



Christmas Giving



Advent



White Gifts



CCSAC Walk

# ST. ANDREW'S IN ACTION

Winter, 2021



## In This Issue

<b>Messages</b>	<b>3</b>
Minister's Reflections: Advent!	3
St. Andrew's Advent Calendar	3
Greetings from the Kirk Session	4
<b>Christian Education and Youth</b>	<b>6</b>
Jesse Tree Activity	6
Forest Church: Rockcliffe Park	6
Advent Meditation Time: Visio Divina	7
Ornament Memories Event	7
Youth Group Roundup	8
Advent Music	8
Wednesday Evening Studies—Advent	9
Chai Gingerbread Cookies	10
<b>Pastoral Care</b>	<b>11</b>
Blue Christmas Service	11
<b>Mission and Outreach</b>	<b>11</b>
Gifts and Gift Giving	11
Anamiewigummig Fellowship Centre	12
Latest News about the Masanka Mubikayi Family	13
CCSAC Walkathon	15
White Gift Sunday—Can You Help?	16
Fair Trade Table is Open—ONLINE	16
Open Table Returns!	17
<b>Worship</b>	<b>18</b>
December Worship Services	18
St. Andrew's Ringers	18
<b>Our Heritage</b>	<b>19</b>
The St. Andrew's Ottawa Glebe Endowment: Our Bequest Fund—Legacies and Remembering	19
St. Andrew's Celtic Cross	21
Memorials Committee—Still Active	23
<b>Fellowship</b>	<b>24</b>
St. Andrew's Women's Guild	24
Men's Fellowship	24
Bethlehem: Birthplace of Jesus Christ	26
<b>Special Committee of the PCC</b>	<b>27</b>

*St. Andrew's in Action* is the congregational newsletter of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Ottawa.

Please email your articles and photos (highest possible resolution, please) at any time to [StAndrewsInAction@gmail.com](mailto:StAndrewsInAction@gmail.com).

**NOTE:** In the case of adults, it is the practice of *St. Andrew's in Action* to use the full name of those submitting material and those pictured. In the case of youth, only the initial of the last name is used to ensure privacy in the online edition. This practice can be adjusted for anyone who does not want their full name used. Such requests should be sent to [StAndrewsInAction@gmail.com](mailto:StAndrewsInAction@gmail.com).

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## Messages

### Minister's Reflections: Advent!

This is one of my favorite times in the church. I think it might just be the candles that get me started when it comes to Advent. They get me every time. The way it starts with one small light, the candle of hope.

Watching a single flame flicker in the sanctuary, it makes me think of all that is possible with this light... all that it can give light to in its turn but on the first Sunday of Advent as it sits there all on its own, well I am reminded as well how even as Advent begins with us speaking of hope, it also begins with Scriptures that take us to places of exile and emptiness, hunger and loss.

This is the great power of Hope, that it does not ignore the truth of people's reality but meets us instead where we are and assures of the new possibilities as God comes into the world.

It always seems quite profound to me to watch that one small flame give rise to another and then another as from the light of hope comes peace and then joy, and then love so that by the time the final candle is lit on Christmas Eve, the Christ candle itself, everyone in the church takes light from it and suddenly the sanctuary is alive with the glory of God. This, I believe is what the coming of Jesus is like... an overwhelming light, full of beauty, truth and grace.

I love Advent. The candles, the music, the Scriptures, the invitation to remember Jesus' incarnation, God coming to us in a baby and the invitation to ponder as well his coming again in Glory. I love Advent, the way we together welcome Him once more into our hearts and the generosity that comes forth from that.

He is Emmanuel: God with us!  
And this truly is a most wonderful season.  
God bless you and keep you,  
In Christ's love  
Karen

### St. Andrew's Advent Calendar

Back by popular demand! Look for this on the website ([www.standrewsottawa.ca](http://www.standrewsottawa.ca)) starting Sunday. Every day during Advent there will be a different submission from a St. Andrew sharing something special with the rest of us. It starts on November 28 and with 27 days until Christmas, I am looking for more submissions. Do you have something to share?

A memory of a Christmas away from home and you were held in love through that? A recipe you make each year and who you share it with? A story your family told every year at Christmas when you were a child and what it has meant to you through the years? A picture of a favourite Christmas ornament and the story behind how it came to grace your home? A memory not of the best gift you ever received but the best you ever gave and why that was? A link to a favourite Advent or Christmas hymn and a few words about what it means to you... there are many possibilities.

If you have questions reach out and ask me. I can send you a few examples of what was submitted last year for inspiration.

Each submission will be posted with a Scripture passage and a prayer that either you or I can add and if there is a photo to go with your story all the better.

My email address is [kd@standrewsottawa.ca](mailto:kd@standrewsottawa.ca)  
Looking very forward to this! Last year I was very moved by the stories of generosity and mission, love and care that were shared.

Grace and peace  
Karen

## Greetings from the Kirk Session

Heather Pilkey,  
Administrative Clerk

*Glory to God in the highest heaven,  
and on earth peace to those on whom his  
favour rests.*

*Luke 2:14*

Advent is upon on us once again. It is hard to believe, but you only have to peruse the bulletin or the weekly emails to see how much is going on. For many, it will be a true blessing to be back in the sanctuary for the Sundays leading up to Christmas, as well as Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. For others, the beauty of the season will shine just as brightly as they worship and celebrate online. For still others, this same beauty is dulled by grief and despair. I think we have all had moments over the past two years where we have mourned a celebration that wasn't, people with whom we couldn't gather, or moments we feel we will never get back. As we celebrate Advent this year, let us remember, no matter who we are, we are all looking forward to something greater.

The Kirk Session has been meeting this fall and I do have a few updates to provide:

### Power To Issue Committee

Since being struck in April 2020, the Power To Issue committee—comprised of a small group of elders and Temporal members—has been meeting on a regular basis and has been instrumental in providing timely recommendations to Kirk Session in order to respond to the fluid and challenging situation presented by the pandemic. Five protocols (proof of vaccination, hand sanitizing, masking, physical distancing and contact tracing) have been implemented, and the sanctuary has been open for worship since August 8. Some groups and committees are

beginning to meet again in the church and rentals are slowly making their way back in. This means there is not the need for PTI in the way there once was, and it was decided by Kirk Session at their November meeting that the PTI committee be discharged with the Session's heartfelt thanks. Committee requests will now revert to going through Session and it was agreed that Church leaders will produce written protocols about their activities and events, outlining how they will be abiding and implementing masking, sanitizing, vaccination, contact tracing and distancing requirements. Going forward, the Minister and Administrative Clerk will consider what type of entity or resource may be best suited to the work of providing support addressing public health concerns.

The PTI committee has worked very hard for over 18 months and I extend my deepest appreciation to them: Noral Rebin, Stuart McLeod, Jeanie Hicks, Arnold Gaertner, Craig Haynes, Heather Pilkey, Thomas Znotins, Andrew Moir, Jide Afolabi, Colleen Ferris, Rob Sheffield, Karen Dimock and Michael Nauth.

### Christian Education Co-ordinator

As many are now aware, Sydney and Tim McIntosh have made the decision to move back to southern Ontario next March, in order to be nearer to their families. In the coming weeks, Karen and I will meet with the Christian Education Committee to talk about next steps, and as we move forward, we will continue to keep the congregation updated. With almost three months till they leave, we have the opportunity to say goodbye to Sydney and Tim in a meaningful way and offer thanksgiving for all the hard work, care and enthusiasm Sydney has brought to her role.

