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ST. ANDREW'S IN ACTION

Winter Edition, 2019



This quarterly newsletter is published the first Sunday in March, June, October and December. The **deadline for submissions for the next issues is February 15**. Please respect the deadlines for submissions. You may email your articles and high-resolution photos at any time to StAndrewsInAction@gmail.com.

Light in the darkness!

Rev. Dr. Karen Dimock

One of my favourite activities every year during Advent is the lighting of the candles on the wreath in the sanctuary. Just as the days are getting to be very short indeed, the light in the sanctuary begins to grow, one candle at a time...

In the midst of what might be an otherwise incredibly busy season I find this slows me down and redeems me. And when I say it redeems me what I mean is that it draws me away from other distractions that demand my time and try to claim my heart and soul and return me to the love of God.

Enjoying the light.

This is how the church begins the year. Lighting candles and reading Scriptures that remind us of God's promises and God's intentions for the world.

Sometimes if we are not careful, Advent can feel like a race. A counting off of days as we rush to Christmas which we think of as the main event itself. Christmas is important for sure. It is the time we remember the mystery that God came to us in Jesus, that we might learn to know and love God more. But Advent isn't just about rushing through the days to get to this. Advent is given to us a time of preparation, for readying ourselves for Jesus when he comes.

In Advent we remember that we are not just waiting to celebrate the birth of Jesus, who was born in the manger 2000 years ago now, but that as Christians we also look forward to his second coming, though we know not when. We live in an in-between time, between Jesus' first coming and his second when the Kingdom of God will be made known in all its fullness.

Advent is a time for waiting, not the way we wait for a bus to come, twiddling our thumbs,

stamping our feet impatiently and counting off every minute that passes. Advent is more like the kind of waiting we do when we are waiting for a child to be born. Taking time, paying attention to what it is we are doing, looking for the signs that assure us of their coming and preparing ourselves for life to change and all our relationships with it. In Advent much of what we are waiting for is mystery, and this kind of waiting... it fills me with wonder... .

This too is what I mean when I say that I find Advent redeeming.

Light in the darkness, one candle at a time...
Come let us walk in the Light of the Lord!

And may the gift of Advent fill you with wonder this year.

Karen



From the Kirk Session

Heather P., Administrative Clerk

It is hard to believe we are entering the season of Advent. It seems like just yesterday we were all gathering to celebrate the beginning of the church year. Kirk Session has been meeting again since September, and while it is always nice to have a break in the summer, it is good to get back to the life of the church. Since September, we have celebrated with those who have gotten married, rejoiced with families as their babies are baptized, and mourned with those who have lost someone dear to them.

There have been a lot of funerals this year and it makes this time of Advent bitter sweet. The glory of Christ's birth is near, but that can make our own losses feel all the more poignant. This is the time of year to come together and lift each other up.

As we head into January we will be turning our minds to the budget and what 2020 might bring us. There will be more to come on that front, but the Kirk Session invites the engagement and participation of all St. Andreans in the new year. The Kirk Session wishes everyone at St. Andrew's a very blessed Christmas.

A Tribute for David B.

The Kirk Session at St. Andrew's has a tradition of honouring elders who have died by creating a memorial minute. This is a tribute written by another elder and is read aloud at a subsequent meeting. Sadly, this year, we have had five elders die. Even though our meetings are confidential, we would like to share these minutes with the whole congregation, as these people touched the lives of so many at St. Andrew's. For this edition of St. Andrew's in Action, we are including the tribute for David Brearley, who died August 29. This was written by his brother-in-law, Stuart M.

John David B.

John David B. was born and raised in Ottawa. After completing public and high school, he entered the federal public service and worked in nine federal departments spanning a period of thirty-two years. During this period he studied for and earned his Registered Industrial Accountants designation.

David was a dedicated and faithful member of St. Andrew's Church, having been a member of the congregation for over sixty years. He sang in

the church choir for fifty-nine years (forty of them as the bass section leader). He served as an elder for twenty-five years and was diligent in both the pastoral care of the people in his district and in the deliberations of Kirk Session. He contributed significantly to the life of the congregation, serving a term as treasurer, serving as chair of the Glebe Trustees for many years, making crafts for the Scottish Tea and Bazaar and leading Wednesday evening study sessions.



