

Tidings

Vol 25, No 3 – Pentecost/Fall 2015



**A PLACE FOR
US ALL**
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Tidings

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EDITORIAL

David Flynn pdflynn@rogers.com

Jo Ann, in her Council report, speaks of a new journey for FSA, guided by the Holy Spirit. The “town hall meeting” on May 19th generated a host of ideas about the direction of this journey. In addition to short-term steps to deal with the current financial crisis, some ideas were about what Steve Elson, in his *View from the Pew*, calls “our purpose.” Is our purpose to keep this venerable old building in good condition? Is it to add members and increase givings in order to maintain our current programmes and staffing, or to preserve community among current members? Are we prepared to open ourselves to other Christian, or even non-Christian groups?

In a way, we are faced with the choice of the early followers of Jesus—do we hide in our Upper Room away from the turmoil around us, or do we go into the world to spread what we know about the Way of Jesus to others, or, perhaps, even to see if our Way can be combined with other people’s journeys so that together we can share a common purpose of fostering a moral, loving way of living.

The Property Committee has considered this question for many years. Each time they choose to rent out our facilities to an outside group, they try to determine if that group shares our purpose. Perhaps the time has come to open up our property to wider uses, such as seniors’ housing or even regular apartments, in order to free the congregation from worries about building maintenance.

In past issues, *Tidings* wrote primarily about FSA members and groups. Now, the Welcoming Committee has asked us to extend our mandate, to do articles on groups which rent our building. Or, we could go even further, and write about other downtown groups, such as the Woodfield Neighbourhood, which sometimes lists our activities in their newsletter. The Membership and Nurture Committee also is asking us to participate in the Woodfield Street Fair. Thanks to Kate, we have links to the Muslim community—should we write about them? The *Tidings* Team decided to ask readers what we should do.

If we believe that we are beginning a Holy journey, we also must believe that we are led by the same God who guided Jesus and the early disciples to look outside their own Jewish community. Are we willing to take that path?



The Rev. Michelle Down

God blesses us with many opportunities to learn, to give, to share, to receive, to forgive, and to embrace. I anticipate that our ministry together at First-St. Andrew's will include all of these, and many more, as we serve Jesus faithfully together. I feel blessed to be called to this ministry, and join the long line of faithful servants who have led you in ministry. I hope to bring gifts that will assist us in working toward the three things that I see as our immediate priorities: Increasing healthy communication; building unity and healing existing fractures; visioning our future with both the abundance of God's grace, and the reality of reducing financial means.

When we have open and healthy communication we will be able to share our celebrations and our frustrations

with compassion, trust, and respect. As this honest communication becomes our normative and standard practise, it will contribute to our healing and communal unity. During our study of Ephesians, we have been reminded that Jesus is the Unity that brings together both individuals and the early church. Our work is to engage with this teaching to allow it to transform us into being the church of today that unifies humanity, creation, and faithful justice, with the Trinitarian formula of our ancestors.

With healing and unity will come a renewed energy for the future. Taking time to dream and vision who God is calling us to be will be important work. It will take excellent listening, intentional truth-telling, and deep discerning. This is not work that has an immediate deadline, but instead an opportunity to listen faithfully as the Holy Spirit speaks to our hearts. (Cont'd. on page 19)

Notes from Michelle



TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION —PART ONE OF TWO: TRUTH Steve Elson

"I swear to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth" are familiar words in a court of law, which aims to uncover the truth. But as people know who have been in court, the truth can vary and differ significantly depending on who is speaking. In practice, the phrase should probably read, "I swear to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth as I understand and believe it to be from my point of view." In a court it is up to a judge and/or jury to decide what is more true or believable among differing and conflicting truths.

A new and different truth came forward and was articulately presented by the survivors who spoke in front of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) of Canada. To quote from the commission's June 2015 report:

Speaking to us at the Traditional Knowledge Keepers' Forum

in June of 2014, Elder Dave Courchene posed a critical question: "When you talk about truth, whose truth are you talking about?"

The commission's answer to Elder Courchene's question is that by truth, we mean not only the truth revealed in government and church residential school documents, but also the truth of lived experiences as told to us by Survivors and others in their statements to this commission. Together, these public testimonies constitute a new oral history record, one based on Indigenous legal traditions and the practice of witnessing. As people gathered at various TRC national events and community hearings, they shared the experiences of truth telling and of offering expressions of reconciliation. (Cont'd. on page 19)

View from the Pew



Getting to Know



MICHELLE DOWN
Glenda Robinson

From the time she was a child growing up on a farm in Sunderland, Ontario, Michelle seemed to be on a journey toward ministry. The youngest of four siblings, she was “the kid who was always in bare feet, collecting eggs, and sweeping out the manger” and learning “from a child’s eye, how God was

empathy, compassion and a great sense of humour.

Over the past two years, Michelle and Joyce both felt that God had called them to FSA. When a vacancy was declared, they felt “the seeds of the spirit had been planted” and Michelle applied. “Knowing that FSA had become an Affirming church was key to knowing they would be accepted and welcomed here.”

The old adage “Practise what you preach” is exemplified in the daily life of Michelle and Joyce. Every morning over coffee, they do Bible study together. As Michelle explains, “This is Holy time for us to connect with each other, the scriptures, and God’s blessing for the day.”

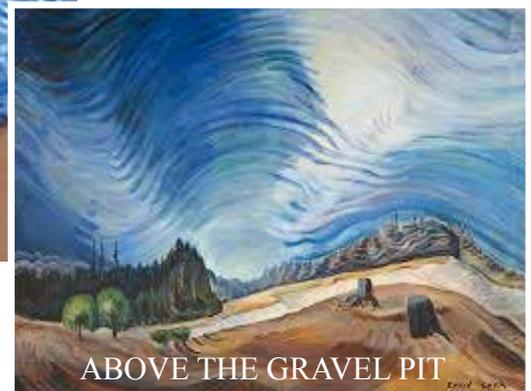
Michelle works hard, but also enjoys many hobbies—sewing, quilting, gardening, making pottery, scrapbooking, “basically making anything with her hands that can produce something in the end.”



alive in the world through creatures and creation!”

One day, at six-years-old, she felt Jesus visit her, saying, “I will never leave you and you will never leave me.” They have “been together ever since.”