### **Anti-Discrimination and Inclusion Committee**

Over the past month, Karen and I have been reaching out to people in the congregation to see if they would be interested in serving on this new committee and I am very pleased to report that we have had many enthusiastic responses, and the committee will have its first

meeting Tuesday, November 30. This committee will work with the existing committees of the church on ways that current programmes might be enhanced and new programmes might be designed.

As we move forward through the Advent season, I wish you all peace and joy.

Heather



# Christian Education and Youth

## Jesse Tree Activity

*Sydney McIntosh,  
Christian Education Coordinator*

On Saturday, November 27, we had a lovely time creating a Jesse Tree together to mark the start of our Advent season.

Isaiah 11:1–2, says:

“A branch will grow from a stump of a tree that was cut down.

So a new king will come from the family of Jesse.  
The Spirit of the Lord will rest upon that king.”

I was so excited to create my own Jesse Tree to help remind me to slow down this Advent season and to intentionally reflect and connect with God in meaningful ways. A Jesse Tree is a beautiful reminder of God fulfilling His grand plan through His son Jesus. Together we walked through the stories of Jesus’ ancestors that God had planned and placed in that instance for a specific purpose. The genealogy of Jesus’ family starting with Adam and Eve and their descendant Jesse all the way down to Jesus. This is why we call it a Jesse Tree as we remember and tell the stories of Jesus’ ancestors. They were all apart of God’s plan to redeem the world by taking on flesh. God came down from heaven to come and dwell with us here on earth.

Psalm 139:16 proclaims, “You saw me before I was born. Every day of my life was recorded in your book. Every moment was laid out before a single day had passed.”

Wow! What great news that we have a God who cares for us this much! Amen.



## Forest Church: Rockcliffe Park

*Sydney McIntosh,  
Christian Education Coordinator*

Our final Forest Church of the season happened on the last weekend of November (Sunday, Nov. 28) at Rockcliffe Park. Together we met and gathered outside to explore God’s creation throughout the seasons. This one was quite a bit colder than the previous two and we thank all who participated this year. Lots of good times were had spent together outside appreciating nature.

## Advent Meditation Time: Visio Divina

*Sydney McIntosh,  
Christian Education Coordinator*

Wednesday, December 1, 8, 15, 22, and Friday, December 24, 7:30–8:00 a.m.

All welcome. Please join Sydney for morning meditations this Advent.

We will read the scripture together, meditate on a piece of art inspired by that scripture, discuss and end our time in prayer.

This practice is called Visio Divina, “divine seeing” and is a form of mediation, reflection and prayer through a process of intentional seeing. This blend of visual mediation and prayer is very powerful and an intentional time to meet with God.

We look forward to welcoming you.

Our scripture schedule:

Wednesday, Dec. 1:	Luke 21:25–36, 1 Thessalonians 3:9–13
Wednesday, Dec. 8:	Luke 1:57–80, Philippians 1:3–11
Wednesday, Dec. 15:	Luke 3:1–18, Zephaniah 3:14–20
Wednesday, Dec. 22:	Luke 1:39–45, Luke 1:46b–55
Final time together:	
Friday, Dec. 24:	Luke 2:1–20

## Ornament Memories Event

*Sydney McIntosh,  
Christian Education Coordinator*



Bring your favourite ornament and story to share about it.

Saturday, December 18, 7–8 p.m.

All welcome. Please join Sydney for this ornament memories event. We would love to hear your stories about a special, treasured ornament in your life.

We look forward to welcoming you.

Any questions? Please reach out to Sydney [sj@standrewsottawa.ca](mailto:sj@standrewsottawa.ca)

## Youth Group Roundup

*Aisling Boomgaardt*

The St. Andrew's Youth Group has had a fun fall, staying covid-safe with a number of outdoor events in Sydney and Tim McIntosh's backyard. We kicked off our return to in-person gatherings at the end of August, with pizza and lots of laughter, as we reminisced about our summer holidays.



At the end of September we met to discuss the National Day for Truth & Reconciliation and watched a movie together on Tim and Sydney's giant outdoor screen, while huddled under blankets and eating popcorn.

The beginning of October saw us fundraise \$350 for the Centretown Emergency Food Centre Walkathon and later that month we were blessed with an absolutely beautiful afternoon in which to carve pumpkins, watch another movie outdoors, and roast marshmallows as we had our

Bible study.

We joined forces with other members of St. Andrew's at the beginning of November to host the first Open Table at Centre 454 since the beginning of the pandemic. We served chilli, and baked some yummy cookies for the university students. It was a great way to show Jesus' love to other young people in the centre of the city.

The youth and their parents were very generous when the Refugee Committee came knocking, asking us to prepare a backpack of helpful and fun items for the 15-year old girl, Misenga, who will be arriving in Canada soon. Seeing everything collected in one spot makes us think we will need a bigger backpack...

If you are between the ages of 12–17 you are welcome to join us at our next youth group event, which is a pizza dinner and horse-drawn sleigh ride on Thursday, December 9 from 5:30–7:30 p.m. Please email Aisling B. ([aisboom@hotmail.com](mailto:aisboom@hotmail.com)) or Sydney M. ([sj@standrewsottawa.ca](mailto:sj@standrewsottawa.ca)) for more information. We also regularly share information via Instagram [@standrewsottawayouth](https://www.instagram.com/standrewsottawayouth), if you would like to follow along. We look forward to seeing you soon!



## Advent Music

Save the Date! On Wednesday, December 8 at 7:00 p.m., join us for an evening discussing the music of Advent, led by Matthew Larkin, our Custodian of Music.



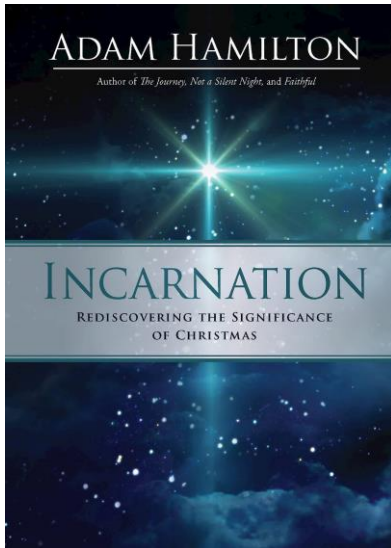
## Wednesday Evening Studies—Advent

Laura McGregor

*For until us a child is born, to us a son is given;  
and the government shall be upon his shoulder,  
and his name shall be called*

*Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace...  
(Isaiah 9: 8)*

Whenever I hear these magnificent words, I hear them in the context of that most magnificent piece of reverential music *Messiah* by Handel. And I think Adam Hamilton, author of *Incarnation: Rediscovering the Significance of Christmas* (Abingdon Press, 2020) would agree with me that we call Jesus by many exciting aliases as he is exploring “one or more of the names or titles used by the Gospel writers as they introduce the story of



Jesus” in our Advent study “Incarnation: Rediscovering the Significance of Christmas”.

Led by Rev. Karen Dimock and Sydney McIntosh, we will be looking at King, Saviour, Emmanuel and Light of the World as the basis of our study in each of the four weeks of Advent with a special evening devoted to Advent music with Matthew Larkin. It’s not too late to join us; please contact Rev. Karen (kd@standrewsottawa.ca), Sydney (sj@standrewsottawa.ca) or Laura

(ljm90star@gmail.com) for further information or to register. Additional books can certainly be ordered on your behalf. We look forward to this special study at this very special time of year.

Sydney adds:

In *Incarnation*, Adam Hamilton explores the meaning of these titles and what they tell us about the child whose birth we celebrate at Christmas. Join us and reflect upon the significance of the Christ-child for our lives and world today!

