounge space.

Winning artists will receive a \$20 gift card and will be featured alongside their art in ConneXions newsletter.

Calling all artists!

Indigenous Relations Team

The Indigenous Relations Team was very saddened to receive news about the passing of our wonderful friend Reverend John Snow Jr. on March 28th, 2026.

It was during Rev. John Snow's funeral service at the Stoney Nakoda Nation that myself and members from our team and church were able to learn more about this remarkable man and appreciate how we were blessed with his presence at St. Andrew's.

I would like to take this opportunity to share his obituary from his service so that you too can understand the depth of Rev. John Snow and the loss we felt with his passing.

It is with sadness that we announce that John David Snow passed away on Saturday, March 28, 2026, at the age of 64 years. John "Johnny" David Snow was the oldest son of the late Reverend Doctor Chief John Snow Sr. and Alva Snow (nee Townsend). Johnny's parents both attended Cook Christian Training School in Phoenix, where they met as students. They went to Morley (MiniThni), AB, where they were married, and then completed their studies in Phoenix, AZ, where Johnny was born on November 25, 1961.

Reverend John Snow Sr. was first stationed in Sintaluta, SK, where he ministered to the Carry the Kettle First Nation, and it was here that John became known as "Little" John. John's schooling began in Ashmont, AB. He then continued his early education at Exshaw, AB, and at Morley Community School.

Johnny was the beloved oldest brother of Rachel, Peter, Tony, Gloria (Ken), William, and Teresa (Simon), and the beloved partner of Trish. Johnny attended Springbank Community High School, where he played competitive football for the Springbank Eagles and was also the President of the student body (Think Snow!) in a primarily mainstream school in the 1980's. To John, this was one of his greatest achievements, and it was a source of pride for him throughout his life.

John had both an Indigenous and a western education, He was a residential day School survivor, raised on the Stoney Nakoda reserve in a First Nations family with an abiding love for land, culture, and respect for the Traditional Indigenous teachings of our people. This upbringing included instruction from Elders and Indigenous wisdom keepers from across North America who attended the Indian Ecumenical Conference in Morley between 1971 and 1985.

His Western education included attending universities in Canada, the United States, and England, where he obtained multiple scholarships and two graduate degrees: a Master of Divinity, a Master of Arts, and a Bachelor of Science from Arizona State University.

John was a well-known oil and gas landman for Stoney Nakoda and other First Nations across Western Canada. His career spanned over 30 years of working within the energy sector, where he earned a legendary reputation for negotiation and won several awards. He had a second career as an ordained minister within the United Church of Canada. Rev. John was soft-spoken, generous, wise, and uncommonly kind. He was both a student and a valued Elder at the Vancouver School of Theology, where he was still attending classes by Zoom this semester. He was a pipe holder for the Nakoda people and danced in the Sun Dance. John began his work with Shell, Stoney Tribal Administration, and finished his second career with the United Church of Canada.

A world traveller, he visited Geneva with his late father for First Nation Treaty issues, including discussions on the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. In 2017, John travelled with the United Church on a tour of Palestine and Israel. He was able to see the Stoney Prayer at the Pater Noster in Jerusalem. John and Trish also travelled across Canada for his many speaking engagements.

John was a competitive ballroom and country dancer and won several world championships in Canada, the United States, and at various European venues. John was also a grass dancer. Along with his family, he travelled throughout Canada and the United States to powwows. He was a devoted uncle to his various nieces and nephews, and counted their children as his grandchildren. He was always ready to help with sporting endeavours, birthdays, and any special ceremonial events that involved his extended family.

Johnny had a wide circle of relatives above and below the medicine line—his ancestral relations came from the Sharphead First Nation, Iyahe Nakoda First Nation, and Yuma Quechan communities.

He was predeceased by his parents, John and Alva Snow and his long-time friend, Barry Huddlestun.

Thank you to all the friends and family who reached out and contributed funds, food, items, or tobacco. We are grateful to all of you. We are grateful to send Johnny on the next part of his journey in a good way.