Michelle’s studies in Business Administration, Personnel Management, Pastoral Care and Intentional Interim Ministry, and her Masters of Divinity have prepared her well as a spiritual leader of a congregation such as ours. Already we have experienced her deep faith, warmth, great sense of humour, creativity, compassion and optimism. She also considers herself “an accommodator, a good listener, a facilitator and, above all, a lover of Jesus.” Her favourite qualities in others reflect her own—honesty, integrity,



For Michelle happiness is a camping vacation. “A tent, canoe, book, camera, great food + great weather = BLISS!”

Not surprisigly, Michelle’s favourite artist is Emily Carr, who saw “God as nature mystically animated by a greater spirit,” as the sky in Michelle’s favourite painting, *Above the Gravel Pit*, conveys.

The accomplishment in her life of which Michelle is most proud is “Listening to Jesus ... and following Him.”

Welcome, Michelle, as our guide on our spiritual journey! (*Quotations are Michelle’s words.*) †



RON WHITE
Pat McGregor

Ron was born in Brantford, and was baptized in Fairview United, a church his father took a leadership role in building. Ron's family moved to London in 1962, attending Grove United at the corner of Huron St. and Clarke Road. It was a joint charge with the original Siloam United, another church he attended later in life. As Grove came to an end, the family helped build Gethsemane United, which he attended through his teen years. Ron comments that it is sad these older churches closed, but nonetheless all fostered his growth and tradition in his faith community.

Around 1995 Ron happened to hear Dr. Frank Meadows deliver a sermon in a north London church. Frank's message resonated with him, and so he slipped into a back pew at FSA one Sunday morning. Twenty years later he is still one of the "back benchers," Jean Wright commenting, "He helps keep a pew at the back dusted."

Ron is a single parent with a daughter in Australia. He helps to keep his mother independent in her own home by acting as her social convener, taking in concerts and Advent recitals at FSA.

When asked to name some of the things he likes about FSA, Ron mentioned again the music and how he is moved by thoughtfully-prepared sermons, which never fail to resonate or strike a chord. "I always look forward to a well-delivered sermon based on equality and justice for all."

He appreciates FSA's commitment to mission and outreach, noting he was a summer helper for hospitality meals for a few years. He enjoys the back pews crowd, especially chatting with Fred Lloyd and Russ Monteith. "I also have to give a shout out to Bob and Louise Slater, who helped make my transition to FSA seamless." The church's motto, "Where liberal theology meets the best of tradition," helps to sum up what he likes about FSA.

After completing his education, he headed out on a two-and-a-half year posting with CUSO as a volunteer science teacher in Malaysia. Upon returning home he enrolled in the Medical Laboratory Technology programme at Fanshawe, and soon afterwards became an instructor in the Health Sciences Division there, noting Barry Moore was college president during most of his time at Fanshawe. In 2001 he took early retirement and spent the next ten years during the winter



months teaching science and English in high schools and colleges in Thailand.

Ron's hobbies and interests include reading, cooking, jogging, strength training, and he also enjoys line dancing. For many years he has been an Aikido practitioner. Last winter he took up skiing at Boler Mountain, planning to spend a lot of time there this winter.

What feeds his spirituality? Ron says this is a tough question as it is "difficult to articulate my faith and spirituality as I feel them in an intuitive way."

Work and travel commitments, perhaps combined with an element of shyness, have kept Ron flying under the radar at FSA. But those of us who are "back benchers" value his quiet presence each week; FSA is fortunate to have him in our midst. †

**YOU CAN GO HOME—EVEN
AFTER 50 YEARS**

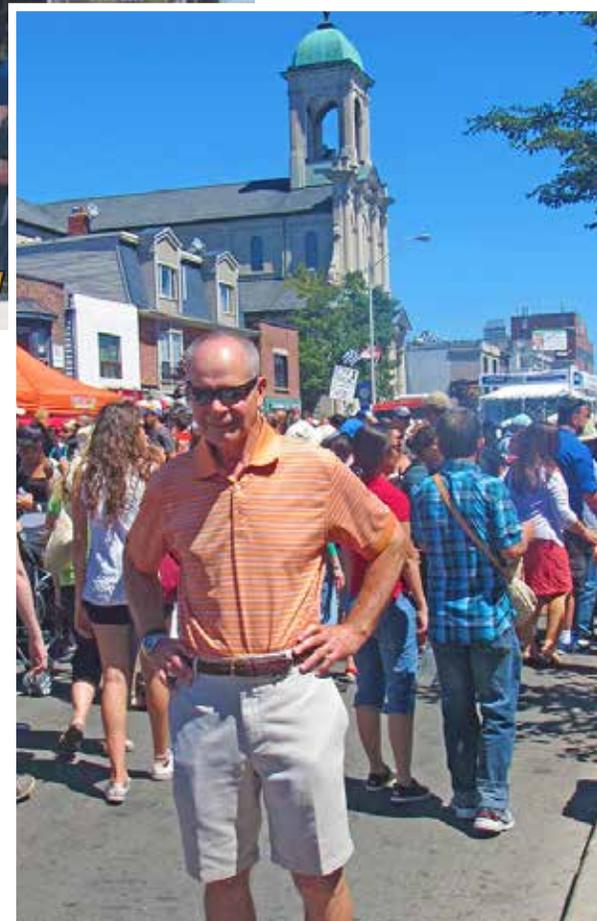
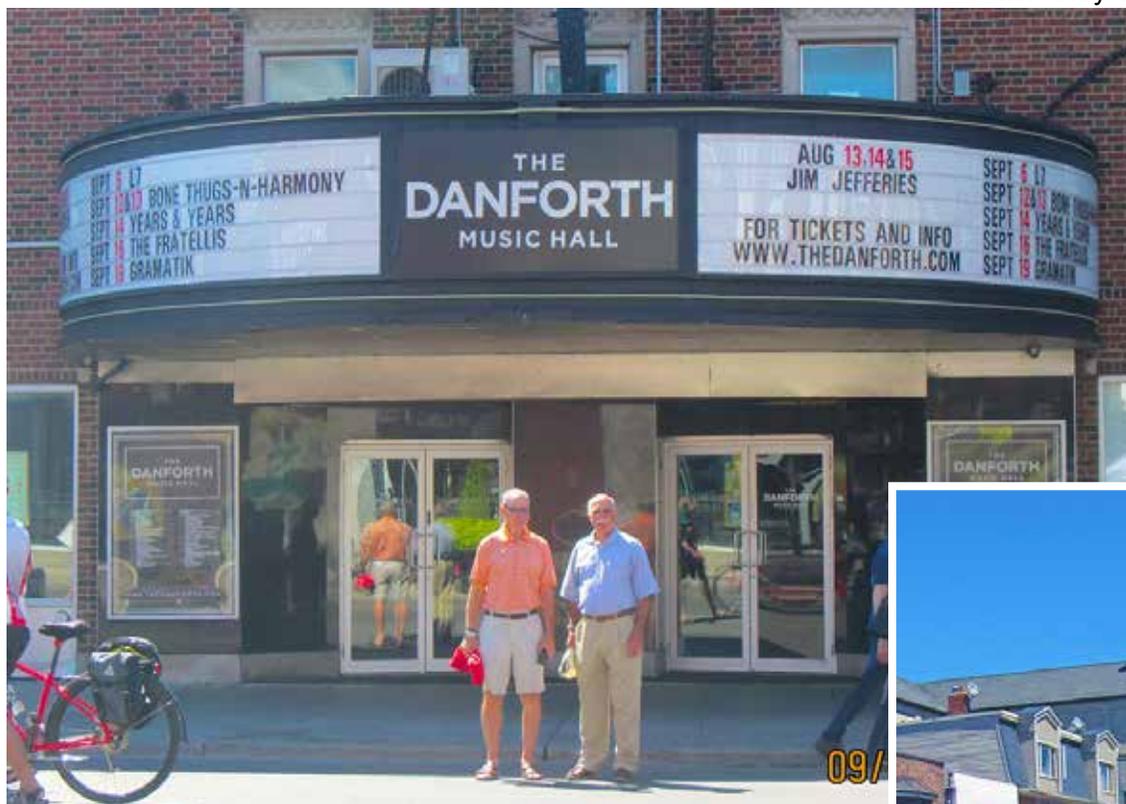
David Knoppert