Chapter topics include:

1. The Royal Titles: Lord and Messiah
2. The Deliverer’s Title: Savior
3. The Incarnate Title: Emmanuel
4. The Light of the World
5. Epilogue: The Word Made Flesh

Books will be provided. Donations towards the books would be appreciated.

If you would like to be involved and receive a copy of the book please contact Sydney or Karen.

## Chai Gingerbread Cookies

Submitted by Sydney McIntosh

Recipe taken and modified from *Half Baked Harvest*.

Prep Time: 30 minutes

Cook Time: 15 minutes

Total Time: 1 hour, 30 minutes

Servings: 22 gingerbread cookies

### Ingredients

#### Chai Spice

- ✦ 2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
- ✦ 1 teaspoon ground ginger
- ✦ 1/2 teaspoon ground cardamom
- ✦ 1/4 teaspoon freshly grated nutmeg
- ✦ 1/4 teaspoon all-spice
- ✦ 1/4 teaspoon ground cloves
- ✦ 1/3 cup granulated sugar

#### Gingerbread Cookies

- ✦ 1 1/2 sticks (3/4 cup) Unsalted Butter, at room temperature
- ✦ 1/2 cup packed light or dark brown sugar
- ✦ 1/3 cup molasses
- ✦ 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- ✦ 1 egg at room temperature
- ✦ 2 3/4 cups all-purpose flour, plus an additional 2-4 tablespoons, if needed
- ✦ 1 teaspoon baking soda
- ✦ 1 teaspoon ground ginger
- ✦ 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- ✦ 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt

#### Espresso Frosting

- ✦ 1 stick (1/2 cup) Unsalted Butter, melted
- ✦ 3 cups powdered sugar
- ✦ 1-2 teaspoons instant espresso powder (optional)
- ✦ 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- ✦ 1/4 cup Heavy Whipping Cream
- ✦ assorted sprinkles, for decorating

### Instructions

1. To make the chai spice. In a shallow bowl, combine the cinnamon, ginger, cardamom,

nutmeg, all-spice, cloves, and sugar in a glass jar or bowl. Set aside for sprinkling over the cookies.

2. To make the cookies. In a large mixing bowl, cream together the butter and brown sugar. Add the molasses and vanilla, beat until light and fluffy, about 1 minute. Add the egg and mix until combined. Add the flour, baking soda, cinnamon, ginger, and salt, beat until combined and the dough forms a ball. If the dough feels too wet to roll out, add 2–4 tablespoons of additional flour.
3. Divide the dough in half. Roll out the dough on a floured piece of parchment to 1/4 inch thickness. Make sure you're using enough flour or your dough will stick. Cut out the cookies using gingerbread cookie cutters. Carefully transfer the cookies to a parchment-lined baking sheet. I recommend using a floured spatula to lift the cookies. Sprinkle each cookie with the chai sugar. Cover the baking sheet and place in the freezer. Freeze until firm, about 20–30 minutes. Roll out the leftover scraps, and repeat with the remaining dough.
4. Preheat oven to 350° F. Bake the cookies on the middle rack of the oven for 8–10 minutes. Cool on the baking sheet 5 minutes, then transfer to a wire cooling rack to cool completely.
5. Meanwhile, make the frosting. In a medium bowl, whisk together the butter, powdered sugar, espresso (if using), vanilla, and cream until smooth and drizzly. If needed, thin the glaze by adding additional cream, 1 tablespoon at a time, until drizzly.
6. Decorate each cookie as desired with frosting and sprinkles. Enjoy!

Note: To pipe frosting onto the cookies: add the frosting to a small sandwich size Ziploc bag (or a piping bag), then snip a small portion of the corner off.

## Pastoral Care

### Blue Christmas Service

*Colleen Ferris,  
Pastoral Care Convenor*

#### **An Invitation...**

The Advent and Christmas season can conjure up many emotions and often times can be conflicting. The world around makes it seem as though we are to be cheerful and joyful, though we may feel sad, alone or many other emotions. It is okay to feel what you feel! We do hope that you see the Pastoral Care Blue Christmas service as an invitation to acknowledge the darkness and an opportunity to find a glimmer of light and comfort at this time.



The service will be held on Tuesday, December 21 at 7:00 p.m. either in the Sanctuary, or livestream online. There will also be a fellowship time online via ZOOM.

For those wishing to join the Service in the Sanctuary, please pre-register by Monday, December 20 by contacting the Church office. Indicate if you will attend in person or wish to be sent the livestream link. A friendly reminder that COVID protocols will be the same as Sunday services (e.g., vaccination requirement, screening, masking).

For those joining at home, you may wish to have a candle with you that you can light during the Service.

For any questions, please reach out to Vivian Leir ([office@standrewsottawa.ca](mailto:office@standrewsottawa.ca)) or Colleen Ferris ([colleen.gushue@yahoo.ca](mailto:colleen.gushue@yahoo.ca)).

## Mission and Outreach

### Gifts and Gift Giving

As we consider our theme of Housing the Holy this year, in addition to your Christmas gifts to support the ministry of the congregation, we invite you to support our Christmas appeal for the support of our ministry partners who are named below with a short introduction to each of them. To learn more about them and how to make your gift please go to [www.standrewsottawa.ca/gift-list](http://www.standrewsottawa.ca/gift-list).

- ✦ the Kenora Fellowship Centre offers a drop in ministry and programming for a mostly Indigenous and homeless community in Northwestern Ontario;
- ✦ the Marco Depestre Foundation is a long-time friend and partner of St. Andrew's, carrying out development and relief work in Haiti;
- ✦ our Refugee Resettlement endeavors which this year are to support the arrival of a family, a mom and two teenagers, originally from the Democratic Republic of the Congo and now in Uganda.

We will also be putting up our mitten tree which welcomes gifts of warm hats, mitts and outdoor clothing for the Ottawa Mission.

And there is also our ongoing collection of food for the Centretown Emergency Food Centre. You can bring and drop of non-perishable food items and toiletries on Sundays.

And! ... The Fair Trade Table has reopened and is selling coffee, olive oil, soap, spices and lip balm, all of it fair trade. All orders will be taken online and orders will be ready for pick up at the end of November. These make excellent gifts for your friends and family. The purchases help fair trade farmers, and the small profit we make goes toward the St. Andrew's Refugee Fund. Email Gail Bowes for

more details [bowes125@hotmail.com](mailto:bowes125@hotmail.com) or go to [www.standrewsottawa.ca/fair-trade-table](http://www.standrewsottawa.ca/fair-trade-table)

## Anamiewigummig Fellowship Centre

*Rod Parriag  
M&O Committee Co-Chair*

In 2019 a contingent of Presbyterians from all over Ontario, and some delegates from BC and Taiwan, travelled to Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Northern Ontario as part of the Truth and Reconciliation effort to view the residential school sites that were previously operated by our church in these areas. The Kenora Fellowship Centre is close to the Cecilia Jeffries residential school site.

We visited the Kenora Fellowship Center, spending three days there. We experienced fellowship with the group and carried out some maintenance work. Later on that year we in M&O carried out a project to collect and ship winter clothing to Kenora to alleviate some of their needs.

The centre supports about 110 homeless people with their many needs. My conversation with Yvonne Bearbull, Fellowship Centre Executive Director, on October 14 led us to continue to work with this homeless group.

Yvonne writes:

Anamiewigummig Fellowship Centre is pleased to share some of our upcoming Winter and community needs and unfunded programming.

In recent discussion with Rod, we was shared that our community is facing a severe underhoused population and more dire with the winter months upon us. We also shared developing plan for our Christmas season. With the recent news of the unmarked burial sites at numerous Residential School sites, it has had a great impact on remaining survivors

and intergenerational survivors. Christmas season is not always the festive time in our community as many are grieving and separated from family and the realities of being homeless hits hard. We endeavor to provide various events throughout the month of December and in the early new year.

