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ST. ANDREW'S IN ACTION

Spring Edition, 2018



This quarterly newsletter is published the first Sunday in March, June, October and December. The next edition will be available June 3 and the **deadline for submissions is May 18**. Please respect the deadlines for submissions. You may email your articles and high-resolution photos at any time to StAndrewsInAction@gmail.com.

Minister's Reflections

Rev. Dr. Karen Dimock

Who do you say that I am?—Mark 8:28

This is not the first question that Jesus asked his disciples, the first question was easier. Who do people say that I am? People had a lot of ideas about who Jesus was, mostly along the lines of one of the prophets of old and so the disciples had a quick and ready answer for that one.

Who do you say that I am was the next question he asked. Peter answered, the Messiah.

And Peter had it right... almost.

Certainly Jesus was the Messiah, but as Jesus began to unfold for them what that would mean—that he must suffer and be handed over to die—well that didn't sound like the kind of Messiah they were waiting for.

Who do you say that I am? As we enter Lent this is the question we are all confronted with. As the gospel takes a turn, away from Galilee to Jerusalem and the cross, we too are invited to turn, to repent, to look more seriously at our discipleship, and this all begins with spending more time with the Messiah we follow.

As Jesus continued to unfold for the disciples what it meant for him to suffer and die, he invited them to pick up their own cross as well. It is only through this that we find life he says. You have to lose your life to gain it.

I find it so intriguing that our Lenten journey this year began on Valentine's Day and that it comes to an end on Easter which is also April Fools' Day. A story of love where even death is defeated?

Looking forward to spending time on the journey with you this year

Grace and Peace

Karen

Love and Death: A word to Parents this Lenten season

Huda Kandalajt

This year the beginning of Lent was on February 14, the day the church calls Ash Wednesday. It was also Valentine's Day. While the world is immersed with schmaltzy red and pink hearts, we started our Wednesday evening studies. It was not a full house at the dinner tables that evening. People had other commitments that evening, we thought. We

sang forty days and forty nights. We read a responsive liturgy that invited us to turn and repent and start the Lenten journey. I was very aware that this is a day of both love and death.

For the first time in 45 years, Ash Wednesday falls on Valentine's Day. The holiday—in old English, halig dæg, or “holy day”—has been scrubbed of its bloody beginnings and now finds its chief significance in market share and revenue generation. (Houston Asset Management tracked the USA 2017 Valentine's sales as just over \$18 billion in their yearly “Cost of Loving” index.)

With its declaration of human finitude and mortality, Ash Wednesday is always countercultural, but when it falls on the very day that chalky candy hearts proclaim “Be Mine,” the contrast is particularly striking.

Though chocolate is generally my weak point, I’ve never been the biggest fan of the way we celebrate Valentine’s Day. This year, however, with both Ash Wednesday and Valentine falling on the same day, I am reminded that however much we ignore the human condition, we are, in fact, as put in Ecclesiastics 3:20, dust, and to dust we shall return.

Themes of love and death are entwined in this “Ash Valentine’s Day,” and they’re deeply connected in the story of our faith and particularly in the person of Jesus.

The church is not a morbidity-obsessed death cult that wants to extinguish the warm glow of romantic love, but we reject the idea that anyone could really love another without it costing something—and something far more than the “Cost of Loving” index could ever track. The contrast in this year’s “Ash Valentine’s Day” I think is between sentimental love and sacrificial love.

Stanley Hauerwas, the Duke school of theology professor of Christian ethics, said, “The great enemy of the church today is not atheism but sentimentality.” In his view, there’s no deeper sentimentality than the presumption that we (or our children) can hold convictions without suffering for them. To have true convictions is to love something bigger than the self, and we cannot love God or others without suffering. For us Christians, Jesus Christ is the ultimate example of what it means that holding to our convictions might mean suffering unto death.

Besides the more dramatic example of martyrdom, there is, of course, the plain fact that all loving relationships will end in death. The reality of losing a loved one is always

beyond words. Even in the best of love stories, death leaves us in deep grief.

Though we all know that our loved ones will die someday, what is often harder to admit is that loving someone will also involve a painful death to self—certainly a death to sentimentality—long before we reach the grave.

In John 15, Jesus said that the greatest form of love is to lay down one’s life for one’s friends. Strikingly, the highest form of love for Jesus is not only the “happily ever after,” but love that results in suffering and death for your friends. Even in marital relationships, we are reminded that if marital love is to last, it will inevitably require the couple to lay down their lives for each other.

This Ash Wednesday, we remember again that we are sinners and that our sin brought and continues to bring suffering and death into the world.

This Lenten season, we are called to self-examination and repentance; by prayer, fasting, and self-denial; and by reading and meditating on God’s word. We are also called to remember “our mortal nature”: You and I are going to die. We don’t remember this because Lent is a depressing time; we remember it because it anchors us in the truth of our human condition, and it anchors us in the greater reality of resurrected love.

Many Christians mark the sign of the cross with ashes on the foreheads as a way to remember death, but also to recall that God has graciously given us eternal life through the suffering, death, and resurrection of Jesus, who laid down his life for his friends.

As Christians, we are people who focus on death while the culture around us embraces love and laughter. On the contrary, we, too, are celebrating love—a love more substantial and costly than we can imagine, a love that is unsentimental yet endlessly passionate, a love

that defeated sin and death, that woos us, forgives us, and calls us “beloved friends”.

I often ask myself how much of that do we teach our children? In a culture saturated by consumerism, and feelings of entitlement, how much do our children know the meaning of commitment? Dedication? Responsibility, vows

and promises? How much do we teach them the value and importance of suffering in true human relationships? How much do we teach them that love is costly. And ultimately, how much do we teach them the full story of Jesus’ unconditional yet costly love. This Lenten season is an opportunity for you and I to do so.

2017 General Assembly Study and Report

Colleen G.

The Kirk Session at St. Andrew’s Ottawa planned three evenings in January 2018 to examine the 2017 General Assembly Study and Report on Physician Assisted Suicide. The following was the structure of the three evenings:

- On the first evening, Sharon B., Executive Director of the Canadian Hospice Palliative Care Association provided information on hospice and palliative care especially the current Canadian situation and what would be a quality palliative care outcome.
- The second evening, Colleen G., an elder at St. Andrew’s, who studied the Canadian Medical Assistance in Dying legislation as part of her graduate degree and has a health policy background provided a 101 on the legislation and policy considerations.
- The final evening was facilitated by Rev. Karen Dimock and Huda Kandalajt and provided an opportunity for conversation, biblical and theological reflection on the past few evenings, as well as the examination of the three case studies within the report.



The evenings garnered approximately 30 St. Andreans and other local parishioners. The feedback collected over the course of the three sessions supported Kirk Session in submitting the below response to the General Assembly.