I recently visited Toronto to experience the “Taste of the Danforth” festival. This visit was particularly meaningful to me since this is the area in which I grew up in the 1960s. Some of the things

from my youth still exist, but the type of businesses has completely changed, and reflects modern Toronto. The church and elementary schools which I attended, the various intersections along the Danforth, and the four subway stops look pretty much the same as they did 50 years ago.

Yes, there have been changes, but to me they have been relatively small.

The essence of my old neighbourhood seems to have remained similar to what it was in the 1960s. Then, life was beginning and was seen through the eyes of a young boy. After fifty years, and much experience, the view has not changed and I felt almost as if I had been transformed back in time. Both happy and sad



that I vividly remember include our small, semi-detached home and our 300-foot garden, playing hockey on an outdoor ice rink in Withrow Park, bringing home books from the public library on Pape Ave, playing baseball in Greenwood Park, buying French fries for 5 cents and a pizza for a dollar, going to Holy Name Catholic Church, where the masses were in Latin, and sadly recalling the loss of two of my best buddies before the age of 20.

The fish and chip stores are now gone, and the masses are now in English, but many things seem not to have changed. The homes on the streets that jut off Jones Ave, the ones that I passed for 13 years on my way to school, look about the same as they did 50 years ago. On the Danforth most of the buildings

memories flooded my mind during my visit. I was pleased that even after 50 years, I was still able to go home. ✚



KEEPING FSA'S CHIMNEY SWIFTS SAFE AND SUCCESSFUL



Winifred Wake and David Wake

At 8:00am on Sunday, June 21st, the phone rang—oh dear! It was Paul Merritt, calling to tell us that two Chimney Swifts were fluttering frantically in the fireplace of the Fireside Room. Somehow, the chimney's damper had been opened, allowing the birds to descend to the bottom of the shaft but preventing them from getting back up again. By the time we arrived, one swift had already squeezed out from behind the fireplace screen. In attempting to escape the building, it crashed into the atrium doors and dropped to the floor, stunned. It was carried outside, where it soon recovered and flew off.

The second swift, in eluding us, exited the fireplace, slammed into a wall, and fell to the carpet. After determining it had no broken bones, we carried the tiny bird outdoors. Placed in a shady corner on an outside church wall, it clung, woodpecker-like, with its strong toenails (see picture). It rested there for two hours, then suddenly shot upward to join the small flock of circling, chattering

swifts overhead. We were relieved to observe a swift dive into the chimney, and knew the nest inside was again being tended. Had the adults trapped in the fireplace died unnoticed, or succumbed to injuries incurred during escape efforts, their offspring would have been doomed.

Swifts have likely been nesting in FSA since the church was built. When Europeans cleared North American woodlands, the number of old-growth hollow trees dwindled, and Chimney Swifts adapted to chimneys. These they inhabit seasonally, when heating systems are not needed. Swifts winter in the Amazon and, each summer, one pair returns to raise young in FSA's fireplace chimney. A second pair occupies the big square chimney that vents the boiler, (see postscript).

Since the 1960s, Chimney Swifts have experienced a 96% decline in Canada, mainly due to problems with their food supply—flying insects. In 2009 the Chimney Swift was listed as Threatened on Canada's Endangered Species list.

FSA is privileged to be able to annually provide homes for two swift families. Each successful nest is crucial to the long-term survival of the species. Please, please, please, help keep FSA's swifts safe—do NOT open the fireplace damper. †



Postscript: On August 21st, a third church chimney—a slim, round one—was discovered to also shelter Swifts.



MAJOR THE REV. J. PIERCEY MACLEAN

(Associate Minister, FSA 1981–1990)



Heather and Bob Vosper

Last summer we were fortunate to have the opportunity to visit beautiful Vancouver Island. It was there, in picturesque Parksville, 37 miles north-west of Nanaimo, that we reminisced about First-St. Andrew's with Piercey MacLean. Piercey, now 89, is

living in a seniors' residence and still keeps in contact by email with several of our members. After losing his soul mate, Ruth, in February of 2008, Piercey remained in Victoria, then moved to Parksville to be closer to daughter Bev. All three of the MacLean daughters reside in BC so Piercey and Ruth elected to retire there in 1990.

As natives of Nova Scotia and graduates of Mount Allison University, Piercey and Ruth were able to reconnect with many former classmates in their days in London. We were blessed to have them with us for those nine years. Piercey remembers fondly the spire pointing upward in London's core. †

Where Are They Now?