The outdoor sacred / prayer fire has become a very helpful resource for us and the patrons. We plan to hold many fires and gatherings offering a safe space of belonging. We also will host our annual memorial and Advent candle lighting which is supported by our elders and members of the Ministerial association.

Some of our costs will be as follows:

Firewood	\$500
Food x4 events	\$,1000
Firekeeper support and tobacco	\$500
Supplies - emotional wellness packs	\$500
Total	\$2,500

### ***Community needs project / support / emergency shelter overflow – “Every bed will count”***

On any given night in Kenora, there are approximately 110 people sleeping in the rough / unhoused. There is a community initiative which we have phrased “every bed will count”. The Fellowship Centre was previously the operator of the community emergency shelter program. We in recent past have provided emergency shelter overflow in certain instances. We are considering providing overflow once again during the winter months for a certain number of individuals. This will require support for staffing and utility costs. We would request consideration to help us offer this service to the people who need a warm place to sleep during these upcoming winter nights. Sponsorship of night stays or flat rate donations would be considered.

The community is also considering funding leased hotel rooms for the most vulnerable who do not access the community emergency shelter. This will also be a further consideration to support in any way. As it is still in planning phase, this is a general overview. Please keep in touch as you are able.

Thank you for your interest and concern with our work and the people we serve. Any amount of support would be greatly appreciated.

## Latest News about the Masanka Mubikayi Family

We are so grateful that so many members of St. Andrew's are stepping up to support the St. Andrew's commitment to refugee sponsorship, whether financially, in kind or through many hours of volunteer work—planning, communicating, writing, and organizing, so much to do to plan and prepare for the arrival of the Masanka Mubikayi family!

We wish to thank in particular, for their recent efforts and contributions:

- ✦ Thomas Znotins for his recent letter to the congregation about his family's experiences as refugees settling in Canada after WWII;
- ✦ Irene Milanovic who has taken on the task of assisting the family with monitoring their health and potential Covid symptoms during their quarantine, and assisting them with accessing health and dental services for the year;
- ✦ The Women's Guild, Men's Fellowship and the Youth Group, who have each put together a welcome kit for the mother, Masanka, Joly, the son, and Misenga the daughter. This is to make their lives more pleasant during their first two weeks in Canada which they will be spending in quarantine;

- ✦ I am delighted to share that Laurentine Mefire has reached out to her friends in the Congolese community and together they will be providing some typical Congolese meals and groceries for the family during quarantine. Lorna Evans will be providing some meals as well. More people are thinking about helping with this as well;
- ✦ A big thank you to Jeannette Logan who is coordinating the major efforts of collecting furniture and furnishings for the family's apartment.

I think everyone might be interested in learning what would be on the typical grocery list of a Congolese family. Some things might be familiar, like chicken, or rice, but I wonder what some of the other things might be? I wonder if they have special tropical fruit, or what kind of desserts or breads do they like to make?

### An update on furnishing the apartment

Jeannette tells me we have received most of the furniture needed for the living room and bedrooms. Now we need help to equip an apartment for habitation. An updated list of what is still needed will be posted on our [refugee sponsorship page on the St. Andrew's website](#). We have tried to think in terms of what's most essential if they happen to come really soon (we dearly hope so!).

If you think you can help, maybe think about what Masanka will need in the kitchen and for cleaning the apartment. She does like to cook and bake. We already have donations of dishes, cutlery, pots, teapot and mugs, but she'll need other things for cooking and baking.

Doing a mental walk around the apartment, we mentally pick up on the other essential items needed elsewhere in the apartment. Next the bathroom: towels, facecloths, bathmat and a shower curtain. For the bedrooms: bedding (one double and 2 singles),

chests of drawers. A first aid kit and a basic toolbox for fixing things, and a broom and dustpan.

The complete list of goods needed is posted on the St. Andrew's website ([click here to download the pdf](#)), or call or email Jeannette Logan if you have questions. You can reach her at (819) 664-9520, or [jeclogan@gmail.com](mailto:jeclogan@gmail.com).

### **Fundraising**

We are getting closer to reaching our goal. We are very encouraged to have reached \$23,151 in the Refugee Fund, so we've made some good progress since starting the year at \$8,171. We are very grateful for all the donations received.

With thanks to the Memorial Fund's donation this fall of \$4,000 and some very generous recent donations which have come in of \$5,000 and a \$1,000 donation in memory of Rob Robertson for the Refugee Fund and some more modest donations, it is very encouraging that we are past the half-way mark to our \$35,000 goal to fund this family's needs for one year.

What we would really like to see would be a group of 50 people offering small monthly donations, of say \$20-25 per month for one year, or a group of 50 offering one-time donations in the \$250-500 range. That's all it would take to get us over the top for this sponsorship, and even get us started for the next one.

Lastly, I wanted to share with you my most recent correspondence received from Masanka, the mother of our current sponsored family, as it shows the importance of what we are all doing to bring them to a better life in Canada.

Masanka's email in the original French:

« Bonsoir Madame Nathalie, vous allez bien? Vraiment, ça me va droit au cœur de relire votre message. Nous étions déjà dans les espoirs de voir plusieurs personnes que nous connaissons de passé l'entretien et d'autres qui voyagent pour le Canada. Vues aussi l'insécurité de voir des hommes armés qui menacent porte à porte dans notre quartier et d'entendre les explosions de plusieurs bombes dans la ville.

Merci beaucoup pour ce que vous faites, et complimente bien tous les membres de l'Église de ma part. Mon fils et ma fille sont très heureux d'entendre qu'ils seront accueillis par des jeunes de l'Église.

Nous prions que le Seigneur vous aide pour avancer le dossier plus rapidement.

Que Dieu vous bénisse abondamment, on vous aime tous.

Masanka »

### **Translation:**

"Good evening Madame Nathalie, are you well? Really, it goes straight to my heart to reread your message, we were already in the hopes of seeing several people that we know interviewed and others travel to Canada. We have also experienced the insecurity of armed men who threaten homes door by door in our area and several bomb explosions in the city. Thank you very much for all you do, and compliments to all Church members for me. My son and daughter are very happy to hear that they will be welcomed by young people from the Church.

We pray that the Lord helps you to advance the case more quickly.

God bless you abundantly, we love you all.

Masanka"

## CCSAC Walkathon

*Gail Bowes*

As a follow-up to the Centretown Churches Social Action Committee's Walkathon held in October, the largest sum ever was raised for the Emergency Food Centre. St. Andrean's contributed greatly through donations and walking for the cause.

Two photos, submitted by the Rob Robertson Walkers, were awarded prizes. The Kerry Kaiser Award for the photo best depicting the spirit of the walk, was given to the group photo below. The photo on the right won for the best poster.

Congratulations to all.



## White Gift Sunday—Can You Help?

Jeanie Hicks (jh1948@hotmail.com)

December 12, 2021

This year, St. Andrew's will support Queen Mary Street Public School in Vanier, serving a diverse and vibrant community. Many of the 150 students are English language learners and need a variety of supports and resources.

Please bring your books wrapped in white paper and help fill these empty book bins on December 12. The 'wish list' of books from Queen Mary has been posted on the church website and in Grant Hall. You may prefer to provide a gift certificate for a local bookstore instead. If so, please ensure these are given directly to Jeanie Hicks or left in the Church office so they can be delivered in January.

Please contact me with any questions. We are thrilled to be working with the staff and students at Queen Mary Street Public School this year and can't wait to deliver the books for the school library.