“First and foremost, the Kirk Session of St. Andrew’s commends the subcommittee on preparing the Study and Report on this very complex topic. It is a topic that has moved away from a criminal and legal issue to one that is now a healthcare issue. This topic, as well as the general one of dying, stirs many emotions amongst people and this was witnessed over the course of the three evenings—from individuals sharing journeys that they had been on with loved ones, both good and bad, and the impact of these life moments. As many moments of pain and sorrow were shared, it was embraced by the resounding notion that God is always us.

Palliative Care

The Study and Report highlighted the unique role that the church can play in the palliative care movement. The knowledge gained over the course of the evenings highlighted the gaps in the current Canadian healthcare environment, yet the importance that quality hospice palliative care can have for not only the patient, yet also their caregivers.

Since the release of the General Assembly Study and Report there has been positive movement with the royal assent of Bill C-277: Framework on Palliative Care in Canada Act (An Act providing for the development of a framework on palliative care in Canada).

Terminology

Terminology surrounding end-of-life care, especially in relation to physician assisted suicide and euthanasia is often misused. While the Study and Report provides the rationale for using the term physician assisted suicide it does not fully align with the Canadian legislation (Bill C-14) which allows both physician assisted suicide (i.e. when the eligible individual takes the medication themselves which has been prescribed to them) and voluntary euthanasia (i.e. when a physician or nurse practitioner administers the substance) (<https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/medical-assistance-dying.html>).

In Canada we also need to recognize that Quebec has a different structure, often referred to as medical aid in dying, and only includes access to voluntary euthanasia (<http://sante.gouv.qc.ca/en/programmes-et-mesures-daide/aide-medicale-a-mourir/description/>).

For the terminology on palliative care, we emphasize that it is not restricted to those in later life. Access to palliative care should be available to all.

Current Legal Landscape

As the committee notes this will likely evolve as this legislation is implemented and likely amended—we are aware that three key areas are currently being examined (as requested from the legislation): mental illness, mature minors and advance request/directives. The Council of the Canadian Academies which was granted this work is anticipated to release their report in December 2018. It will be critical that the church remains abreast of the outcomes.

A pastoral response

The pastoral response section provides theological reflection and guidance on how we as teaching and leading elders, and all members of the church family can provide support during times of needs with key responses: to be present, to listen and maybe to speak. It is recognized that each end-of-life situation is unique and the crucial role that the church family can play in providing spiritual support during this time of need.

Reflective Stories

The review of the case studies provided an opportunity for wonderful discussion and reflection amongst St. Andreans and the role of our faith when we are faced with these types of situations—“We do not live to ourselves, and we do not die to ourselves. If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord’s” (Romans 14:7–8).

To further support the examination of the subject matter, it is recommended that scenarios focused on assisted suicide and voluntary euthanasia would be helpful. In addition, a scenario that focuses on conscientious objection especially for healthcare professionals would be helpful. This is especially a consideration as in some jurisdictions (e.g., Ontario) physicians or nurse practitioners (NP) need to refer to another physician or NP that could support an individual with their request for medical assistance in dying. This referral could cause a challenge to some as it relates to conscientious objection and their professional responsibilities. The church could likely find itself in a situation of needing to provide support to these healthcare professionals, and a case study could provide a good learning opportunity.

Overall, the Kirk Session of St. Andrew’s feels that the Study and Report is a good initial framework that with some revisions could further be used as a reference and guidance tool.”

Spring Rummage Sale

Saturday, April 7, 2018

10:00 AM 1:00 PM

The Women’s Guild welcomes donations of books, clothing, household items, small appliances, sports equipment and surplus items (no electronics, please!) for the Spring Rummage Sale. Donations may be left in the downstairs kitchen.

Holy Communion and Prayers for Peace

Dr. Rev. Karen Dimock

Gail B., Luc D. and I were asked to put together an article about the Wednesday communion services here at St. Andrew’s for *Glad Tidings*, which is a publication of the Women’s Missionary Society. It was fun to put together and after we were done we wanted to share it with you as well.

The Wednesday services hold a special place in our hearts. Gale is one of the volunteers who prepares the communion and the lunch afterwards. Luc who worked on the hill first came to St. Andrew’s on a Wednesday and is now a member and an elder. And me, well when I came as the minister I was at first overwhelmed at the thought of a mid-week service every week. Now, three and a half years later but it has become a very special time, one to look forward to each week. A time of pausing, going into the sanctuary and connecting with God in worship, and a time as well for

connecting with members who stop by for the service and a time of getting to know some of our neighbours who work nearby. The service is simple, short and contemplative.

We hope you enjoy our reflections and if you are downtown in the middle of the week, come and worship with us.

Henri Nouwen in his book *Clowning in Rome* talks about all the many churches one comes across in that very busy city. They are empty places for much of the week he noted and yet, and as I think about it at the same time in their very emptiness they show us a place set aside for coming into God's presence, a place where God also waits for us.

It has been years since I read that book and while I am sure I don't remember what it said exactly, my remembrance of it has changed the way I have looked at Churches ever since. From the classic wooden buildings encountered on rural roads to modern buildings in the suburbs, to stone edifices in our downtown cores, here in Canada and around the world, church buildings stand as witnesses to God's presence among us. And while I often simply pass them by, I treasure how even when closed and empty they show us a sanctuary, a place for finding God. They even remind me sometimes, when I pause to pay more attention, of the place within myself that so deeply longs to be with Christ.

I have been serving as minister at St. Andrew's Church in Ottawa for just over three years. Our sanctuary, located across the street from the Supreme Court and just west of the parliamentary precinct is a historic one. We worship like most congregations on Sunday, the Christian Sabbath, but in the last two decades we have come to worship as well on Wednesdays. In the middle of the work week, our bell rings out at noon and then, from ten after twelve until twelve thirty, we welcome

people in for a Service of Prayers for Peace and Communion.

The origins of this service go back about twenty years. As we researched it, Rev. Dr. Andrew Johnston writes to us that it actually began with Knox Church which is our Presbyterian neighbour on the other side of the parliament buildings. Rev. Dr. Stephen Hayes was the minister at Knox and it was his idea that communion be served mid-week in the Presbyterian Churches on each side of Parliament Hill.

The worship we offer is a simple service. There is no music. We gather in the silence of the sanctuary, the only sound the ringing of the bell as people arrive. Then for the next twenty minutes we pray, read Scripture, share a short meditation and offer prayers for peace. Then we move to the communion table. For the longest time it was bread and wine that we shared but now to be more welcoming, it has become bread and juice. The service ends with a blessing and sharing the Peace of Christ.