We are grateful to Goodstoney First Nation Chief and Council, Trish, as his primary caregiver, the South Campus Hospital staff and the ALS Society for their care of him in his final stages of ALS.

St. Andrew's Presbyterian church was privileged on several occasions these past 12 months to have had Rev. John amongst us to provide insight on Indigenous ways, history and story teachings. On June 21, 2025, he was our special guest at our church service to help us recognize National Indigenous Day for The Presbyterian Church in Canada. He presented a lovely Indigenous story to our children during children's time about why the forest is beautiful.

Through the Hearts Exchanged program we were privileged to have Rev. John attend our January 14th workshop and lead our discussion on land acknowledgement. Having an Indigenous voice speak and answer our questions on the importance of land acknowledgment was truly a great teaching moment; it was very impactful. Following the workshop, he encouraged Hearts Exchanged and St. Andrew's to continue this discussion both on Land Acknowledgement and The Doctrine of Discovery to encourage people toward action.

In the last ConnXion's, we shared Rev. John Snow's story of food scarcity and being fed last during his time at Residential Schools. With Rev. John as our visionary and together with the support of Heritage Park, Viviana Reinberg (community social worker in Kingsland community) and St. Andrew's Presbyterian church, we were able to create an event that honoured those children from his memory. The event focused on reclaiming food as a source of dignity, culture and community. The event was a resounding success.

This Feast was the last event that Rev. John Snow participated in before his passing. It was a beautiful way to have honoured him. An event honouring Indigenous children and families may become an annual St. Andrew's February Family day activity, and it will honour the remarkable Reverend John Snow Jr. and his legacy.



What's happening at Neechi-Mart?

Trinity Hall is a busy place on Wednesdays! I recently visited the Neechi-Mart shortly after 8:30 AM. The co-directors Willie Anderson and Kate Webb-Harris were already busy unpacking and opening grocery boxes which come from various suppliers who contribute their surplus goods based on what's available. Unfortunately, on the day I was there, contributions were lower than usual, with noticeable gaps in what was available, but Neechi-Mart does the best they can for anyone who comes in.

As the morning went on, more volunteers (including some from our congregation) came in to help. The volunteers are organized into several different groups. Everyone helps with unpacking and organizing the items into various categories, i.e. soups, pastas, vegetables, meats, etc.

At 11:00 AM, Kate holds a short prayer ceremony with the volunteers before the patrons are invited in. There is also an opportunity for the volunteers to engage in a smudge ceremony. The patrons are invited in at 12:00.

A greeter is assigned to welcome them, take their names and track the numbers served; there is no requirement to provide identification or proof of need. Personal shopper volunteers accompany the patrons to shop the market items they need and also insure everyone gets a fair share of what is available. The different food categories are clearly labelled to help patrons and their personal shoppers work their way through the market and pick out what they need.

The patrons come from a cross-section of backgrounds, cultures, and a variety of age groups. For the children who attend there are games and puzzles available to keep them entertained while their parents shop. Over seventy individuals went through the market the day I visited. Often these individuals were accompanied by other family members who come and visit so as I said, it is busy!

It should also be noted that many of the patrons are picking up on behalf of their families. Willie estimates that Neechi-Mart feeds over 200 individuals on a weekly basis!

A hot meal is prepared by kitchen staff and served to the attendees, which creates an opportunity to visit with each other. After the meal, ten or twelve stayed longer to take part in some crafts organized by Kate.

As Kate explained to me, Neechi is Cree for "relationships". She and Willie are focused on building and improving relationships with other groups, including St. Andrew's.

The Neechi-Mart is a very full day for the volunteers and especially for Willie and Kate. This is just one of the ways they make a difference in the community. In Bill Judd's words, "It is difficult to know what all Kate and Willie do." They seem to thrive on it and are passionate about opportunities to make a difference for those less fortunate.

Submitted by David Townsend





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