Thank you in advance. Blessings.



## Fair Trade Table is Open—ONLINE

Gail Bowes



Since we are not yet back to sharing fellowship in Grant Hall after the church service, purchases from the Fair Trade Table need to be made online, through St Andrew's website.

Items available for sale are olive oil, soap and Za'atar spices from Palestine, coffee from Equator Coffee Roasters in Almonte and lip balm, made from natural beeswax. If not for yourself, these items make wonderful gifts.

Buying Fair Trade provides fair compensation to the farmers, and all proceeds made from their sale goes to the St. Andrew's Refugee Fund.

Payment can be made in cash or by cheque. The last day for pick-up is December 19.

If you have any questions, please contact Gail Bowes ([bowes125@hotmail.com](mailto:bowes125@hotmail.com)).



## Open Table Returns!

*Laura McGregor*

Even a pandemic can't keep the need for an open table at bay and on November 7, St. Andrew's was honoured to be the host church for the first in-person event in almost a year and threequarters.

With thanks to all our families and individuals who cooked and served, approximately 20 students were able to enjoy a lovely chili dinner with buns and drinks and dessert. It was a joyous event; greetings from St. Andrew's were delivered by John and Janet Banigan



which included a brief history of our presence in Ottawa and a quiet but beautiful prayer was raised by Sydney McIntosh. Observing Covid restraints was definitely top of mind and we managed to serve dinner to everyone in a safe way with many returning for seconds and portions to take away with them. While we offered both vegetarian and "meatatarian" options, two of the students made me laugh by asking for Unitarian chili, a blending of both types.

There is definitely a hunger for these events from everyone's perspective, both from diners and servers. While we were all a little nervous going in, it was a fabulous afternoon and everyone walked away satisfied and with joy.

A huge thank you goes to Sydney McIntosh, Jeanie Hicks, Beulah Parriag, Gail Bowes, John and Janet Banigan and Aisling Boomgaardt for pulling out their best chili recipes and responding to our call so very quickly; a huge thank you also goes to Heather, Andrew, Mary and James Fraser for the amazing desserts and the buns which were plentiful. Your servers were joined by Chad and Jason from St. Alban's which made for a very special afternoon.

An especially big thanks should go to St. Alban's and Centre 454 for making their facilities available and the organizing committee of Open Table. Without you, none of this would have been possible.

*And the King shall answer and say unto them,  
Verily I say unto you,  
Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren,  
ye have done it unto me.  
(Matthew 25:40)*

# Worship

## December Worship Services

**Sundays at 10:00 a.m.** Our theme this year will be Housing the Holy. Remembering how Jesus himself was born into a simple stable because there was no room at the inn, we will be considering how we, our homes, and our church community can become places where hope, peace, joy and love are housed.

**Sunday December 5<sup>th</sup> is Communion Sunday.** For the first time since March of 2020 we will be celebrating communion during worship in the sanctuary.

**Sunday December 12<sup>th</sup> is White Gift Sunday** when we will be dedicating our gifts of books for the Queen Mary Public School. The website (<http://www.standrewsottawa.ca/whitegiftsunday>) has a wish list of the books the school is hoping for and an introduction to the school as well. You can drop off your gifts on any Sunday during Advent.

**Blue Christmas, December 21<sup>st</sup>** at 7:00 p.m. Advent and Christmas can stir up conflicting emotions within us. The world tells us it is a time of joy, happiness and cheer while inside we might be feeling loss, loneliness, grief or despair. The Blue Christmas Service is a quiet and reflective one where we can be embraced by the love of God for us, in Jesus.

**Christmas Eve Service, December 24<sup>th</sup>** at 7:00 p.m.: as we come into the sanctuary at night, the Christ candle is lit, the candelabras shine and through music, prayer, reflections and stories we celebrate the birth of Jesus, Emmanuel, God with us.

**Lessons and Carols, December 24<sup>th</sup>** at 10:00 p.m.: Through carols and Scripture we hear and reflect on the story of God's love coming into the world in Jesus Christ.

**Christmas Morning Service, December 25<sup>th</sup>** at 10:00 a.m.

Please Note: With the exception of the December 25 morning service, all services this month will be live and livestreamed with recordings available afterwards as well through the church website [www.standrewsottawa.ca](http://www.standrewsottawa.ca). Please register in advance for in-person attendance through the church office ([office@standrewsottawa.ca](mailto:office@standrewsottawa.ca)). COVID protocols include masking and a requirement for double vaccination. The December 25 service is in-person only.

## St. Andrew's Ringers

*Jill Collins-Williams,  
Bell ringer*

The bell choir is very grateful for all your enthusiastic and kind comments about our taped music presented in a Sunday service recently. To tell the truth, some of the credit goes to the wonderful new sound system in the sanctuary and those who run it. The small speakers distributed throughout the choir meant you could hear all the bells, rather than just those closest to you as you used to sit in person in a service.

The bell choir will record another piece for a service during Advent and we hope you will all enjoy it, too.

The St. Andrew's Ringers choir is also taking part in OGEHR's virtual Christmas concert. The choir itself and all the members belong to this Ontario Guild of English Handbell Ringers, which promotes handbell ringing and organizes workshops and festivals for all the choirs in the province to let ringers meet and learn from each other. The concert will be broadcast on December 12 if you want to hear more choirs perform. There will be a link on their website, ogehr.ca.

Thank you again for all your support.



## Our Heritage

### The St. Andrew's Ottawa Glebe Endowment: Our Bequest Fund—Legacies and Remembering

*Ian Jarvis  
Chair, The Glebe Trustees*

Do you remember Jessie Bate, Paul Lepsoe, Norma Davies and Ann Crain? Or possibly Bob Swift or Un Allen and Eva Cope? These are only some of the wonderful St. Andreans in recent times who prepared in advance to leave a financial gift to St. Andrew's in their estate. There are many more names going all the way back to the 1800s.

Bequest is the term for a financial donation of this type. It is simply defined as a gift of assets through the provision of a will. Not all of us are blessed with the financial wealth to provide for such gifts and countless worshippers give in many other ways for

#### *A message from the Glebe Trustees*

This is number three in a series of articles about the Glebe Trust. In this writing we examine the third of the Glebe's largest funds, the Bequest Fund—from its origin to the role it's currently playing in the financial framework behind St. Andrew's ministries. Writing about the fund brought back fond memories of some of our past members and their participation in the church. It is wonderful how they continue to contribute today through the bequests they planned for St. Andrew's so many years ago!

*Ian Jarvis  
Chair, The Glebe Trustees*

which they're remembered as well. The focus of this article however is on bequests left to St Andrew's.

It's interesting to note that the first bequest to St. Andrew's was in 1877 in the amount of \$200. It came from the estate of Rev. Dr. Alexander Spence (pictured at right) the fourth minister to our church. He died in Scotland so somehow his bequest found its way back to St. Andrew's. Since then, bequests have been received from time to time as individuals seek to remember the church in their wills. Some are large, others small and some have stipulations about their utilization. I was reminded of a congregant's bequest back in the previous century during times when heating was by coal. The gift required that it only be used to purchase coal. Of course, as the story goes, soon after coal heating was discontinued. I wonder what happened to the bequest! Most bequests are gifted without restrictions and this allows them to be deployed at the discretion of church leaders and congregants of the time. This kind of bequest makes the most sense to my way of thinking. Nonetheless all bequests are welcome and put to use.