The service has never been a large one, often there are just a handful of people who gather. Some members of the congregation who worship on Sundays also attend on Wednesdays but in recent years a small community of folks who work downtown have come to make St. Andrew's their mid-week Church. Some of them have also started to come on Sundays but for most it is the Wednesday service that makes a difference to them. We frequently welcome as well visitors to the city, people who are on vacation or here for work, people from across the country and even around the world, who have seen our sign and come in and join us.

One lady who works in the office tower beside us told me once that she listens to hear the bell ring for the service and even if she cannot get away from work she is glad to hear it ring. Once when the bell rope wasn't operational and the ringing didn't happen she came in to see what

was happening, to check that the service was still happening.

Some have remarked recently that it is the peace the service offers that draws them in. The sign outside says Holy Communion and Prayers for Peace. A recent visitor who works on the Hill said that about our church recently, your Church is a place of peace.

These prayers for peace have become increasingly important in leading the service. In recent years there has been much violence in the world and in 2014 that came very close. Less than a km away from us Corporal Nathan Cirillo was shot and killed at the National War Memorial and his shooter was subsequently shot inside the Parliament Buildings. This was just before I arrived at St. Andrew's, it was a Wednesday and even under lockdown they celebrated communion here.

We always offer prayers for peace around the world and here at home, but the need for peace is often deeply personal as well. People long for peace in their own lives and in the midst of the week this is often what brings them. The sanctuary, the prayers, the sharing of bread and cup. Afterwards some chose to remain in the sanctuary and its silence, others rush back to work and some join us for lunch.

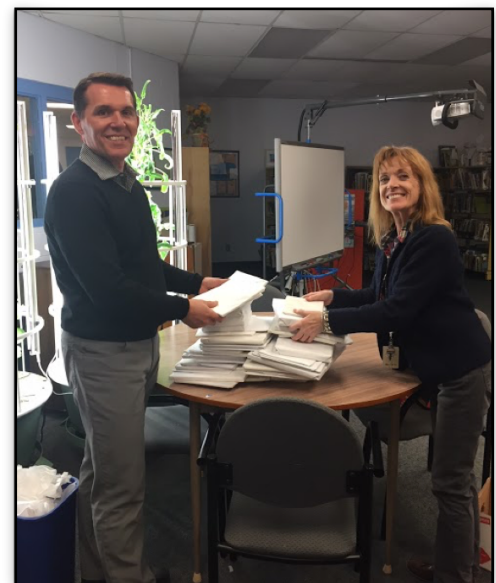
We have a simple lunch of soup in the hall behind the sanctuary after the service is over. A team of four takes turn making and serving the meal and as we move from sanctuary to dining table our communion continues, lives touch, care happens.

Years ago, something Henri Nouwen wrote made a difference in the way I see churches and the presence of God they witness to, not just on Sundays but all days. On Wednesdays at St. Andrew's we are finding a way to welcome and participate in that witness.

White Gift Sunday

Jeanie H.

This past December, St. Andreans supported Robert E. Wilson Public School (REW), a Kindergarten to Grade 6 English school, located in the heart of Vanier on McArthur Ave. This wonderful school has a population of 200, with many students who have recently arrived in Canada from other countries such as Syria, Colombia, Afghanistan and Somalia. They also have a large First Nations, Métis and Inuit population. Many of the students come from difficult family situations including poverty and single parent homes. Despite the challenges many of the students face, they arrive every day with smiling faces ready to learn with the incredible staff. It is a school with a very caring staff and community. They strive to provide as many opportunities and experiences for their students as possible by using school funds and donations from community partners to access all of the wonderful opportunities the Ottawa area presents.



The boxes of books were dropped off in January and the principal, Todd Saunders said: "Thank you for dropping off the books yesterday. They are amazing! My librarian was so thrilled to be opening brand new, high quality literature. It was Christmas all over again! We really appreciate your thinking of us and choosing us to be this year's recipients."

The CE Committee would like to expand this concept during the year as we gather up gently used books for R. E. Wilson. They can be wrapped in red tissue paper and left in the boxes in either narthex. Thank you for supporting this amazing endeavour!

Below is a letter of thanks and photo from Todd and the staff at R. E. Wilson.



ROBERT E. WILSON PUBLIC SCHOOL

373 McArthur Avenue ♦ Ottawa, Ontario K1L 6N5 ♦ (613)745-9489 ♦ Fax (613) 744-8497

January 15, 2018

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church
82 Kent St
Ottawa, ON K1P 5N9

Dear St. Andrew's Congregation,

On behalf of the Students, Families, Staff and School Council of Robert E Wilson Public School, we would like to thank you for your very generous donation of books to our school through White Gift Sunday. The books donated are going to our library and classrooms and will go a long way in helping us provide quality books for our students. Having quality literature for our students to read is a huge component of improving literacy. Your generosity is much appreciated by all of us at RE Wilson.

As a school, we endeavour to work with our community to strengthen relationships and improve the lives of our students. Thank you for being an important part of our community and supporting our initiatives. We hope to have the opportunity to work together again in the future.

Sincerely,



Todd Saunders
Principal

Letter of Repentance

The Rev. Peter Bush

February 12, 2018

To The Presbyterian Church in Canada and all those harmed by homophobia and hypocrisy by and within the church:

The 2017 General Assembly asked the moderator to write a letter of repentance to the LGBTQI community. Although, in 1994, the General Assembly received The Human Sexuality Report that called on The Presbyterian Church in Canada to repent of its homophobia and hypocrisy, the church to this point has not acted on that call and publicly repented. However, the 2017 General Assembly established a listening committee, the Rainbow Communion, to create a safe space for LGBTQI persons and others to tell of their experiences in the church, and to report back to Assembly no later than 2020. This letter of repentance is an interim response between the call of the 1994 document and the work of the Rainbow Communion.

God calls the church to be a welcoming community where we welcome one another as Christ has welcomed us. In our hypocrisy the church offers welcome to heterosexual people but often shuns people who do not identify as heterosexual. In this homophobic environment, the church is often an unsafe place for people to name their sexual identity and orientation. For the church and our congregations failing to be safe and welcoming places, we are sorry, and we repent.

In this homophobic environment we are all harmed. Families have felt and still feel the church's expectations to condemn and reject children, siblings and parents who do not look, act or speak in ways congruent with the restrictive gender definitions of the church and society. Friends feel pressure to break off connections. For the ways our congregations judge and exclude others based on restrictive gender definitions, we are sorry, and we repent.

No one should ever be harmed for naming their sexual identity. We live in a culture and a world where LGBTQI persons are bullied, brutalized and sometimes killed. Moreover, bullying and violence occurs in congregations or in the community with the support of church members. Presbyteries and sessions fail to hold church members and church leaders accountable for their hateful acts. For our failure to protect those attacked and brutalized, we are sorry, and we repent. For our ongoing failure to hold people accountable for abuse and hatred, we are sorry, and we repent.