NORWAY Barbara Plante

On May 25th, 2015, I embarked on a cruise through the Norwegian fjords. This trip was a dream come true, stemming from my fascination as a child with a book called *Children of Other Lands*, and in particular with the pictures of “Olga,” living in a village towered over by beautiful mountains—a village in a fjord.

The trip didn’t disappoint. We landed in Bergen—the delightful birthplace of

eventually crossed the Arctic Circle. I have a certificate to prove it! And the weather became colder—and colder—and colder. Fortunately we were prepared! We even had a visit from King Neptune. He provided great entertainment, and offered to baptize, Norwegian-style, anyone who was game. The baptism consisted of having ice cubes pushed down the back of the neck of the kneeling “victim.” Katie and I were content to watch!

My favourite fjord was Trollfjord. We entered it late one evening and spent about an hour deep in among majestic mountains. This is the land of the midnight sun, and we were there at midnight. Because the fjord was so narrow the light was rather dim, but the sun shone on the mountain tops, turning them golden. All around us were cascading waterfalls; it was one of the most beautiful moments of my life.

We enjoyed two concerts during our cruise. One was in the lovely little city of Tromsø, and the performers were a soprano, a keyboard player and a flugelhorn player. The concert consisted entirely of Norwegian music, and was definitely a highlight of the trip for many of us. Our second concert took place in a herring oil drum! Completely scrubbed out—no odour of fish—we all filed into this great storage drum, sat down and a tuba player began in the doorway, gradually making his way into the centre of the “room.” He began with *In the Hall of the Mountain King* and went on to entertain us for a full 45 minutes. What an experience. We loved it.

We travelled up into the Arctic Ocean and back, spending time touring the lovely countryside, and visiting towns and villages along the coast. Back in the south, we finished with more time in Bergen, and then on to Oslo. There are so many wonderful things to see, but our favourite was Vigeland Park, full of amazing statues depicting life from all aspects. It is magnificent.

Norway, the Land of the Midnight Sun. A wonderful adventure. †



Edvard Grieg—and had a tour of the town. Later that day we set sail.

Our cruise ship, *Nordenorge*, is part of the Hurtigruten fleet, comprising about a dozen ships sailing constantly up and down the coast of Norway, delivering mail and goods to remote villages along the coast and deep in the fjords. They also act as ferries, taking passengers, with or without their vehicles, from village to village, or to the southern cities.

From the outset, the scenery was spectacular: snow-capped mountains soaring up into blue skies, and pretty little villages dotting the shores of the coast and the fjords. As we travelled northward, we



FSA ROUNDS UP ITS CIRCLE

Jane Daichendt

The Bridges out of Poverty/Circles programme tackles the prevailing challenges of poverty here in London. With the financial backing of Ontario Works (OW) and Goodwill hosting offices, coordinator, Shane Clarke, sought out London's Interfaith Social Action Coalition agencies to acquaint them with and promote itself. Bridges out of Poverty was in search of an agency that could offer resources—the human type—and facilities, to deliver a programme helping individuals and families receiving OW (Welfare).

Several MOE members attended an information session to find out more about Circles. It definitely piqued their interest. Former minister Kate Crawford and Shane also met to consider the qualities each could bring.

As Circles ideas were being assessed, FSA's Hospitality Meal Coordinators, Joanne Girvan and Katherine Wonfor, were approached by North London Group Churches. NLGC could no longer host their hospitality meal on Thursdays. Their request was to simply exchange the evenings they each hosted.

Suddenly, FSA's facilities, volunteers

and monies could potentially be made available for an alternative programme that also focused on those who are impoverished. In June, 2014, MOE members, led by Linda Badke, presented a motion to Council to see if this new potential venture would truly be a good fit for FSA.

As MOE and Council furthered their considerations, MOE recognized the importance of informing FSA's congregation about Circles. Two separate leaflets were distributed to the congregation via Sunday's bulletin. These notes summarized the ideals of Circles and briefly reflected on FSA's 20 years of serving hospitality meals. On August 25th, 2014, volunteers of our Hospitality Meal took heart in knowing that the 165 participants who came in for their meals at FSA would be offered their next Monday meal by NLGC.

Such an amazing alliance—so many open and capable hearts and minds together—focused on poverty at the same time! With such a thorough onset, FSA's Circle was ready to embrace its first group of 13 OW recipients in January, 2015. Watch for the December issue of *Tidings* to learn more about Circles features, the care FSA and its volunteers provide, and Circle "Leaders"; participants taking charge of their lives. *(To be continued)* †



CROSSING THE RIVER

Jim Silcox

On June 28th, FSA crossed the Rubicon. Were you there? That was the first Sunday we projected our service onto an overhead screen. We had, however, dipped our toes in the water a few weeks earlier when we started a looping slide show with the week's announcements.

We found that the congregation was amazingly receptive. Many came forward with support and with very constructive suggestions. We tried to incorporate most of them as we moved from one week to the next. Then there were the

little technical hiccups which invariably occur when new technology is put in place.

For example, many may not know it, but once we start **projecting** words for the hymns, we risk running afoul of Canadian copyright laws. "Ah," you say, "we are a church, a not-for-profit, and copyright laws do not apply to us." Or you might say, "We own all those copies of *Voices United* and *More Voices* so we can project anything we want from those books." However, the UCC advises all churches that they "... cannot legally photocopy, reproduce in bulletins, or use on overheads or a projection system material that is in copyright unless they get permission. *(Cont'd on page 19)*



**AN UPDATE ON
THE WILLIAM
PROUDFOOT HOUSE
FUND**
Bob Vosper

William Proudfoot House (WPH) was established in 1980 by FSA members. It operated successfully as a group home for women in conflict with the law until 1995. Funds from the sale of the property were given to the London Community Foundation, to be managed as the William Proudfoot House Fund.

In 2015, this fund granted \$8,400 each to My Sisters' Place and Rotholme Women's and Family Shelter, proof that the legacy of WPH lives on, and that FSA has made a difference in the lives of many. A letter from the director of My Sisters'

Place, has recently been received, where she states, in part:

"We would like to express our heartfelt appreciation for the William Proudfoot House Fund recent grant of \$8,400 to My Sisters' Place through the London Community Foundation. It is because of generous donors like you that we are able to provide crucial services to some of the most vulnerable women in our community ... The [Foundation's] support of My Sisters' Place has made a tremendous difference in our work and in women's lives. Thank you for your generosity in supporting the London Community Foundation in their work which impacts the lives of many in our community."