David believed in giving back to his community outside the church and volunteered with several organizations after retiring including Carefor (formerly the VON) and Meals on Wheels where he served a term as treasurer. After a year away he returned to the board as secretary, a position he held until his passing.

David loved family, not only his family but also his extended family including his sister's family, and his relatives in Toronto and his wife's

family in Scotland. He will be sorely missed by his family and all those who knew him.

White Gift Sunday–December 15, 2019

Jeanie H.

For the past number of years, St. Andrew's has extended the Christmas spirit by giving to community schools. On a designated Sunday, St. Andreans place their books wrapped in white paper into baskets for the school. Each school provides a 'wish list' of books for their library and the books are delivered by elves from St. Andrew's. In the past, books have been delivered to Centennial School, Cambridge School, W. E. Gowling School, R. E. Wilson School and Connaught School. It is wonderful to visit the school and see the new books on the shelves. Thank you letters have been a joy to read!



This year, St. Andrew's will support the school library at Cambridge Street Public School on White Gift Sunday, December 15. Cambridge is a kindergarten to grade six school. Although many of the students were born in Canada, this K–6 school serves a predominantly multicultural population of students and families originally from locations such as China, Vietnam, Myanmar, South

Asia, the Middle East, Eastern Europe, Africa and South America. Grade six students leaving Cambridge Street School for middle school attend Glashan Public School or Fisher Park for grades 7 and 8.

Baskets will be ready for books on the first Sunday in December.

Looking Forward into Winter

Sydney Johnson

The next Kid's Church will be on Saturday, December 14 from 4:30–6:30pm.

Come join us as we rediscover the wonder of our Saviours birth.

There will be a craft and bible story centred around the Christ child.

Dinner is provided but it would appreciated if you could bring a dessert or side to share. For more information or to confirm attendance Sydney can be reached by please email at sj@standrewsottawa.ca.



The Christmas Pageant

Heather P. & Heather F.

As we enter into Advent and all the wonder it brings, we will once again be sharing in the joy of the Christmas story at the family service on Christmas Eve.

Riley B. is directing this year and has put together an engaging re-telling of Christ's birth with a wide-ranging cast. It is always wonderful to see all the St. Andreans who are involved in the pageant and this year is no exception. It takes many weeks of practice and still more practice, but it is always a magical night. Thank you to all who prepare lunches, practice lines, work on costumes, put up the staging, arrange for lighting, provide music and so much more

Come and join us as we celebrate our Saviours' birth. The Christmas Eve Candlelight Service and Pageant will take place on Tuesday, December 24 at 6:30 p.m. We hope to see you there!

Opportunities in Advent @St. Andrew's

Midweek Communion and Prayers for Peace: Wednesdays at 12:10, On the Road to Bethlehem. An invitation during Advent to slow down and take time in the middle of the week, join us in the sanctuary as we prepare ourselves for the mystery of Christmas, God with us in Jesus Christ. Afterwards we serve lunch, bring your sandwich and we will provide the soup!

Christmas Corner: Keep your eyes open for the Mitten Tree going up in Grant hall and with it baskets for donations for White Gift Sunday and the Food Centre. Books and Devotionals from our library will also be located on tables in this area.

December 14 & 15: Sharing the Christmas Story One of the wonderful things about the Christmas story is how we find a place in it for everyone. That is part of what we love about the pageant but many of us also have treasured nativity sets that we lovingly take out each year, carefully setting out each of the characters, recalling as we do both our own Christmas memories and also the way each character in the set was drawn to the Baby Jesus.

Do you have a **nativity set** you would like to bring in and share with the Kid's Church families on December 14 and then during worship with the congregation on December 15?

We will set them up in the sanctuary for everyone to enjoy including the families at Kid's Church on the 14th. We promise to take good care of them and hope you might provide a few words about where it came from and perhaps why it is special to you. Who your favourite character was when you were a child and who it is today. Please speak with Reverend Karen or Sydney if you are able to share or have questions.



Gifts to share! Our giving at St. Andrew's this year

White Gift Sunday: gifts of books for the library at Cambridge Street Public School. A list is available through the website and in Grant Hall. Please wrap in white paper and drop off in the basket in Grant Hall. We will be dedicating them on December 15th, White Gift Sunday.

Mitten Tree: decorating the tree in Grant Hall with gifts for the Ottawa Mission and Bruce House (which supports families and individuals living with HIV/AIDS in Ottawa area.)