Even when congregations and church members do not participate in emotional and physical bullying, the church's silence condones such action when it fails to speak against the violence. By not speaking clearly and in a public way, the church is "part of the evil of the world, of its violence, neglect, and injustice."¹ Moreover church members wanting to speak fear that if they speak they will be ridiculed and bullied themselves. For our silence and silencing others, we are sorry, and we repent.

¹ Living Faith 2.5.6

The church by its actions and inaction, speaking and silence, creates hurt, fear and distrust among LGBTQI persons who are part of the church. Deaf to the cries of hurt, fear, and distrust, the church

¹ Living Faith 2.5.6

dismisses the pain experienced by LGBTQI persons. For our unwillingness to recognize the hurt and fear our actions and attitudes have caused, we are sorry, and we repent.

Bullying, hatred and silence, have led to emotional and physical pain and personal struggle, which sometimes have led people to attempt or commit suicide. The church has not offered and continues to fail to offer care to those who face this struggle and pain. For our failure to offer tender care to the hurting, we are sorry, and we repent.

Irrational fear in the church has created a climate where there is often more interest in condemning what is considered sin than in listening to the struggles and stories of human beings. The church is often quick to speak and slow to listen. Further, the church is quick to name and condemn certain sexual practices, while at times being slow to name and confront sexual abuse and marital unfaithfulness. For our hypocrisy, we are sorry, and we repent. For offering judgment and condemnation rather than gospel hope, we are sorry, and we repent.

The church too often puts more emphasis on a person's sexual identity than on their identity in Christ. When the church ignores the gifts present within the body of Christ, it fails to appreciate all that God has for the church and fails to see God's glory revealed in all people. For our unwillingness to affirm the spiritual gifts present in all the people of the church, we are sorry, and we repent.

By God's grace, led by the Holy Spirit, and seeking to be faithful disciples of Jesus Christ we repent and desire to go in a new way and to be a welcoming church centered in the Triune God of grace who draws us into community. As such a community, we will seek, as individuals and congregations, to welcome all, as Jesus Christ has welcomed us. We will reach out, rejoice together in fellowship, and seek holiness as we worship, pray, sing, eat and listen together for God's Word speaking to the whole church. We commit ourselves to pray with one another, weep with one another, and rejoice with one another.

This letter of repentance is neither the beginning nor the end; it is but a part of a longer conversation. This conversation is being taken up in part by the Rainbow Communion, a committee with the important mandate of creating a safe space where experiences of LGBTQI people will be told and heard.

Those who wish to respond to this Letter of Repentance can do so by sending their e-mail response to repentance@presbyterian.ca.

In Christ,

The Rev. Peter Bush

Moderator of the 2017 (143rd) General Assembly

The Presbyterian Church in Canada

2018 Winter Wednesday Evening Studies:



Join us for a study and fellowship. Winter Wednesday evenings will start at 6:00 p.m. on Feb. 14th and conclude on March 21.

Making Sense of the Cross—Led by Rev. Dr. Karen Dimock

The cross is a powerful Image. One that we not only reference quite frequently in the church, but that we come across in art, in the jewellery people wear. As a symbol the cross shows up in movies and advertising and not always in the most “Christian” of ways. But what does it mean? How do we understand it? God revealed as Christ on the cross? The violence of it all? What does it mean that Jesus dying saves us? And then there is Jesus telling his disciples to pick up their own cross!

There are a lot of different messages about the cross. It is about sin. It is about love. It’s about forgiveness and passion and sacrifice. It’s about opening the way to a new future when it seemed like no future was possible. Making sense of the cross! This is a conversation about Faith Seeking Understanding. A conversation about something that happened 2000 years ago, and that people have been talking about ever since. A conversation that we will be taking part in now!

Book of Judges- Bible Study by David B.

The Book of Judges is a very loose interpretive history, with a strong theological bent.

Israel has fallen away from her faith by worshipping deities other than their Lord God, with the result that she is overpowered by other nations and is utterly humiliated. Heroes like Gideon and Samson come to the fore and attempt to rescue the people, but they are only successful for short time periods.

As remote as the events may seem from our time, we will find that human nature has not changed much, and the book has pertinent meaning for us today.

“If One Part Suffers...”—Christianity Under Siege—guest speakers, directed by Peter L.

An examination of Christian witness in troubled areas of God’s world including Egypt, India, Nepal, Sudan, China, Palestine and the Democratic Republic of Congo. We will look at some of the responses of various peoples to threats against their freedom to worship, and consider our own call to minister with them.

Words to Remember

“Who do you say that I am” Mark 8:29

The Earliest Christians—Led by Huda Kandalaft

Clearing the dust off ancient history to look at the Fathers of the early Christian church. In this course, The Earliest Christians, we will study the contributions of the Fathers of Christianity to the life and witness of the early church. We will also ask what could we revive of their teachings for us today. Through DVD presentations and documentaries, we will look at prominent figures of the early centuries at the beginnings of the church such as Irenaeus, John Chrysostom and Origen.

Holidaying St. Andrew’s amigos in Cuba



Flowers in the Sanctuary

Elizabeth P.

*I come to your altar, O LORD,
singing a song of thanksgiving and telling of
all your wonders.*

*I love your sanctuary, LORD,
the place where your glorious presence dwells.*

Psalms 26: 6b–8 (NLT)

Have you ever really looked at the flowers on the Communion Table each Sunday, really looked? Do they give you joy? Peace? A sense of

calming beauty? Are they something living and colourful to enjoy, are they there to enhance the message of the service?

All of the above! What a joy it is to see the lovely blooms each week—and we may all give thanks to the Women’s Guild of St. Andrew’s Church for them. It is the Guild that arranges (and defrays the cost) for the displays that are delivered each week, as well as the glorious poinsettias at Christmas, the lilies at Easter, that give us such pleasure.

We enjoy the flowers on Sunday, yes, but the most important role of those flowers begins as

the service ends. Members of the Pastoral Care Flower Ministry (as well as some Elders) deliver the arrangements to members of our congregation who are ill, those who can no longer attend church very often due to age or infirmity, those who have suffered a loss or those who have welcomed a new life. We thank Jan, Aderemi, Betty, Judy, Billie, Barbara, Diane, Luc, Marj and Yvette for taking such care in this very important work in the church. When I worked in the church office, I received so many calls from those who had received these flowers. Some were surprised ('Why did they bring me flowers? I'm not special'), some were overwhelmed ('You have no idea how wonderful it feels to be remembered in this way!'), some were so happy to have this special visit ('Who do I thank? I want to write a note right away to thank the church for such kindness').