*Respectfully,
Susan Macphail,
My Sisters' Place. †*

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

INCLUSIVENESS.

We are happy to be a part of our FSA family, and happy that we have made our inclusivity known to the broader community by our actions. However, I believe that the large sign in the Atrium near the Sanctuary doors is too narrow in its focus.

The rainbow logo indicates our support for our LGBT community, but it neglects to address any other minority groups in our faith family. Those other groups would include those folks who are of another heritage, as well as those who are blind, deaf, handicapped, or challenged physically, mentally, or psychologically. They also need to be given visual reassurance that they too are recognized, loved and needed here.

Please, let us change our sign to include everyone beyond those in the mainstream who worship and share in the life of our church.

Respectfully submitted,
Marion Wilson.

Note: Normally we do not respond to letters to the editor, but because of FSA recently becoming an Affirming congregation, we thought it appropriate to ask our new minister, the Rev. Michelle Down, to comment (see adjacent column). Eds.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR RESPONSE

Marion, thank you for your letter expressing concern about how we inform each other and the community of our Affirming status here at FSA. We are committed to working hard in all the aspects of our faith life to ensure that ALL of God's children know that they are loved, precious, and holy in God's eyes. We will work diligently so that ALL peoples will know that they are welcomed as family here at FSA. As an Affirming church we are saying we honour, respect, and welcome diversity in culture, ability, gender, education, economic status, freedom/imprisoned status, etc., and not just in sexual orientation. Therefore as an Affirming church, our job is to find all of the ways and places to say that proudly. This will happen in worship, in staff meetings, at Council, in committee gatherings, at our family parties, and in our signage, brochures and literature.

The places in both the community and our lives, where God is sure to be found, there also must be our message that we at FSA are open and Affirming. Affirming of all, with all, and for all. As we share this message of Affirmation that God has placed in our hearts, let's commit to finding words, symbols, and branding that will best tell our story. The rainbow is the symbol that our scripture uses to affirm for us God's eternal commitment of love and peace. Although this

is the symbol for the LGBTTQ community, it does not negate God's love and acceptance, or ours, of any other individuals or communities. Might this rainbow symbol continue to remind us of our covenant to be Affirming in all the aspects of our faith.

As together we do our future work of visioning, additional symbols may also arise that will help us tell our story. Let us all pray about what the symbols of our faith are at FSA, and how we can incorporate them into how we live out our faith. Having an Affirming identity is a huge priority for me. It is one of the reasons that I was first attracted and called to FSA, and I know that

others have come because of its Affirming status. So let us now find all the ways to honour all the colours of the rainbow for all the people of God. If you want to hear more about the rainbow and its Affirming symbol, please go to the podcast on www.fsaunited.com and listen to the sermon that I preached on July 26th, 2015.

May we all be embraced as family. May we tell our stories proudly. May who we are in the world be affirmed by humanity, as it surely is by God.

In love,
Michelle.
✝



Committee Reports



COUNCIL **Change Is in the Air** *Jo Ann Silcox*

As Council contemplates its fall start-up, we do so with profound gratitude for the presence of Rev. Michelle Down, among us since July.

Michelle's enthusiasm around our becoming a YES church—that is one which welcomes new persons and new ideas with the same devotion we have given to preserving the familiar and the known—has been infectious through the summer months.

In August Michelle will have represented London Conference at General Council 42—which will prayerfully consider large-scale changes in the organization and

funding of the United Church at every level. These changes will require prayerful consideration on the part of all of us as we determine how most faithfully, as a local congregation, we are to respond as a faithful people.

We look forward to collectively writing a mutual covenant of commitment, collaboration, and co-operation with one another and with the congregation, as collectively we begin to imagine together the new thing God is doing here among us.

Your prayers and your commitment—that of each and every one of you—are central as we become co-Creators with the Spirit in imaging this new thing which God is doing in our midst. ✝



CHRISTIAN DEVELOPMENT *Allyson Watson*

Happy fall! It will be great to be back and reconnect with the FSA community. Planning has been happening all summer to provide great things for the fall. Jane Dockrill has been working on new programming for church school, TNT and the God Squad. All youth and children's programmes will be starting September 13th. There will be the Sunday and Thursday morning Bible studies. Keep your eyes open for interesting new programmes,

in addition to the movie nights and book club.

On September 19th at 9:30am, we will be participating in a river clean-up in partnership with the London Muslim Mosque. Please contact Allyson Watson if you would like to help. Also, for anyone who is handling or serving food at the church, there will be a food handlers' certification course on September 26th.

As always, we encourage feedback about what we are providing and what we could provide to interest all members of FSA. Let us know! ✝



WORSHIP

Jane Westmorland

We welcomed the Rev. Michelle Down to First-St. Andrew's at a very joyful service (with cake) at the beginning of the summer.

Services during the summer were held in Proudfoot Hall. Michelle utilized projection equipment to present the service in power point, and delivered a riveting sermon series. Services in the Sanctuary will resume on Sept. 13th.

Looking ahead, we have a very busy fall season. Friendship Sunday, a day when you can bring a friend, make a new friend, or be a friend, will be celebrated on September 27th. On World Wide Communion Sunday, October 4th, we will join people around the world as we receive Communion. We look forward to the UCW conducting a service on October 18th. There will be a very special Music Sunday which will begin November.

Then, at First-St. Andrew's Anniversary Service, November 22nd, we will welcome Cheri DiNovo, MPP from Parkdale-High Park as our guest preacher. Cheri is a former United Church minister who is renowned for advocating for social justice. Although a date has not yet been set, we are also planning a Covenanting Service for Michelle, at which time we have the opportunity to make a commitment to her as she in turn makes a commitment to us.

The Worship Committee wishes to thank Kerry Stover, Tom Hiscock and David McKane for conducting the services through the months after Kate left and Michelle arrived.

We also have a special thank-you for the Rev. Dr. David McKane for being our guide as we met during that time. David attended our meetings, representing the ministerial staff, giving us the benefit of his knowledge and wisdom. †



PROPERTY

George Jolink,
Heather Vouvalidis



It is an exciting time at First-St. Andrew's as we gear up for our fall season under new leadership

and with an eye towards our future. As we continue to serve our spiritual needs, and the needs of those in our immediate community and the world beyond, the Property Committee works to ensure that our physical home remains viable for future generations.