Christmas Eve and December offering: Each year we invite you to make a financial gift through the church to local, national and international organization that we are involved with. Envelopes are located in pews during December and in the bulletins on Christmas Eve.

- **The Community Laundry Co-op** (<https://communitylaundrycoop.ca/>) provides low-cost self-service laundry for people who might not otherwise be able to afford clean clothes. Co-op members enjoy a sense of community and a network of support.
- **The Kenora Fellowship Centre** (<https://presbyterian.ca/canadian-ministries/indigenous-ministries/>) is one of the ministries to Indigenous People supported by the Presbyterian Church in Canada. They provide homelessness and poverty relief support and services. Members from St.

Andrew's visited there this summer and can speak to you of their great need for support.

- **The Marco Depestre Foundation of Ottawa** (<http://marcodepestrefoundationofottawa.org/>) has been a mission partner of St. Andrew's since 2010. It provides disaster relief and ongoing support to communities in Haiti. A lunch and learn on their work will be presented after the December 15th worship service.

Centretown Emergency Food Centre: St. Andrew's provides ongoing support to the Centre through the year. Baskets for collection of food will be located in Grant Hall by the mitten tree and White Gift Sunday baskets during Advent.

Saturday November 30: Scottish Tea and Christmas Bazaar, 1–3 p.m. Thanks to everyone who donated basket items! We are looking forward to displaying and selling them at the bazaar and look forward to seeing you there. Donations for attic treasures, the silent auction, jams and jellies, linens and jewellery can be dropped off in St. Andrew's Hall the week of the Bazaar. Bake sale items can be dropped off after November 28. Proceeds of the Bazaar are gifted into the local community through organizations that offer help and hope to those who need it.

Fair trade coffee, chocolate and so much more!

These are gifts that multiply in their giving. Proceeds from your purchase from the Fair Trade Booth in Grant Hall on Sunday mornings support both our own Refugee Fund as well as providing fair compensation to farmers who produce them. And... the coffee, chocolate and olive oil make for wonderful gifts over Christmas.

Worship, Music and other Celebrations

Sunday December 1st: Waiting in hope! Worship and Communion at 9:15 and 11 a.m. Scripture passages are Isaiah 2:1–5 and Matthew 24:36–44.

Wednesday December 4th, 7:00 p.m. in the Currie Room. New members reception! Interested in learning about the life and work of St. Andrew's? Do you have questions about what being Presbyterian means? This gathering with the minister and elders is for you! We will be welcoming new members in the Sunday Service, December 8. If you are interested please do talk to Reverend Dimock ahead of time (kd@standrewsottawa.ca) and she can answer any questions and, if you wish, arrange for a personal visit as well.

Saturday December 7th, 9:30 a.m. until noon: Gathering, defining and refining the congregation's aspirations. Hosted by the Stewardship team this is a pre-budget conversation about what matters in the ministries we offer as we step up the future and the coming year. All are welcome but please do let the office know you are coming as materials for preparing will be sent to participants in advance of the conversation.

Sunday December 8th: Preparing for Peace. Welcoming New Members during our service today as we light the candle of peace. Scripture passages are Isaiah 11:1–10 and Matthew 3:1–12.

December 8th: Congregational Christmas Lunch after the 11 a.m. service. \$5 a person and \$15 a family.

Thursday December 12th: Cookie exchange at 7 p.m. Bring 6 dozen cookies to share; spend some time sampling and chatting with friends new and old. Make up care packages of tasty treats for members of the congregation who are homebound and assemble a package to take home as well. Sign up in Grant Hall or through the Office.

Saturday December 14th: Kid's Church from 4:30–6:30. Exploring the Christmas Story! A time for young families to come together and celebrate the Christmas story through Crafts, then sharing song, prayer and story in the sanctuary and finishing up with a pot luck meal. For information or to sign up speak to Sydney Johnson our CE co-ordinator sj@standrewsottawa.ca

Sunday December 15th: Joyfilled Surprises! This is White Gift Sunday so please bring your books for that! If you are looking for a day to bring a friend this just might be it. We will be enjoying the nativity sets that have been shared and talking about how in the Nativity Story we find, not just that there is a part for each of us in the story of Jesus Christ's birth, but that in him God is truly with us. Scriptures for this Sunday are Isaiah 35:1–10 and Matthew 11:2–11.