Flowers may seem a small thing, but they can mean so much. The Guild invites you to share in this ministry: if you would like to commemorate a loved one or a special event, the Guild invites you to donate to the flower fund (we suggest \$85); we will order the flowers, and a notice will be placed in the church bulletin. You may have seen these notices: Michel donates special white flowers every last Sunday in January in memory of his parents; Dorothy has flowers the last Sunday in September to remember her husband; the Armstrongs always supply the ones for Canada Day...

Please make out the payment to The St. Andrew's Women's Guild, leave it with the church office, and let us know the Sunday you wish to dedicate the flowers and the wording you would like in the bulletin: you can contact Vivian in the church office (613-232-9042 office@standrewschurch.ca), or contact me, Elizabeth. As you donate towards the flower arrangements, and celebrate a special occasion

or remember a loved one, please also remember the people who receive those flowers afterwards!

I wish at this point to celebrate a very special lady in the Guild and our congregation: as Betty J. retires as our Flower Convenor with the Guild, we all want to thank her so very much for her years of dedication, making sure that we always have flowers in the sanctuary. As I take on this task (with some trepidation, I might add: how can I replace a legend?), I hope that I can live up to her great example. Thank you, Betty, for your help, your commitment, your wonderful sense of joy—and of humour! I met you the very first day I started working at St. Andrew's over ten years ago; you made such an impression on me with your welcome, no-nonsense attitude, and fun: I treasure you, dear friend.



And now, as we move towards Easter, we wish to remind you about the sixty lily plants that will adorn the sanctuary on Easter Sunday. Each and every one will be delivered after the service, and they have come to mean so much to the recipients. It is a lovely way for you to remember loved ones; their names and yours' will be printed in a special bulletin insert that is also delivered with the lilies.

Memorial Easter lilies will be displayed in the sanctuary on Easter Sunday, then distributed to members of the congregation less able to get to church. If you wish to provide a lily in memory of someone, please send a donation payable to *The Women's Guild Lily Fund* to the church office **by Monday, March 26**, including the name(s) you wish to appear in the memorial list.

Walking for Centretown Churches and The Mission

St. Andreans certainly like to walk and in the past 6 months we have raised funds and walked for PWS&D with “Ride or Walk for Refuge” in September, the Centretown Emergency Food Centre in October, and The Ottawa Mission on February 24th. Our walking reminds us of the story of the disciples on the road to Emmaus. We walk at our own pace, meeting others along the way; we might be passed by them or we may be the passersby, but at all times Christ is with us in our interactions. Each one of us is busy these days, so it is also a time to put away our cell phones and be one on one with another person or with nature.

At the time of writing it is too early to say how much the St. Andrew’s All Saints team raised for The Ottawa Mission in February as money is still coming in. In February 2017, last year, our walkers raised \$2,755 but this year we had fewer walkers and, at last count, have



raised at least \$1,650. The walk/bike for PWS&D this year raised \$128,000, and overall in Canada \$4,400,000. At October’s Walk for the Centretown Emergency Food Centre we were the top fundraising team; in total supporters raised \$17,000 for the CEFC. St. Andrew’s has been a long-time supporter of The Ottawa Mission, which provides food and accommodations for the homeless in Ottawa along with providing a hospice, dental service, dispensary and educational training facilities. We thank the walkers, the volunteers and the financial supporters of this year’s walks.

Amkhut News

Aisling B.

By now, we have all heard of our Canadian Prime Minister’s visit to India, which most commentators view as unsuccessful. It seems that news also reached our friends in Amkhut and Jobat, who sent numerous messages indicating their dismay at the treatment an important Canadian dignitary. They even felt our prime minister was completely accurate to have dressed the way he did, as they know their

heat calls for cooler, flowing clothing. Their reassuring comments made me smile.

Leading up to Christmas, Rev. Navneet contracted malaria three times in a short span of time, which was very difficult for him and his family. During Holy Week this year he will go to Ujjain to preach; Ujjain is where Canadian Rev. Buchanan first provided medical assistance when he landed in India in the late 19th century. In Amkhut the congregation will be led by the only female minister in the region, Rev.



Left: Pauline B. on Christmas Day.



Right: Nativity scene at Amkhut.

Sandhya, who has visited Canada on an extended stay of 6 months.

Amkhut held its annual 5-day convention February 14-18, where they hosted upward of 2,000 people, including 450 children, for a spiritual retreat. This year the congregation invited the region’s Pentecostal congregations to join as well, which meant increasing the budget to 2 lakh rupees (almost \$4000CAD); part of this budget is for rice and daal which the congregation feeds to attendees, and also covers the cost of the guest ministers and praise band, who were invited from Rajasthan. Two weeks prior to the event Amkhut hosted 22 Pentecostal pastors and church members for a prayer meeting. They prayed from 8pm until 4am, petitioning God for a successful event. I believe God answered their prayers. One young man told me that it was great to have so many people in attendance and he especially enjoyed the beautiful Pentecostal service at midnight, which included praying and dancing.

Rev. Navneet explained that the reason First Church Amkhut invited Pentecostals was to create a sense of unity among Christians in the area; reading between the lines it seems that national politics are beginning to affect livelihoods, property ownership, and church land ownership. Up until recently, reports from

Amkhut have always been positive and people of all religions have lived peacefully together. People are hopeful that things will turn around after next year’s elections, but they ask that we hold them up in prayer.

Open Doors, an evangelical Christian ministry which supports persecuted Christians around the world, recently placed India on their list of countries where Christians are “Extremely Persecuted.” In a country of 1.3 billion people there are 64 million Christians. The most extreme Hindu fundamentalists consider all Indians to be Hindu and want them to remain so. In fact, they have even proclaimed that by 2021 they hope all of India will be Hindu. Only two days ago in Jobat the ruling party organized an event where the speaker clearly spoke against Christian activities and claimed they were performing forced conversions. As you can imagine, these types of events are



distressing for local Christians. The modus operandi of the extremists is to first attack religion, then language (all of India should speak Hindi), and then the illegal land takeovers begin.

Please keep Christians in India in your prayers. Words of solace from the Bible: *If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink...Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. (Romans 12: 20-21)*

Pneumonia Vests for Jobat/Amhkut India

Diane H.

An English Tea was held at the home of Barbara N. July 26, 2017 when she turned over another 3 dozen vests to Pauline B. Barbara is a great friend of WMS and has been involved in the knitting of vests since the WMS started doing this work in 2004. Donations had been requested from National WMS and so our involvement began. Since that time 1,255 vests have been mailed to Pauline for use in the Christian Hospital in Jobat, thus saving the lives of babies and toddlers while keeping their chests and backs warm.

Over the years, Barbara has knit more than 1,000 vests and generally provides her own wool. Barbara's life is knitting for special causes and has resulted in large quantities of hats, mitts, toques and scarves for the Youville Centre and The Mission. Because of a kidney condition she lives a sedentary lifestyle and as she puts it "God gave me this work to do and I am happy to be able to do it". Barbara had her 80th Birthday in May, 2017.