Until 1976, the Temporal Committee maintained administration over all bequests. A change occurred under the St. Andrew's Act, 1976 whereby the investments were transferred from the Temporal Committee to the Glebe Trustees who then established what is now known as the Bequest Fund. It also became required that the names of those leaving a bequest be named in our annual reports unless anonymity was requested. For bequests where the deceased's will has given specific direction for its use, special funds separate from the Bequest Fund are set up. The investment of these special funds and their stewardship is also the responsibility of the Glebe Trustees. While the Glebe Trustees oversee Bequest Fund investments, use of the fund and its related income is governed under the St. Andrew's Act, 1976. In 1989 By-Law #4 of this act was passed dictating uses for the income stating:

*To support the work of the congregation and of the Presbyterian Church in Canada in accordance with the budget approved by the Temporal Committee, the Kirk Session and the congregation.*

Additionally, by special vote the Congregation may decide to use Bequest Fund capital for current or other needs.

Accordingly, the Trustees have invested the Bequest Fund to both generate income and grow the capital base as a protection against inflation. All income is turned over to Temporal and used in the many ministries of St. Andrew's. Additionally in the past decade or so, with Congregational approval,



REV. ALEXANDER SPENCE, D.D.

capital has been used in the work of St. Andrew's in supporting and supplementing church revenue shortfalls and in other manners.

To illustrate, over the past 8 years, the Bequest Fund has provided upwards of one million dollars to St. Andrew's ministries through its operations. Essentially this is the equivalent of using all the income, the capital growth and, all the bequests received by St. Andrew's during this period. On average this is approximately \$125,000 per year, representing about 22% of church annual revenues. A consequence of this extensive use however is that the capital base of the fund has eroded such that the fund in 2020 is almost exactly the same amount as it was in 2010. This means that it has not increased with inflation and has less purchasing power in today's dollars. Even so, it can be viewed as money well spent and I'm sure those who left a financial legacy to St. Andrew's would be pleased to know their gift has been put to work! Replenishing this base will be necessary if the Bequest Fund is to continue its current level of support to St. Andrew's ministry and mission.

So why have people left a bequest? I believe they loved St. Andrew's and found spiritual enlightenment by witnessing and participating in its ministry. I expect their wish was for this to continue for future generations. Additionally, I think some were enamoured with St. Andrew's rich history and almost 200-year contribution to Canada's capital as a beacon of God's light. A sacred place and in times past attended by prime minister's, governor's general, diplomats, a princess and hosts of other dignitaries. But always maintaining a deep connection and attention to the needs of the less fortunate, disenfranchised and marginalized. St. Andrew's after all initiated and participated in many initiatives where a need was identified both locally and in distant places. This vital work continues to this day. Worship has continually evolved at St. Andrew's. And in the words of O. Mary Hill in her book *Fifty Years of St Andrew's 1928–1978*:

*The road upon which a small Presbyterian congregation set out in the Bytown of 1828 still stretches ahead, offering new experiences and new forms of service.*

Will you remember St. Andrew's by considering the Bequest Fund?

## St. Andrew's Celtic Cross

Joan Rivard

*Written for the Dedication of the New Celtic Cross  
on All Saints Sunday, October 31, 2021*

When thinking about the recent theft of St. Andrew's Celtic cross, I am really struck that a story about loss contains so very many things to be thankful for.

The first Celtic cross was brought to St. Andrew's by a member of our congregation, who thought it might look nice in our eastern garden. We are appreciative of caring members like this, those whose gestures add so much to the life of our church community.

Immediately, it was obvious that this was a good fit. It just felt like the cross was where it was meant to be. I worked nearby and walked by that garden hundreds of times. I always enjoyed catching sight of the cross standing among the tulips or perennials or saddled with snow. The little garden was tended by our great custodians and by volunteers from the church, who literally got down in the dirt beside a busy downtown intersection to plant and prune and pluck. How lucky we are for all those who give their time and energy to beautify St. Andrew's.

But in the spring of 2021, we discovered that the cross was missing. It must have taken considerable effort to wrestle it out of the ground in which it was so firmly embedded. We reported the loss to the Ottawa Police, and the information was picked up by the *Ottawa Citizen*, which ran articles in May and June. The cross is the symbol of our faith. We are in a prominent location. In these unsettled times, there was the real possibility that this was more than a simple theft. Perhaps it was part of a larger statement, a threat against St. Andrew's or even against Christianity. It was disconcerting.

The article generated an immediate response from the Ottawa community. Offers of help came from within and without the congregation. All of these kind offers touched our hearts. Mr. Patrick O'Shaughnessy, owner of Laurin Monuments in Ottawa, quickly got in touch with Reverend Dimock. Mr. O'Shaughnessy offered to create and donate a replacement cross for us. He's not a member of St. Andrew's, but simply felt moved to help. As he said in the article, he believes that the best way to handle theft or vandalism "is to just fix it," as quickly as possible. We are so grateful for Mr. O'Shaughnessy and his unequivocal generosity.

It's wonderful to have a Celtic cross again in the garden at the eastern side of the church, near the corner of Kent and Wellington Streets. This cross is sturdy, carved from heavy granite. It will be there for as long as we are.

In the meantime, someone walking along a pathway by the Ottawa River came upon our original cross. It was not damaged, and Ottawa Police were able to retrieve it and return it to us. Whatever caused its loss, we were thankful for its return. It's now gracing our Atrium, and I can't help wondering, when I see it, about its journey while away from us. What thoughts did it provoke in passersby on that river path?

So, at its core, this is a story about a loss that caused us some distress here at St. Andrew's. But the heart of our community shines through every part of it. This loss brought out the best, the kindest and the most charitable impulses of our congregation and our neighbours. We are grateful.



## Memorials Committee—Still Active

Thankfully St. Andrew's has adapted to functioning in a different environment due to the Covid 19 Pandemic.

The Memorials Committee does not have the same visibility or scope of activities and responsibilities as other Committees, such as Worship and Music or Christian Education.

Its mandate includes responsibilities to conserve our heritage and create opportunities to enhance an appreciation of our past as a Congregation from an internal and a broader community perspective.

Pre-Pandemic the Committee, with the help of others, organised our Church Archives which had been transferred from Library and Archives Canada to the City of Ottawa Archives. And the Committee presented events for the Congregation and the community at large, such as for Black History Month in 2019 in association with Black History Ottawa, the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Canada's founding including an event with Cindy Blackstock of the Child and Family Caring Society of Canada, the 500<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Reformation in 2017, and supported the 190<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Congregational Dinner in 2018.

However, our key responsibility is for finding ways to wisely use the funds donated to St. Andrew's as memorials for members and adherents who have passed away. These donations to the Memorials Fund essentially serve as gifts to support the ongoing mission of St. Andrew's. The Committee often regards the Memorials Fund as being "gifts from one generation to another".

The Fund enables the Committee to carry out its functions, which include providing financial assistance for initiatives by other Session Committees which are compatible with the mandate of the Memorials Committee. The Committee had done this pre-Pandemic but has focused more on this aspect of its mandate during the Pandemic.

In the last while the Committee has:

- ✦ Given \$4,000 to the Refugee Sponsorship Fund;
- ✦ Committed \$750 to Pastoral Care in support of the Flower Ministry which the Guild has traditionally supported, however the Pandemic has impacted the Guild's fundraising;
- ✦ Reaffirmed its \$300 commitment to Christian Education for the purchase of French material for the Church School;
- ✦ Participated in the Worship Service on All Saints Sunday, October 31 which included the Dedication of the new Celtic Cross on our West Lawn donated by Mr. Patrick O'Shaughnessy of Laurin Monuments following the loss of our smaller one. Participation included the writing and reading of a text about the Cross (*Be sure to read this text, above in this Newsletter*), as well as the purchase of a thank you gift for Mr. O'Shaughnessy—a commemorative 2021 \$100 silver coin for the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Poppy;
- ✦ Had the donated painting *Ottawa Morning* (a view of Wellington St. from the Supreme Court's steps) installed in the Pottinger Room. This painting was described in the October edition of *St. Andrew's in Action*;
- ✦ Paid \$100 for the annual updating of the Book of Thanksgiving by a calligrapher. The Book, in the showcase just outside the entrance to Fergus Grant Hall, has listed Marriages, Baptisms, Deaths and Bequests since 2003.