Lunch and Learn with the Marco Depestre Foundation on **December 15th** after the 11 a.m. worship service. The Marco Depestre Foundation has been one of our mission partners for almost ten years now and they are one of the organizations we support through our Christmas Eve and December offering and prayers as well. Yvette Depestre will be sharing pictures and stories about the current work of this wonderful organization that provides both disaster relief and ongoing support in Haiti.

Blue Christmas, **Friday December 20th at 7 p.m.** A service of light and darkness, as we come together in love, remembering that for many this is a season of difficulty, loss, tears and griefs

remembered. Join us in the quiet of the sanctuary, by the light of the candles for a service of worship followed by warm apple cider and cookies in Grant Hall.

Sunday December 22nd at 9:15 and 11 a.m. The Choosing of Love. Our Scripture passages as we light the fourth candle on our Advent Wreath are Isaiah 7:10–16 and Matthew 1:18–25.

Choir Christmas Concert and Congregational Carolling, **December 22nd at 4 p.m.** With Tom Annand, the choir of St. Andrew's and a String Quintet.

Christmas Eve, **December 24th at 6:30 pm:** The Christmas Pageant! Come sing carols with the congregation as we share together the story of Jesus' birth.

Christmas Eve, **December 24th at 10 p.m.:** Lessons and Carols with the Choir of St. Andrew's Church

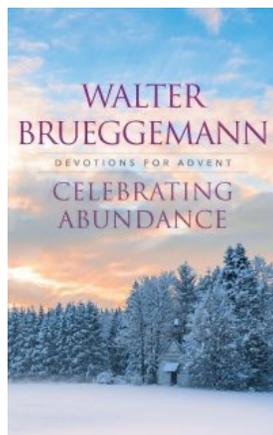
Christmas Day, **December 25th at 11 a.m..** Christmas morning service!

Presbyterians Read!

The word Advent originates from the Latin word *adventus*, which means “coming.” During this season, we pause and look back at Christ's coming into the world as a baby and we anticipate his coming again. We are invited to celebrate the unique in-between space of “already but not yet.” It is a space filled with the extravagant grace of God, and Advent is a time of learning to trust and live in this gift of grace.

Presbyterians Read: Celebrating Abundance

In Advent 2019, Presbyterians across the country are invited to join a denomination-wide book study on Walter Brueggemann's *Celebrating Abundance*. Using thoughtfully prepared small group and individual weekly study guides, Presbyterians will journey through Advent reflecting on themes of God's abundance as revealed through the small details of faith stories—a cry in the wilderness, a teenage mother, a worn down stable and a promise of a new day.



Celebrating Abundance was chosen as a denomination-wide book study for this season because each of Brueggemann's daily reflections in this book are an invitation to see beyond the illusions of worldly extravagance and to embrace the true abundance readily available through Christ. In a world where fear and anxiety abound, Brueggemann calls us to believe in the in-breaking of the kingdom of God through Christ, who brings hope, joy, love and peace. Brueggemann's words, which are steeped in God's love and care for us, inspire us to “do kingdom things we did not think we had in us”.

Ways to get involved

1. Solo—Get a copy of *Celebrating Abundance* and read the devotions each day;
2. Small Group—Start or join a small group of people reading the daily devotions on their own but meeting to discuss what they've read once a week; speak to Reverend Dimock if this interests you and we will organize a group to do this;
3. Online in our Facebook Group—Read the devotions each day and join the

discussion with other Presbyterians in our Facebook study group. All are welcome to join. The group is private and only the members in the group can see who's in the group and what they post.

To access the online study guide, or to log into the Facebook page go to <https://presbyterian.ca/canadian-ministries/presbyterians-read/>

We have 12 copies of the book at St. Andrew's and more can be ordered. Freewill donation to offset the cost of it is appreciated. Signup sheet to join the study is in Grant Hall.

Welcoming Junior Choir Director Gabrielle!

Sydney Johnson

Gabrielle joined St. Andrew's as Junior Choir Director in Fall 2019. She holds a CEGEP degree in liberal arts, a bachelors in vocal music performance from the university of Ottawa and is completing a graduate performance diploma in classical voice as well. Gabrielle has a passion for working with young children and youth in order to help them blossom and discover their passions. She loves opera, haute cuisine and her two very fluffy cats.