This past summer our focus has been on repairs and enhancements both on the inside and outside of our building. You may notice that some areas with flaking paint have been repainted, the gallery hallway has been reconfigured, posters have been hung, and electrical upgrades have been completed. In addition, the boiler system has had a full inspection with minor repairs and alterations to our heating distribution. As I write this article we anxiously await the start of the exterior high-level painting. The summer weather (generally great) did produce a couple of massive rainstorms, which had an impact in our building. During an electrical storm our sanctuary lighting dimmer system was compromised and we are currently looking for a repair solution. Rest assured that we will not be in the dark.

As we move into the fall, our committee will focus on future projects, including a projection system for the sanctuary. This will allow us to expand our capabilities

for programming both during our services and for other functions. Stay tuned for details. We are also exploring avenues for the disbursement of old pews, which are currently occupying space in the coal room. We welcome your input.

Although the Property Committee oversees all aspects of property maintenance and determines priorities, we recognize that much of the actual work is handled by our staff and volunteers. At this time I would like to recognize specifically Ron Bradley, David Beach and Audrey Coulthard for their ongoing contributions to building/grounds enhancements. In addition, Tim Miedema continuously works on behalf of all of us to ensure that First-St. Andrew's is clean and functioning properly.

As always, thanks to you and the Board of Trustees for the ongoing support. †





M.O.E.
Nicaragua Boomerang Volunteer Trip
2015
Janice Elliott

In February, three members of FSA, Linda Badke, Jim and Janice Elliott, travelled to Managua, Nicaragua, with Companeros Inc. for the third time. Seeing the familiar faces of the Companeros staff, the other volunteers, and the children and families we had worked with other years was like reuniting with family members.

During this trip our focus was entirely on Los Quinchos School and the surrounding area. Houses were built for two families in great need. Jim worked on the house-building project but soon became sick. This gave us the opportunity to experience health care, Nicaraguan style! We were taken to a beautiful, modern, private hospital where Jim received excellent care with no waiting! Our host family was so kind and caring to Jim while he was sick. It was very heart-warming.

Linda and I had a most moving experience working with teachers at Los Quinchos School. We presented a series of four days of workshops to a group of 14 teachers there. We found them to be bright, supportive, dedicated, hard-working professionals, eager to learn new strategies to teach their students more effectively. Although we were mainly interacting with the teachers through interpreters, we felt a close bond with them during our time there. It was apparent that many teaching practices, which are well known to teachers in Canada, are not familiar to the teachers at Los Quinchos, and they were eager to learn the teaching techniques we presented to them. They communicated to us that they would very much like a teacher from Canada to spend a longer period of time with them, presenting workshops,

modelling best teaching practices, working with them on a group and individual basis.

We focused our workshops on stories, including reading, writing, telling, and using puppet shows and murals to tell stories. The most moving part was hearing the teachers' stories on the history of Los Quinchos School and how the revolution affected them and their students. It was an honour to have them share their history with us. We also had them write about their individual connections with Los Quinchos. Again, the stories were so much more moving than anything we could have expected. Some of the teachers were former students at the school, and the teachers who taught them

as students were now their mentors and colleagues. They told amazing stories of students who came from very difficult home situations, graduated and now have good jobs, such as one former

student who is working at a bank. A fellow volunteer, Janet Nield, collected these stories and is going to have them typed up and translated so they can be shared.

The teachers seemed to love everything we presented. We started each day with a short English class, and they were very interested in improving their pronunciation of English sounds and words. One day they told us our workshops were "stupendous!"

We have had such a wonderful experience in Nicaragua that we look forward to our next trip, which is in the planning stages. Several of the youth of our church have indicated their strong interest in a volunteer trip to Nicaragua, as have a few adults.

Please join us on September 20th after church to hear more about our experiences and our plan for a trip in 2016! We are so thankful for the support we have received from FSA, which has made such a difference in the lives of those living in poverty in Nicaragua, as well as ourselves. †



Jim, Janice and Linda with thier host family on their final evening

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2015 WHITE SQUIRREL GOLF TOURNAMENT

Diane Knoppert

Great day, great golf (sometimes), great fellowship, great food, great cause! These are the kinds of comments heard at the White Squirrel Golf Tournament; five great reasons to plan to be part of the 10th annual event.

We also had some record-breaking numbers this year: 103 registered for dinner; 33 Hole Sponsors; 26 on the Nature Walk; two Bancrofts (Mike and Dave) on the winning 18-hole team, which also included Linda and Dave Peeling; the 9-hole winners were Bill Guthrie, Del McLennan, and Bruce Richardson; one 50/50 Draw (the first at this event).

Over \$10,000 was raised to support four valuable outreach programmes: ELUCO (East London United Church Outreach); St. Paul's Daily Bread; Los Quinchos School in Nicaragua, and the Joanne McWilliam Memorial fund to provide bursaries for Nicaraguan students.

Thanks to everyone who participated in the tournament: Committee members and friends, golfers, walkers, diners, and those who donated auction items and sponsored holes. Special thanks to Bob Schram of Sterling Marking Products for donating posters and hole

sponsor signs. This year we raised \$4,900 from our hole sponsors alone: ABC Electric Inc.; Association of London Muslims; Paul and David Mullen; A. Millard George Funeral Home; BMO Nesbitt Burns, Peter McCallum; BMO Wealth Management, BMO Nesbitt Burns; Bartlett Restoration Ltd.; Brainworks; Mike McDonald, CIBC Wood Gundy; The McGorman Investment Team, CIBC Wood Gundy; Richard Nemeth, vice-president, portfolio manager, CIBC Wood Gundy; Collins Barrow KMD LLP Chartered Accountants; Dodington & Dodington Pipe Organ Services Inc.; Peter Ross, gen-car; HSM Consulting; Harris Funeral Home; IDS Integrated Digital Solutions; Investors Group, Chris Liddiard; JRAMM, Snowplowing—Lawn Maintenance, J. Skinner—C. Skinner; London Audio; McFarlan Rowlands Insurance Brokers; Ontario Door Controls; Paramount Painting & Decorating (London) Inc.; Progarde Security Inc.; RBC Dominion Securities, Ken Somerville; Remark Fresh Markets; Sherwood Travel; Skyline Elevator Inc., a Division of Schindler Elevator Corporation; Jane Hill, Agent, State Farm Insurance; Stevenson & Hunt Insurance Brokers, Part of Arthur J. Gallagher Canada Ltd.; Ken Chandroo, Subaru of London; Wendy Thompson & Associates; Paul Needham, Westview Funeral Chapel; Zavitz Insurance Inc.