In the beginning, WMS had a "stash" of wool on which to draw, and the vests went to 55 Wynford Drive for shipment to India and Malawi. This became too expensive and the project was stopped. The knitters wanted to carry on so shipping costs were raised in various ways and members of St. Andrew's rolled their change and donated it. Ann C., a long, long time member of WMS, had kindly left a bequest to the WMS and some of that was put into the "postage fund". Happily, the Mission and Outreach committee has agreed to pay the postage when shipments are ready to go.

St. Andrew's is twinned with the First Church Amhkut and the pneumonia vests just strengthen that bond.



L- R Diane H., Pauline B., Brenda D., Alice C., Barbara N.. At the tea but not in the photo is Pauline's niece Ann O.

Bazaar News

St. Andrew's Scottish Tea and Christmas Bazaar, 2017 edition, is now history. The proceeds from the event, after expenses were covered, have been shared with numerous community agencies, including Bethany Hope Centre, Caring and Sharing Exchange, Centretown Emergency Food Centre, Centretown Laundry Co-op, Daybreak Housing, Elizabeth Fry Society, Gracefield Christian Camp and Retreat Centre, Salvation Army, Hospice Care Ottawa, Interval House, Minwaashin Lodge, the Ottawa Mission, Ottawa Innerscity Ministeries and Rape Crisis Centre. Revenue also supports the cost of the Nursery Caregiver at St. Andrew's.

Work has already begun for this year's Bazaar. A small group of women meet Monday mornings at the church working on projects for the Craft Table. We are always looking for others to join us. Contact Gail B. for more information.

Mark your calendar for this year's Tea and Bazaar - November 24, 2018.



Wandering Wise Man

Riley B.

During this past season of Advent, children from St. Andrew's were given the opportunity of taking a 'Wise Man' stuffie home for the week. The objective was for the child and Wise Man to bond during the week, attend various events and report back on Sunday morning, during the



Children's Time of our worship service, what kind of adventures and experiences they encountered. The kids journeyed along with the Wise Men during Advent as they prepared themselves to welcome the king born in a manger.

When my youngest daughter Katie had her turn in the final week before Christmas, the Wise Man sat at our dining room table for most of the week and was included in other events within the home. When the time came at the end of the week to attend a play at the National Arts Centre, Katie decided it was time to have the Wise Man join us.

Prior to the commencement of the play, we decided to get some family pictures in front of one of the large, well decorated Christmas trees in the foyer. As we waited our turn for our pictures, I admired the decorations and wrapped gift boxes that adorned the tree. As we posed for pictures, I placed the Wise Man down beside some of the gifts and even as I rearranged some boxes back in place, where we had just posed for pictures, I completely forgot about our tiny guest.

It wasn't until the next morning, as we were preparing for church, when I realized that our Magi was missing. Where was he? I couldn't

show up this week in church without one of the Wise Men.

Immediately following church, we made a quick journey back to the Arts Centre, to find our Wise Man happily snuggled amongst the gifts under the Christmas tree. It was as if he was

part of the decorations, no one had taken him. Maybe he blended in or maybe the spirit of Christmas ensured he stayed put and didn't go home with someone else. All this to say, our week with the Wise Man ended even more positively than when it had started.

Sermon from Sunday, February 25, 2018

Rob R.

I'm very proud of our national church. At a time when we could easily be distracted by our own concerns, we have retained this window on the wider world through PWS&D, this special way that we can be the hands and heart of Jesus to communities that need our care.

One good thing about attending Church is that it may be one of the few times during the week when we think big thoughts. On other days many of our concerns may be small and transitory, involving just day-to-day issues with family and friends and co-workers. But on Sundays, we must think about our faith, our place in the world, and helping our neighbour.

One reason for avoiding big thoughts is that so many big issues are simply beyond us. Take the universe; it's ninety-one billion light years across, and it's still expanding. Still expanding...as Christians we may wonder why God wants more space. And there are still over a billion people in our world living in poverty. In a world of abundance, as Christians we wonder why this happens and what we can do about it. This Sunday we cannot discern why the universe is so big. But we can discern how, in our corner of it, we can help our global neighbours as an expression of our faith.

Certainly there have been many ideas about how to promote development. How can the peoples of the north best help the peoples of the developing south? Decade after decade, new solutions have been offered by experts. There was the Green Revolution, designed to banish world hunger. There was structural adjustment economics, a no-nonsense approach where markets rule. There was the view that instituting good governance practices is the one key to social and economic progress; or, that better education of girls is also the one key to achieving social and economic progress. And there have been periods when the fundamental requirement for all progress was said to be forgiving national debt, or was it preserving the environment.

Now some of these ideas may be true; maybe they're all true in their way. And there has been considerable progress in many developing countries. But we still spend vast sums trying to find out what works best. International development aid by all countries now amounts to one hundred and sixty billion dollars a year. That's more than half of the entire annual budget of the Government of Canada. If I had one hundred and sixty billion dollars every year to spend on development, how would I spend it most effectively? That's just one more big thing that I don't know.

What then as Canadian Presbyterians should we think about our own capacity to do good in the developing world that confronts so many problems? What is our capacity to make a difference with our annual PWS&D budget of about four million dollars, a small thimble-full of cash in this big sea of money?

Of course Christians turn to the scriptures to answer our most basic questions. But, we must confess that the scriptures don't overflow with answers to many of the things we would like to understand. Jesus did not explain the expanding universe to his followers. And as for economic and political issues, His discussion of them is sufficiently general that present day Christians hold wildly divergent views based on the same scriptures. But Christians believe that we can learn from the Scriptures what we need to know. How do the Scriptures help Christians to understand our responsibilities to the peoples of the developing countries? How can we deploy our small resources and make a big difference?

I've chosen as our scripture this morning the well-known parable of the mustard seed. Many people preaching on international development do. The mustard seed wasn't a seed that farmers planted in their gardens. It just grew in the fields. But Jesus chose it for His parable to illustrate how something small and undervalued can grow and serve...grow not for its own sake, but for the sake of the birds of the air, giving them a place to rest, to observe, to recover...a place for them to be.

Scholars usually interpret this parable to represent the power of faith, the spread of the Kingdom, and the growth of the Church. From its small and humble beginnings, Christ knew that Christianity would flourish and grow in the world, standing as a tall and welcoming faith, giving to us a place to shelter and to recover from lives spent up in the air. Our Church's support for international development mirrors that vision of the small becoming big, of modest investments making a difference in people's lives, of giving people a better and safer home.