Welcome aboard Gabrielle, we are so glad to have you!
 Gabrielle: juniorchoir@standrewsottawa.ca

Open Table 2019

Jeanie Hicks

*For he satisfies the thirsty
 and fills the hungry with good things.*

Psalms 107:9

Through ecumenical friendships, The Open Table provides young adults and students in the University of Ottawa area with a place to gather



together once a month over food and discussion. The mission of The Open Table is to extend Christian hospitality and to offer community to emerging adults living in the greater Ottawa area.

This involves offering a free monthly meal to students and other adults (18–30) during the academic year. The Open Table can connect adults with local faith communities and provide a safe space for conversation and friendship.

On Sunday, October 27, 2019, St. Andrew's Ottawa hosted the monthly meal and dessert in Centre 454 at St. Alban's. This is located at the corner of King Edward and Daly—in the heart of the University of Ottawa campus.

St. Andreans responded to the request for food and a group of 45–50 (including volunteers) feasted on lasagna, casseroles, Shepherd's pie, gluten-free dishes and salads. In honour of

Hallowe'en (and any dental students) dessert was a mélange of cookies, apples and candies!

You could always see someone wearing a blue t-shirt from St. Andrew's chatting with the students as they were in line, eating or waiting for seconds. It was a wonderful evening! The positive energy of St. Andreans was recognized and appreciated!

The Christian Education Committee extends thanks to all who assisted.



Fall Wednesday Evening Studies

Laura M.

By the time you read this, the Fall Wednesday Evening Studies will have concluded but right now we are in the throes of learning and sharing together. Starting on October 23rd, we've been working in our groups to learn about **Christianity and World Religions** based upon the book by Adam Hamilton (led by Rev. Karen Dimock) or **The New Testament You Never Knew** (led by Beulah P. and Neil W.) or how **Love Does** based upon Bob Goff's book of the same name (led by Sydney M.). Preceded by the opportunity to share a community meal, we've enjoyed some wonderful soups and chilis and baked pasta dishes thus far. But the very best part of all is the opportunity to enjoy each other's company and benefit from our shared studies. We sincerely hope that you will join us in the spring for our next study sessions.

Healing & Reconciliation Trip, June 15–26, 2019

Sydney Johnson

This past June I was a part of a team of about 35 Presbyterians from congregations across Canada to go on a Healing and Reconciliation journey/tour for 10 days throughout northern Ontario and the Prairies. This picture you see was taken in Kenora, Ontario which is about 4 hours away from Winnipeg. Visiting these communities, hearing them so openly share their stories was not only life-changing but eye-opening. Our Indigenous brothers and sisters welcomed us so warmly into their lives to share their stories as residential school survivors and the intergenerational effects on their families with everyone. These people and their stories



matter. When people ask me about my trip and ask "how was it?" all I can respond with is "interesting." It was such an interesting but challenging experience hearing the horrors of residential schools and seeing the conditions many continue to live through daily. The amount of substance abuse was heart-wrenching, the pain and sorrow these people have endured at the hand of Canadians "who

had no idea residential schools were happening.” The last residential school closed in 1998, which is within my life time... That I had not heard of residential schools till my first year of university is mind-boggling. I say this not to point fingers but rather to encourage us to learn from past mistakes and go forward

united realizing that the horrors of the past will not be forgotten but will slowly begin to heal the more effort we put into reconciliation work. If you are interested in learning more about my journey please reach out and I would be happy to share the stories I have heard with you. We can make a difference.

Kenora Fellowship Centre

Stacey H.

On Sunday, October 20, 2019, I joined Rod and Beulah at Westminster Church to make a presentation on our Truth and Reconciliation Mission Trip that we went on this past June.

I spoke about the Kenora Fellowship Centre. I noted that according to the most recent Census, indigenous people comprise 19% of the population of Kenora, but that it is pretty clear when you take a walk through town, that at least 90% of homeless people are indigenous. There is a very serious and chronic lack of affordable housing in Kenora. As a result, although the Centre is intended to provide temporary housing, many of its residents must use it on a long term basis.