Mark your calendar for the 10th Annual White Squirrel Golf Tournament at Ironwood Golf Club in Exeter, Saturday, June 11th, 2016. †



MEMBERSHIP & NURTURE FSA's First Annual Pride Parade Party

Anne Cummings

What a grand time we had at our first annual Pride Parade Party on the church lawn after the Sunday service on July 26th! This event was co-sponsored by the LGBTQ Committee, the Welcoming Committee, and the Membership and Nurture Committee as a way to welcome community members to our church who happened to use our lawn to watch the parade. Jane Dockrill organized fun games for the children that involved water, which was helpful for the hot day. A hotdog lunch was served with the help of many volunteers, and it is estimated that we fed about 150 people. We asked for a freewill donation for the lunch with the proceeds going to the Regional HIV/AIDS Connection, and a cheque for \$211 has been presented to them from FSA.

Once the parade reached our lawn, our youth were busy giving cups of lemonade and water to the marchers, who were very appreciative because of the heat on the parade route, (see photo on page 20). Marching with

our church banner were 16 FSA members, including our Reverend Michelle, wearing FSA t-shirts with the rainbow Affirm logo on the front, the FSA logo on the back, and the words, "Welcoming All." Our contingent was led by a car decorated by Amanda Williams and Cheryl Samson with rainbow-coloured balloons. Joyous music of affirming songs boomed from the car from a playlist created by their son, Thomas.

Our Pride Parade Party did meet the objective of the three organizing committees of welcoming the community to our church. Those members who interacted with our guests received comments such as, "I never knew anything about the United Church and did not know that you were gay affirming"; and "My coming out would have been so much easier if I had had a safe church like yours." There were also members from Westminster United in Thamesford and Richards Memorial who joined us on the lawn. To add to our welcome, our outdoor sign had the following message: "We are a welcoming church with reserved seats for all. We are inclusive and affirming. This week we celebrate gay pride." †



Supper Club Closes Its Doors

June McKay

On May 26th of this year, FSA's Supper Club held its last meeting. In 1949 a group called Bi-Focals began, and held regular meetings, taking the form of a shared potluck, and singing. It was intended for couples, the combined age requirement being 80 or more. The format then changed to include single people, and those of any age.

In 1995 I became convenor of the group, and have loved doing so ever since, with the help of my husband Jack, my sister Shirley Wynne, and many cheery volunteers. In 2005 the name was changed to Supper Club.

As we all have aged, and many who have moved to retirement homes find it more difficult preparing meals or do not want to drive at night, it is time to remember suppers shared with friends, sing-songs, and memorable presentations.



Some of the many unforgettable events for me are: three visits from the **Teen Challenge Farm** team; two performances by **Three Keyboards**—Peter Clements, Angus Sinclair and Stephen Holowitz; **The Rainbow Connection**, three beautiful couples in costume who showed us how real ballroom dancing is done; **Dr. Mike Bancroft** and his work with synchrotron radiation; **The London Plan** by the City of London Planning Department, and always lots of music and talent evenings, with great singing led by **Paul Merritt**.

As with any organization, its backbone is the strength of the volunteers, and the willing callers, all of whom are to be commended for behind-the-scene assistance. Thank you to all who have been so loyal and willing.

It is with a somewhat heavy heart, but with the joy of happy memories that I write this to you, my friends and fellow sojourners.

Affectionately,
June. †



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Harold Jackson

“Be master of your petty annoyances and conserve your energies for the big, worthwhile things. It isn’t the mountain ahead that wears you out—it’s the grain of sand in your shoe.” — Robert W. Service

	January–June 2015	January–June 2014
Total Income	\$310,210	\$334,052
Total Operations Expenses	\$335,503	\$354,196
Surplus/(Deficit) [Operations]	(\$25,290)	(\$20,143)
Trust Funds Assistance	\$65,883	\$46,386
Outreach [M & S Fund]	\$38,454	\$41,439
Surplus/(Deficit) [Net]	\$2,139	(\$15,196)

The table presents a consolidated financial picture for the first six months of 2015 by comparison to the same period in 2014 for First-St. Andrew’s United Church. Income continues to lag expenses for the period. However, increased support from trust funds investment income has allowed a small surplus to be recorded in 2015 versus 2014 for the period being reported. Cautious management of cash flow remains in place as it relates to the hierarchy of accounts payable during the summer, our “low time” for congregational givings. There are important results to consider that the summary figures do not reveal.

1. Congregational givings are \$14,220 less than for the same period in 2014.
2. Rental income is \$875 ahead of 2014 results, while all other local income is behind by \$10,494 versus 2014.
3. Significantly, Trust Funds income support is \$19,497 ahead, contributing to the surplus.
4. Significant expense reduction in the programme/staff area of \$26,231 has been realized during the comparative 2014 period, largely a result of the minister of worship and congregational life vacancy.
5. Operations expense exceeds 2014 expense by \$7,538 for the period resulting from un-forecast project costs.
6. M&S Fund 2015 remittance lags 2014 due to reduced givings for the period.

The data for the January to June 2015 compared to 2014 period are illustrated on the next page graphically. Your continued support and generosity is gratefully acknowledged and allows this community of faith to keep its promise of being “**At the Heart.**” May you have enjoyed a summer of rest and relaxation with family and friends.✚