As you can see, in spite of the Pandemic, the Memorials Committee is still active. For any questions, please send an email to the Church office ([office@standrewsottawa.ca](mailto:office@standrewsottawa.ca)).

## Fellowship

### St. Andrew's Women's Guild

*Jill Collins-Williams,  
President  
(613) 526-6250*

I propose a New Year's resolution to the women of St. Andrew's to make 2022 the year they become more active in the Women's Guild. We have lost several devoted older members over the last couple of years and events like the Christmas Tea and Bazaar and Rummage Sales require a large group of women willing and able to do the planning and execution of these important St. Andrew's traditions.

Please don't think it's all hard work. I find the Guild is the most supportive and interesting group I've ever been a part of. We learn from each other and truly enjoy each other's company. What could be better than a group of strong women living their faith?!? Our monthly meetings at 10:30 a.m. on the first Thursday of the month are highlighted by interesting speakers (by Zoom at present) and the best sandwiches and sweets you could imagine—once we can meet again in person.

We are praying that you will join us soon.

### Men's Fellowship

*Richard Lauzon, Coordinator,  
Men's Fellowship*

Our November Men's Fellowship Zoom meeting will be devoted to a group discussion on the topic: "How can St. Andrew's reverse the trend towards declining membership within the context of dwindling church attendance across the city/country?" This meeting will be an interesting experience to tap into the thinking, observations and insights of Zoom participants on a complex subject.

Very recently, Statistics Canada released the results of a study based upon a census question on the religious affiliation of Canadians from 1985 to 2019. This census question has been included every 10 years since 1871. A summary of the results was issued on October 28 this year in the Statistics Canada publication, *The Daily* (ref. Study: [Louis Cornelissen, Religiosity in Canada and its evolution from 1985 to 2019](#)), as well as an infographic, *Religion in Canada* (ref. [Statistics Canada – Infographics \(11-627-M\)](#)). The infographic is included below. The full report is also available on the Statistics Canada website ([Click here](#)).

In addition to this report, we will hear from Tom Znotin who has conducted a survey of several congregations across Canada to glean insights into their operations and their efforts to stimulate an increase in church membership. Urban churches like St Andrew's have definitely faced challenging times and a vibrant effort to attract new members is vital to the future health of congregations nationwide.

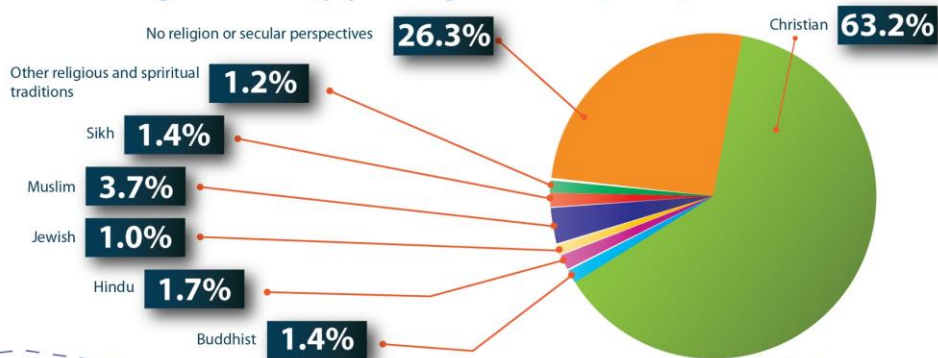
Our refugee project to support the 17-year-old son of Masanka Mubikayi has successfully attracted some of the needed donations of bedroom and study furniture as we prepare to receive this family once their immigration issues are resolved. Other church committees, such as the Women's Guild and, of course, Missions and Outreach are also targeting donations for the rest of the family.



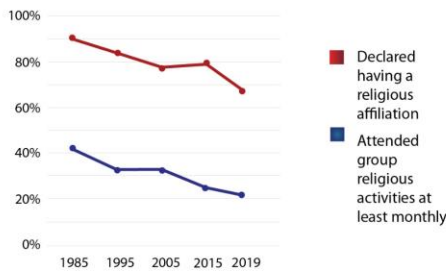
# RELIGION *in Canada*

In 2019, over two-thirds (68%) of the population in Canada reported having a religious affiliation, and just over half (54%) reported that their religious or spiritual beliefs were somewhat or very important to how they lived their lives.

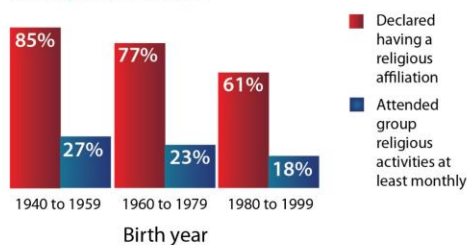
**Distribution of religious affiliations, population aged 15 and older, Canada, 2017 to 2019**



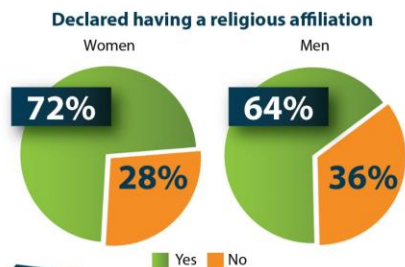
**Religious affiliation and participation in religious activities declined from 1985 to 2019**



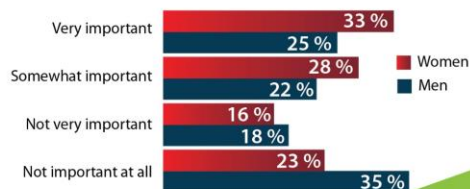
**From 2017 to 2019, younger generations were less likely than older generations to declare having a religious affiliation and to participate in religious activities**



**In 2019, women were more likely than men to report having a religious affiliation and to say that religious or spiritual beliefs were very important in their lives**



**Importance of religious or spiritual beliefs in their lives**



Source: L. Cornelissen, 2021. "Religiosity in Canada and its evolution from 1985 to 2019." *Insights on Canadian Society*. October. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 75-006-X; Statistics Canada.

Catalogue number: 11-627-M

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Donations to other meritorious groups will be considered at our November meeting from our modest funds.

All men of St Andrew's are invited to participate in our Men's Fellowship Zoom sessions, and if you are not receiving the few emails we send from time to time please contact Richard Lauzon (richard.lauzon@gmail.com, or 613-592-1410) to be added to the list.

## Bethlehem: Birthplace of Jesus Christ

Riley Brockington

*O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie!  
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by:  
Yet in thy dark street shineth the ever lasting light;  
The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.<sup>1</sup>*

In September 2019, I had the privilege to visit Israel, which included a few hours one day in Bethlehem. My trip to Israel was short, as part of a longer vacation with my uncle which also included Jordan. When we considered various day trips to take while in Israel, Bethlehem was a must see for me, particularly since it is only 10 kms away from Jerusalem.

On approach to Bethlehem, it is hard to miss the tall, fortress-like wall that Israel has built to divide their country from the Palestinian Territories. The border guards gave a cursory wave as we slowed down at the border, but we did not need to stop.