I discussed some of the outreach activities in which our group participated. These included preparing a fish fry lunch and breakfast buffet. I also assisted with some basic clean up tasks such as wiping down tables, chairs and mopping floors. While I was wiping down some chairs, I started to think of how during one of our St. Andrew's AGM's, we spent a relatively lengthy period discussing how our current supply of chairs were not comfortable, that we desperately needed new ones and how much that would cost. My time spent at Kenora Fellowship Centre definitely put things into a new perspective. The Centre is in need of some very basic yet essential repairs...which makes our St. Andrew's debate about chairs seem rather minor in comparison.

The Centre faces many challenges, which include a shortage of staffing, insufficient funding and some racist attitudes in the city of Kenora. Following my talk, I met a member of the Westminster congregation who lived in Kenora for ten years. She explained to me that there is great divide of views on indigenous people among the city's residents. Some residents are very progressive and supportive of indigenous rights while others have flagrantly racist attitudes.

My talk received a rapturous response from the Westminster congregation. I spent at least an hour following the service discussing next steps with members of the congregation. They are so enthusiastic. They even talked about driving up to Kenora themselves to not only donate winter clothes, but to assist with some DIY yourself repairs at the Centre!

Should you have any questions about the Kenora Fellowship Centre, please feel free to contact me.

The Mission and Outreach team thanks you!

Last week Rob and Rod, the committee convenors, packaged up the donations given to support the people at the Kenora Fellowship Centre. They filled 6 large construction size bags and 6 large garbage bags with the following items: 30 backpacks; 12–14 heavy blankets; 20 warm coats; 25 sweaters; 200 pairs of socks; 100 pairs of mitts and gloves; 50 hats or toques; 30 scarves; 25 pairs of boots; 8 pairs of pants and several lighter shirts. The team is overwhelmed with the support of the congregation for this cause. It will all be well used when it arrives. It is scheduled to leave Friday Nov. 29. Thanks again to everyone who contributed and helped out! (In the photo, we see Rod sorting the clothes that came in from St. Andreans for Kenora Friendship Centre and the Winnipeg Inner city Mission.)



Walk for the Centre

Laura M.

So...church is finished for the day...the weather is pretty good...what else can we do today to make it special? Oh, I know! We'll go and join the Walk for the Centre! And that's exactly what ten people from St. Andrew's did this year.

October 6th was the date and City Hall was the place to be. We gathered together with about 200 other like-minded people to raise money and awareness for the Emergency Food Bank Centre and the desperately needed work it does to feed our city's most needy. Our church school children had drawn posters for us sending us on our way with their prayers and their best wishes. These were greeted with much admiration at the rallying point and were borne with much pride. Although we all chose the shorter of the two walks offered, we walked with the knowledge that every step brought much-needed funding for the Centre and the work it does.

Thank you to Rob R., Aisling B., Diane M., Sydney M., Heather, Theo and Lucy P., Gail and Bob B. for keeping me in such good company.

Vacation Bible School August 12–16, 2019

Sydney Johnson

VBS "Mars & Beyond" 2019 was a wonderful time. 34 kids attended and this was a great number. Volunteers who helped were wonderful and great with the kids, with a few new youth volunteers helped out this year—thank you to all! The decorating was wonderful.



Beulah P. led a team of people on the Saturday before VBS as I ran a workshop for new volunteers upstairs. The kids loved the dancing part of the morning and at the end of the day when they got to watch the skit with myself as the “space commander” and Mary F. as the puppet EP3-20. The puppet was called this so the kids could remember their bible verse of the week better, Ephesians 3:20. The bible stories engaged the children, we focused on Daniel and the lion’s den, the Good Samaritan, Esther and more.

The mission project chosen this year was the Winnipeg Intercity Mission which myself and Rev. Karen visited on the Healing and Reconciliation Trip. This organization is supported by the Presbyterian Church of Canada and volunteers drive in the organization’s van to pick up the families around the rough neighbourhood of North

Winnipeg to bring them to church. The families have no other way to get there and few resources. The church supplies teaching resources on parenting, addiction counselling, childcare and a free meal every Sunday at church for a congregation of about 80 people. They drive them to church and home filling up cars that are run down and in need of replacing. This year the kids raised \$87 to donate towards a new van for the Winnipeg Intercity Mission—they loved raising the money for it and thought that what the organization was doing was so cool!