I want to begin my description of some PWS&D activities with an example of how we help people to rest and recover. It's in Ghana in West Africa. I visited Ghana many years ago and I encountered a welcoming and friendly and openly religious nation. And yet, it contains some sinister elements. After a crop failure or the death of a child or other unexplained event, some communities suspect witchcraft as the reason, with disastrous results for the women involved. Based on malicious rumour or the fantastic dream of a child, a woman can be called a witch, subjected to abuse, and forced to flee to a camp for outcasts. And there they find the results of the mustard seeds that you and I have sown. Working with the Presbyterian Church of Ghana, we have given them access to vocational training for themselves, and elementary schooling for their children. And in their home villages we support education about human rights, respect for women, and knowledge about the health problems people once thought were caused by witches. Sometimes it takes years, but eventually many women can return to their homes, their families and their communities. What a big thing we are accomplishing with our small contribution.

And what about other small investments? I asked two PWS&D program officers to think of some good examples of small investments making a big difference. Both women thought of experiences in Malawi. One arose in a sustainable livelihoods project. A woman named Sara was loaned five dollars. She invested it in a small retail business and netted two dollars. With this small profit she bought a set of dishes. It meant that each member of her family could now have their own plate rather than eating from a common pot, thus improving her family's hygiene. Just a five dollar investment significantly improved one family's health. In a second project, dealing with maternal and child health, there is a component that teaches men about pregnancies. One small element deals with cravings. Men have typically thought this was just an excuse to have expensive food. As a result of our training, the men now understand that cravings are a natural part of pregnancy and go out to buy what is craved. Thanks to a very small investment, discord in families has been reduced.

Now I am not advocating that you donate only small amounts to PWS&D, but we have identified many small gifts that will make a big difference as part of our Gifts of Change program...for eight dollars you can buy a farmer some garden tools...for twelve dollars buy a mosquito net to prevent malaria...for fifty-four dollars train one volunteer to care for an AIDS sufferer. Donations of this kind can be made directly through the Gifts of Change page at the PWS&D web site.

This is not to say that all PWS&D projects are small. Great challenges sometimes require great efforts. I was fortunate enough to travel for three weeks in Malawi in central Africa for PWS&D. It is poor, ranking number 173 on the list of countries in terms of the wealth of the people. It's the country where fully one half of PWS&D's development money is spent; a country where we Presbyterians have many historical bonds. And I can assure you that our support is directed at the poorest of the poor. In fact, it sometimes seemed to me that the people we are helping are beyond poor. Set on a scorched landscape where rivers have become dried up river beds, children rise each morning with nothing to face but the same bleak day, running around, with no programs or resources or toys. Some schools were so poor there were no chairs or desks or chalkboards...just a teacher left to her own resources.

And of course, there is death...high rates of mothers dying during pregnancy or at child birth...and high rates of child mortality. In Malawi, one in every one hundred pregnant women die, and you may have to beat those odds many times over because you may be pregnant often. And nearly three in every one hundred babies die. These women and children are victims of a high rate of adolescent pregnancies, unskilled birth attendants, and poor emergency care. Into these appalling circumstances we introduced a project financed by you...through the Government of Canada and through PWS&D. This project supported community organizers to teach about good nutrition and early warning signs in pregnancy. Groups were formed for men to learn about their responsibilities to their wives and newborns. Women were encouraged to move into hospitals weeks before their delivery dates and when that didn't happen they were provided with bicycle ambulances to get them to the hospital for delivery. In the hospitals safe and private delivery rooms have been built and good quality neo-natal care given. The death rates have dropped dramatically. In some project sites there have been no deaths at all, and in others the numbers are well below the national average.

A second phase of these projects is now underway in Malawi and there remains much work to do in educating both men and women, reversing harmful cultural practices, and establishing better facilities. How often can any of us point to actually saving people's lives? But together, through PWS&D, we can point to saving many lives and truly carrying out the gospel's call for social justice.

PWS&D is also the agency of our church that co-ordinates our sponsorship of refugees. It oversees the application process, and tells us about best practices to sponsor refugees. Over the years PWS&D has helped many congregations to support the displaced of the world as they build new and decent homes. To refugees, their sponsorship by churches has been a life-altering event, not just for them but for subsequent generations. And it is all built on the thousands of small contributions that Christians have made to support PWS&D's capacity to work in this area, plus the generosity shown at the congregational level.

Let me share with you some recent trends. In 2017 the commitment of the Government of Canada to support refugees diminished. Private sponsorships were up, but those to which the government gives financial support were down significantly. In 2017 we submitted 78 applications to sponsor 176

individuals and it will be about the same number this year. That still leaves many congregations wanting to sponsor refugees right now but unable to do so because of government quotas. As for nationalities, a large majority of the refugees now being resettled by our congregations are Syrians, but a majority of those coming this year will be from at least 12 other countries. I know that we are all proud of the way our church has responded to this refugee crisis, and the fact it has been done efficiently and thoughtfully is a great credit to PWS&D and its dedicated staff.

And, it is PWS&D that answers calls for relief after natural or man-made disasters around the world. There is an old Irish saying “Eaten bread is soon forgotten.” Indeed, there can be a tension in international work between devoting resources to relief to satisfy current needs, or devoting them to long-term development interventions with lasting visibility and impact. Nevertheless, the scriptures clearly support feeding the hungry, and giving them resources that are “sufficient unto the day.”

Christ urged us to live in the present, and that means responding to very present needs. But our responses are not limited to just providing food, shelter and medicines. We also provide counselling to overcome the trauma that victims have experienced and help in re-building and recovering their livelihoods. As drought sweeps through east and central Africa, I’ve seen the large bags of corn and other nutritious food being provided to thousands of hungry people no longer able to provide for themselves. In South Sudan, working within the framework of the Canadian Foodgrains Bank, nutrition feeding centres have been established where children under five and lactating mothers can be screened for malnutrition and provided with therapeutic foods. And caregivers are being educated in proper hygiene and child feeding practices. The project will benefit forty-two thousand people. More recently we have provided support to support over six hundred thousand Rohingya people who have fled persecution in Burma and are now in Bangladesh.

Even in our own country, PWS&D has been the agency that received a quarter of a million dollars in an effective and responsive way to Fort McMurray when Presbyterians across the country donated to help those affected by the wild fires.

Our churches have all been caught up in the issues of refugees from the Middle East. But PWS&D also plays a vital part in providing relief to those who stay behind. The United Nations reports that the number of refugees uprooted from Syria has surpassed four million—over half of these refugees are children. Of course, we cannot begin to help most of them. But we can help some of them. One of our programs provides food vouchers to Syrians who have fled to Lebanon. One of the men we help named Abdel says, “I am not allowed to work here. Without the vouchers, my family would have nothing to eat. You have wide hands. Thank you for not forgetting us.”