One notices the density right away, many buildings and people, compacted in finite space, the graffiti on the walls, lack of vegetation, plastic bags dancing along the street, guided by whisps of wind.

Founded in 1400 BC, Bethlehem today has a population of approximately 30,000. The city receives a significant number of Christian tourists and pilgrims throughout the year and the number one destination is the Church of the Nativity. A fire in the 6<sup>th</sup> Century eliminated the original church on this site (St Helena), which led to the construction of a new church, that to this day, contains floor mosaics from the original building. This church is truly a mixture with Latin, Greek Orthodox, Franciscan and Armenian Convents and Churches, as well as bell towers, terraced gardens and a pilgrimage route.

The following text is provided by the UNESCO World Heritage Centre:

“Located on the spot believed to be the Birthplace of Jesus Christ for some 2,000 years, the Church of the Nativity is one of the most sacred Christian sites in the world. The sanctity of the site is maintained by the three churches occupying it. The construction of the church in 339 AD above the grotto, and its reconstruction in 533 AD, commemorates the birth of Jesus and attests to seventeen hundred years-long tradition of belief that this grotto was indeed the birthplace of Jesus Christ.”<sup>2</sup>

The land in and around Bethlehem, which stands in the southern portion of the Judean Mountains at 2,500 feet above sea level is rocky, with little vegetation. I thought about Mary and Joseph on more than one occasion while in Bethlehem. What was their journey like, purported to take five days from

<sup>1</sup> *O Little Town of Bethlehem*, written by Phillips Brooks (1835–1893)

<sup>2</sup> [whc.unesco.org/en/list/1433/](http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1433/)

Nazareth to Bethlehem, over 100 km. Mary, days away from giving birth, rode on a donkey, the warm sun providing comfort by day, and the cool, cloudless sky providing chills at night.

With a census ordered for taxation purposes, Mary and Joseph travelled to Bethlehem to be counted, because Joseph was a descendent of King David, and his family came from Bethlehem. Upon their arrival in town, Mary and Joseph discovered there were no places to stay. The inns were full. Seeing that Mary was due at any moment, an owner of an inn told Joseph that they could stay in his stable. Mary and Joseph settled down on the hay in a stable with animals sleeping. Mary went into labour and Jesus was born. The only place for the sleeping baby to rest was most likely in the animals' trough, known as the manger.

During this time, an angel appeared to shepherds who were watching their flocks in the fields near Bethlehem. The angel told them the good news of the birth of the Savior and Messiah, Jesus Christ. The shepherds immediately went to find baby Jesus, which the angels told them they would find sleeping in the manger. Three wise men (magi), saw the brilliant star in that sky that rested over where Jesus was born. They travelled quite a distance to find the new king and found Jesus right where the star pointed. They knelt and worshipped the Savior and gave him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

Underneath the Church of the Nativity, after a challenging climb down a set of steep stairs, you are greeted by a grotto and immediately the silver star, the place where Jesus Christ our Saviour was born.

There is silence. Some people kneel to touch the star. Others simply stand and watch people pass in and out. Some cry. It is truly breathtaking.

*O holy child of Bethlehem, descend to us we pray,  
Cast out our sin and enter in; be born in us today.  
We hear the Christmas angels, the great glad tidings tell;  
Oh come to us, abide with us, our Lord, Emmanuel.*

## Special Committee of the PCC

Dear St. Andreans,

This letter has been forwarded to us as a congregation. Please do read prayerfully and with care. There is an email address for people who wish to share stories or connect with the special committee. Please let us or your elder know how to support you in that. In the Spring when this committee makes its recommendations to the General Assembly we will be paying attention and sharing then too.

In Christ's Service

Karen Dimock, Minister of the Congregation and Moderator of the Kirk Session  
Heather Pilkey, Administrative Clerk of Session  
Jide Afolabi, Recording Clerk of Session

The Presbyterian Church  
in Canada



L'Église presbytérienne  
au Canada

MODERATOR OF THE 146<sup>TH</sup> GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
The Rev. Daniel D. Scott, B.A., M.C.S., M.Div., D.Min.

July 28, 2021

To the people and congregations of The Presbyterian Church in Canada,

The 2021 General Assembly appointed a special committee to listen to concerns identified by petitions from the Presbyteries of Eastern Han-Ca and Western Han-Ca. The petitions state “we have experienced treatment at the hands of many in The Presbyterian Church in Canada which has caused us much pain and raises alarm, for we have collectively experienced many instances of slander, ridicule, racism”. The petitions challenge The Presbyterian Church in Canada to reflect on the ways “the dominant culture of the denomination” might again be “following in the hegemonic sins of their ancestors”. The authors of the petitions believe that they, as Koreans, are not alone in these experiences and ask for the General Assembly to confess the mistreatment of “the large ethnic contingent of our denomination” done “by the dominant culture of our denomination”.

In response to these serious words, the Assembly named a nine-member special committee. The members are: the Rev. Sampson Afoakwah, the Rev. Peter Bush, the Rev. Mary Fontaine, the Rev. Joon Ki Kim, the Rev. Stephen Kwon, the Rev. Linda Park, the Rev. Dr. Daniel Scott, the Rev. Frank Szatmari and the Rev. Sean Seungho Lee. At its first meeting, the committee named the Rev. Linda Park and the Rev. Peter Bush as co-conveners.

The purpose of this letter is to do three things.

1. To let the church at large know that we exist and have begun our work. We will be reporting to the 2022 General Assembly.
2. To invite stories about how members of the ethnic contingent of The Presbyterian Church in Canada have been treated by members of the dominant culture of The Presbyterian Church in Canada. We wish to hear from people in “ethnic” congregations. We also wish to hear from people of non-Euro-Canadian descent who are part of congregations whose members are largely from the dominant culture. As well, we would like to hear from clergy of non-Euro-Canadian descent who cross-culturally serve congregations whose members are drawn from the dominant culture.
  - a. We have an e-mail address: [special.committee.pcc@gmail.com](mailto:special.committee.pcc@gmail.com) to which people can submit their stories in writing.
  - b. We also hope that congregations and groups across the church will invite us to come and hear their stories. It is our hope that we will be able to hear those stories in-person.

Clerks of Assembly: The Rev. Stephen Kendall and The Rev. Donald Muir

However, with COVID-19 restrictions, we may need to use Zoom (or a similar technology).

- c. We anticipate developing ways in which we can gather stories from individuals.

Please contact us through the e-mail address above to invite us to visit your congregation or group to hear stories. Please contact us if you have personal stories you would like to tell us verbally. We will do our best to hear from as many people as possible. We plead for patience and understanding as we set up our processes. As the timelines are very tight to make the deadline of reporting to the 2022 General Assembly, the earlier the invitation is sent to us the more likely that we will be able to accept it.

- 3. We need your prayers. Please pray for the members of the committee: for resilience and stamina, for sensitivity and discernment. Pray for those telling their stories: for the courage to tell their stories and the comfort of the Holy Spirit even as the stories may be hard to tell. Pray for the church as whole that this process will lead to understanding, hope and a renewed commitment to the vision of the church described in Revelation 7:9: “a great multitude that no one could count from every nation, tribe, people and language”.

We thank the church for the trust it has placed in us. If there are questions or comments, please use our e-mail address.

In Christ  
On behalf of the Special Committee



The Rev. Linda Park  
Co-convener



The Rev. Peter Bush  
Co-convener



**WORDS TO REMEMBER FOR DECEMBER**

**Isaiah 9:6 (ICB) A child will be born to us. God will give a son to us. He will be responsible for leading the people. His name will be Wonderful Counselor, Powerful God, Father Who Lives Forever, Prince of Peace.**