Overall I believe VBS was a success as the kids had fun and learned about the Lord. It was encouraging to watch them dance to the songs and say the bible verse by themselves at the end of the week. I am happy that I was able to direct “Mars & Beyond” this year, thank you again to everyone who made it possible!

Marco Depestre Foundation Update

Yvette D.

While 2019 has so far brought reasons to rejoice, the Marco Depestre Foundation, like most organizations serving in Haiti, have experienced great concern with the mounting insecurity, political unrest and disturbances that have caused us to curtail or suspend our activities. Travelling in and outside of the capital Port-au-Prince is hindered by road blocks. I am thankful that though it was a challenge, during my onsite visit to Haiti from August 21 to September 11, apart from a visit to Macary (South-eastern Haiti), I had the opportunity to meet with the beneficiaries of the different projects funded by us and carried out by the Foundation in Haiti (MDFH).

Our ongoing Child Sponsorship Project now provides scholarships to forty-three children. Our church family at St. Andrew’s sponsors a total of 11 children ranging from Kindergarten to the equivalent of Grade 10! In general, all the children are healthy and growing, with average grades. One of them graduated from High School this year and plans to pursue studies in accountancy.

With generous donations received, we distributed school supplies in Laboule 12. I was unable to distribute the school supplies destined for La Saline as the school was unable to function at that time; a small amount was given to the School Principals in Savana, Furcy and Fondoux to be distributed to the neediest children. Students and guardians received with gratitude these necessary items. Close to 200 Kindergarten and Grade School students received notebooks, pens, pencils, sharpeners, geometry sets, rulers, colouring books and educational toys.

Six needy student families benefit from our Nutrition Supplement Program. A monthly voucher of \$25US is provided for beneficiaries to purchase nutritious food that provides the children a unique

experience to eagerly shop at a grocery store. As a result, their health, stamina and school performance have improved or remained stable.

In the Fondoux, funds raised by the VBS children last year were used to start a small school garden. Though some cleaning of the space was needed, tomato, eggplant and papaya trees were growing when I passed by on September 7. In our Goat Project, three goats were given to replace those who had died for diverse reasons. The first kids will be passed on to other families when they are strong enough. Additional kids will be kept by the family to provide sustenance and livelihood.

As part of our long term Agroforestry Project to reinforce the land and provide a source of revenue for families in the designated areas, I was able to visit the nursery sites in Vialet/Barette on September 2 for the distribution of 2,567 seedlings of mango, cocoa, nut, cedar, tamaris, acacia cherry as well as others. On September 9, I participated in the distribution of 1,233 seedlings of nut, oak, ash, tamaris and passiflo in Furcy.

In both places a number of men and women helped to fill the bags with soil, while someone on site would do the watering. When the situation permits, follow up visits by the Agricultural Agent will be carried out at the locations where trees have been planted to interview beneficiaries and to take photographs.

In a remote region in the South, the Savana School community does not have latrines. To improve the health risks six latrines for families closest to the school are being completed with funds from our Humanitarian Aid Project.

In October, we responded to a dire request and offered dry goods to 200 plus families in Laboule 12, who had no means to survive since they were unable to work because of the disturbances. Provisions to the grateful families included rice, beans, tomato paste, milk, spaghetti and oil.

A significant change in the operation of the Marco Depestre Foundation in Haiti occurred last September, when the President, Rev. Marco Depestre Jr accepted a call to minister at a Methodist Church in New Jersey for a year. He was replaced by the Vice-President, Mr Rosny Desroches. As a result, the Foundation had to open its first one room office, to maintain the records that were previously housed at Marco's home.

The situation is far from settled in the country but we are most thankful to have been able to reach out during dire times. On behalf of the Foundation, I would like to thank our minister, Rev. Dr. Karen Dimock, the Mission & Outreach Ministry and the many members of the congregation for their continued vital support of the mission and work of the foundation.

May the Lord bless the congregation of St. Andrew's for their generosity and support!

Gracefield Retreat

Sydney Johnson

St. Andrew's Ottawa headed out to Gracefield Christian Camp and Retreat Centre for a time of fellowship over the September 6–8 weekend. Rev. Karen & Aisling B. fearlessly led the weekend going back to Ottawa Saturday to return Saturday evening following the funeral of beloved congregants David B. I and my partner Tim M. headed up for the Saturday to spend some time with those up there for the weekend, bringing Zully & Ernesto up with us for the day.