Let me make one last reference to a way that you can help PWS&D continue to respond abundantly to all of these opportunities for service. We have a fund called the Loaves and Fishes fund that receives legacy gifts through wills and life insurance policies. It’s not one of those funds where donations languish. Instead, every year, one dollar in seven is spent by PWS&D on our programs. Please consider this fund as you consider your own legacy to our church. It is a way for large donations to sustain our operations at a consistent level. Details about it can be found on our web site.

There are many big things we’ll never know...why the universe needs more space, or how to solve every problem in the developing world. But, we are blessed in knowing as much as we need to know to act in a faithful and effective way toward our global neighbours. We know that through doing small things, through our generosity, people’s lives will be made better. In many cases, in most cases, you

and I won't see the result. But just as the early Christians sowed their small mustard seeds confidently knowing that a Church and a faith would grow from them, so we can confidently make our own contributions to PWS&D, knowing that in our small way we are truly accomplishing big things and advancing the Kingdom. Please share with your families, your neighbours and your colleagues this good news about what your Church is accomplishing in Christ's name.

Family Activities During Lent

Huda Kandalaft, Director of Christian Development



I discovered lately through one of my Facebook posts which I myself posted last year that every year I say, this is the coldest winter ever! A reminder that humans have a short memory! Sometimes we go through the cycle of life experiencing things over and over again as if for the first time.

What keeps me warm and going at St. Andrew's is seeing the children's faces glowing with amazement as they discover the love of Jesus and grow in their faith.

Despite the extreme cold this winter, the experience feels new every time. I am always amazed at the first snow fall, at the dazzling white blanket that covers the earth every year, at the beauty, and the thought of life waiting to happen!

I pray that the journey through Lent to Easter this year will be a fresh journey for you with fresh meanings and fresh blessings.

Lots of activities are planned this winter and I would like to invite your family to be part of the journey. Some upcoming activities:

- Kids' Church and Kids on Mission: the fourth Saturday of each month at 4:30, followed by a potluck supper. March 24.
- March Break Camp at Gracefield: March 12–16 Register online, <http://gracefieldcamp.ca/children-youth/march-break-camp/>
- Congregational Film Night: Join us for dinner and a movie, Friday March 23 at 6pm. In preparation for Holy Week we will watch "The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe" and have a lively discussion. Pizza dinner, popcorn, and drinks will be available as a fundraiser for Canada Youth 2018. All are welcome!

Activities during Lent and Easter:

- Palm Sunday, March 25 with special songs from the Junior Choir and palms, the children will celebrate the Lord's entry to Jerusalem. Join us with your children in St. Andrew's Hall at 10:15 a.m. to proceed into the sanctuary in Palms.
- Maundy Thursday, March 29 join us for a family supper and service from 6-8



pm to remember our Lord's last supper.

- Good Friday, March 30 at 11:00 a.m. service. We focus on the cross with the senior choir leading worship. One room Church School will be available.
- Easter Workshop Saturday, March 31 from 1.00–4:00 p.m.: Join us to walk with Jesus through events of Holy Week. A day for all ages. Don't miss this interactive walk with Jesus through the stations of Holy Week.
- Easter Sunday, April 8 with the sanctuary full of Easter joy and in music, flowers and singing we celebrate the resurrection of our Lord. Church School children will join the Junior Choir in the praise. Special Church School program will be provided.

Activities For youth:

- Youth Group: continuing the Bible project each Sunday during the 11 a.m. service.
- Confirmation class March 24: This confirmation retreat is for youth ages 14+. It is designed to teach the fundamentals of our faith and reformed doctrine.
- Canada Youth 2018 July 2–7 at St. Catherine's, Brock University: For youth who have completed grade 9. The Presbytery of Ottawa is pleased to support the youth and young adults of the presbytery with registration bursaries. Speak to me if you are interested.
- Open Table—Hospitality at its Finest March 25.

Looking ahead:

- Gracefield Summer camps: Fun camps for all ages. Check the list in Grant Hall or online at <http://gracefieldcamp.ca/children-youth/summer-camps/>

- St. Andrew's annual congregational retreat at Gracefield, Sept. 7–9.
- The Wednesday evening BBQ July 4, 11, 18 and 25 with activities and learning for all ages.
- The Children's Summer Camp: VBS will be Aug 13–17. Mark your calendars and watch for more info soon.

If you would like more information about these or any other activities please don't hesitate to email, call or chat at any time.

Please consider this a personal invitation to your family to join and be part of the fun of learning and growing in faith together.

Have a blessed Lent!





Junior Choir

Tracey A. Stabback

It has been a busy season for the St. Andrew's Junior Choir! We have had the privilege of participating in many events and services both here at St. Andrew's and in the greater Ottawa Community. We kicked off the year with an offsite bowling event where we had the opportunity to enjoy the company of both our singers and their families. During the fall months we provided monthly special music here at St. Andrew's as well as a regular Sunday service at Knox Church in November. Several choir members who have been developing their conducting skills had the opportunity to direct the choir during this time, and we concluded 2017 with special music at the 6:30 Christmas Eve Service. The New Year began with an afternoon retreat that included music rehearsals, bible study, and social time. We particularly enjoyed a Liturgical Dance Workshop with Wendy Morrell, as the choir continued its exploration of different ways to worship God. January also brought several performances as we participated once again in the Burns Dinner at St. Andrew's, as well as the Annual Ecumenical Service for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity held at Knox Church. We look forward to working with the adult choir in February as we premiere Tracey Stabback's new work, the choral piece, "Make a Joyful Noise to the Lord", dedicated in loving memory to Margaret M. C. Stay tuned for more exciting events as we move into the last third of our season! (Pictures have been provided by Huda Kandalaft, Tracey Stabback, and Matthew B.)



Summer's Coming!

While we are all still struggling through snowbanks and dreaming of milder weather, it is hard to believe that VBS is coming...and sooner than we think! Scheduled for August 13th through 17th, this year's theme is... **Rolling River Rampage!** The 2018 VBS takes you on the ride of a lifetime with God! Kids learn Jesus is with them all the time, even in the rapids. **Rolling River Rampage** VBS takes kids on an action-packed white-water rafting adventure to experience the ride of a lifetime with God. Along the river, children discover that life with God is an adventure full of wonder and surprise, and that they can trust God to be with them through anything!



Theme Bible Verse: *When you pass through the waters, I will be with you. (Isaiah 43:2)*

You too can get involved in this adventure. We encourage you to start thinking about how we can all contribute to make this the best session yet. Do you have some time to devote in person? Do you have some craft supplies you can contribute? Are you a decorator at heart? Do you hanker to help with costumes and ideas for keeping our kids happy and benefiting from this wonderful opportunity to grow in God's love? If so, don't be shy! You will soon have the chance to contribute in small and big ways. Keep your eyes peeled for further information in the weekly bulletin, in Grant Hall and on the website. A grateful thanks comes to you from the Christian Education Committee for your participation.