I had never visited Gracefield but it was beautiful. People commented on how much they loved the canoeing, hiking, camp fire, devotionals and time to unwind. Thank you to everyone who participated! Can't wait till next year! Thanks to Tim P. for the great photos!



Rally Sunday

Sydney Johnson

Rally Sunday this year was SO fun! In the service we honoured the teachers, leaders and children! Balloons and blessing of the backpacks were a hit with three tasty soups to follow!

A message to the Sunday School teachers: Thank you for choosing to volunteer with St. Andrew's in the Sunday School and children ministry this year—the work you do is so important!

I appreciate each one of you. God bless you in the weeks to come, I pray the Lord will give you the words to say and the answers to the tough questions! Please feel free to come to myself, Karen and I am sure Althea and Koko with any concerns or questions—if we don't know the answer we will try to help you find one!

Koko, welcome aboard as co-superintendent! It is a blessing to work along-side you. Thank you serving in this way.

Thank you Althea for your continuous work and leadership in the Sunday School & Christian Education—you are one talented lady! And of course also thank you Laura M. for your fearless leadership—we love you!



Church School: Helping Our Children Grow in Faith

By Althea W.G., Co-Superintendent of Church School

First, a big "Thank You" to all the volunteers who taught the one-room summer classes this past June to September! The teachers were: Sana W., Barbara and Scott W., Lorna E., Dana G., Melanie T., Elinor H. and Family, Stacey H., Joshua L. and Family, Koko A. and Family, Sydney and Tim M., and Althea and Clark G. We had from 6 to 16 children in the class

throughout the summer. Each summer, we invite volunteers (families and individuals) to teach a class. It is a wonderful opportunity for those in the congregation who normally do not teach church school to do so one Sunday (or more) during the summer.

In September, the new Church School year started out with a wonderful Rally Sunday that included blessing of the back packs, the commissioning of the teachers, and registration of children. We have 43 children registered for church school. “Thank You” to all the parents and guardians for completing the registration form for their children and youth each year, as it helps us to safeguard the health and safety of the children.

This year, we welcome Koko A. as Co-Superintendent of Church School with me. Koko has brought to the position her experience in teaching church school and leading other Christian education activities at St. Andrew’s, along with lots of energy and ideas.

Thank you to all our volunteers who are giving of their time and talent to help our children learn and grow in faith! At the 9:15 a.m. services, we welcome back Afua O. who co-teaches with Sydney M. For the 11:00 a.m. services, we welcome Tim M. as a new teacher for the ages 10–11 class along with Jide A. And, we welcome back Joshua L. and Sana W. teaching the ages 2–5 class, Elinor H. and Lorna E. teaching the ages 6–7 class, Stacey H. teaching the ages 8–9 class, and Aisling B. leading the youth class (ages 12 and up).

We have started using a new curriculum called ‘Spark’ for the ages 6 to 11 children, after using the Season curriculum for many years. We selected Spark following a focused search in the spring for a change in teaching material that reflects the needs of our children. We carefully considered several curriculum criteria, including: focuses on God and salvation as a gift of faith; provides opportunity for depth of

learning as children age and a broad span of Old and New Testaments stories reflecting the themes of Creation, Fall, Restoration, and Redemption; reflects diversity of children and society; invites reflection and questioning as key components of learning and understanding; calls for children to live out what they are learning about God at church, at home and in their communities; and, is fun. If you would like to know more about the Spark curriculum or about the criteria used to guide our selection, please contact me, Koko or Sydney.

In addition, Koko and I are continuing to ensure that growing in faith is also derived through singing, particularly some oldies but goodies that children continue to sing and hum long after they leave the church each Sunday. We continue to sing last year’s songs—Hallelu, Hallelu, Hallelu, Hallelujah and I’ve Got the Joy Joy Joy Joy and are focussing on two new catchy songs—Noah—Arky Arky Arky and My Cup is Full and Running Over, along with other seasonal songs.

We are also introducing a new activity during Assembly time in Grant Hall. As the children are taught the importance of seeking spiritual guidance from our Minister, their parents and guardians, and Elders, we will invite Elders to attend the Assembly Time in Grant Hall from time to time to speak with the children about who they are and their role in the church.

Please note that we continue to seek additional volunteers to help teach church school. If you would like to learn more about teaching church school you may contact me.