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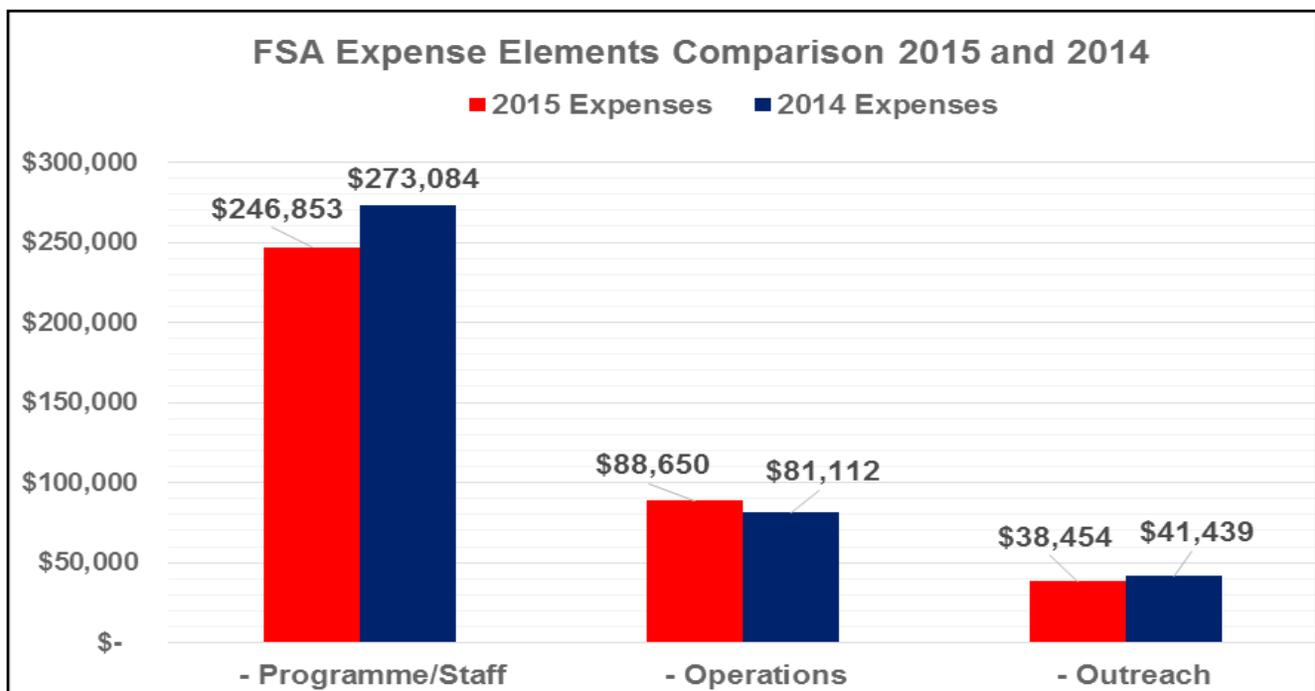
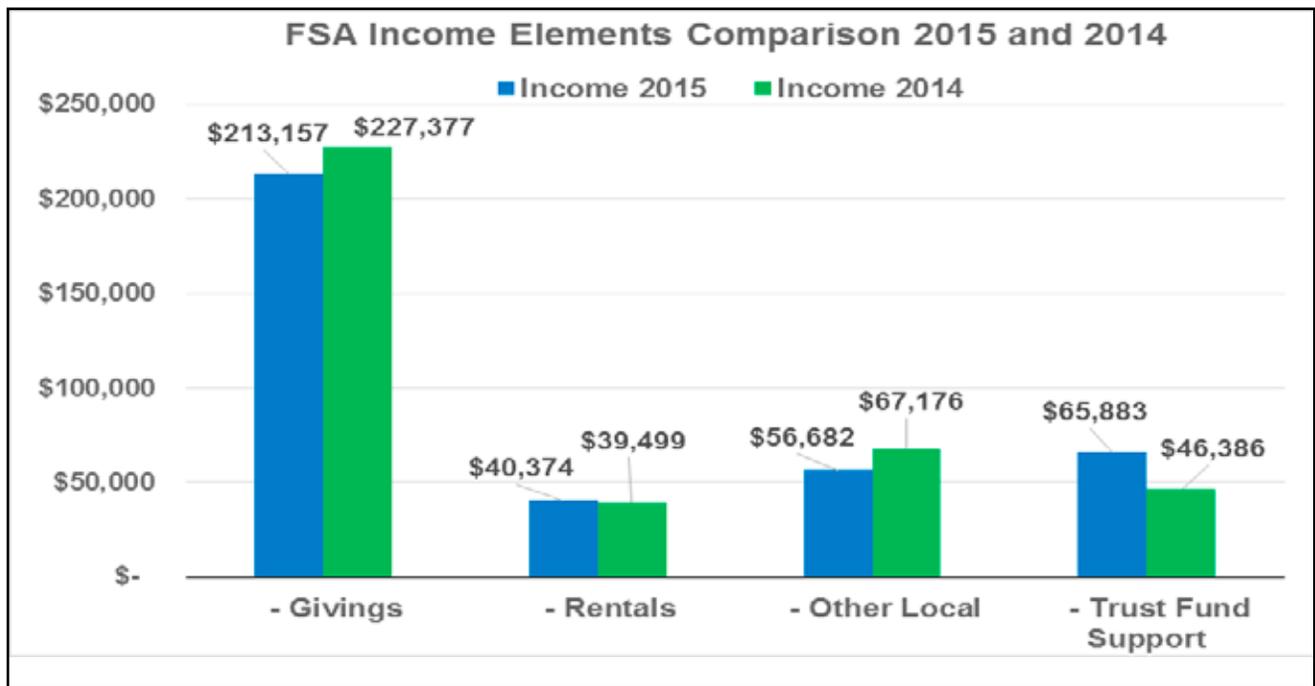
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ARCHIVES
Calling All Detectives
Bev Lindsay

The Archives Committee needs your help. Can you identify any of these faces? If you think you know someone, please contact Bev Lindsay. †



Photo #1



Photo #2

DID YOU KNOW?

ANNOUNCEMENTS

from MOE

September 13th: Corn Roast

From Christian Development

September 13th: Rally Sunday

September 21st: Book Club begins

September 30th: Movie Nights begin

From UCW

November 14th: Boutique Bazaar featuring French Café and Artisans' Alley

CHANGES

Weddings

Alex Danayan & Nare Stamboulia, July 4th, 2015

Stacy Souchard & Kyle Walling, July 18th, 2015

Hayden Mulholland & Hilliary Bingham, August 8th, 2015

Baptism

Adele Haven Matthews, August 2nd, 2015 (See page 20.)

Funerals

Grace (Pat) Potter, June 12th, 2015

Mary Round, July 12th, 2015

James Ballantyne, July 28th, 2015



>> Notes from Michelle (cont'd. from page 3)

With the United Church of Canada being offered new and exciting opportunities to dramatically adjust our denominational structure, we at FSA might be inspired by the courage and faithfulness of the changing post-millennial church.

Within all of this, the most important thing to me is that we embrace one another with peace and joy, and that we are open to the transformative power that Jesus is offering to us every single day. If we support, care, and celebrate one another, then together we will be able to do the thing that God asks of each and every one of us ... to simply change the world. To change fear into hope, distress into peace, and hatred into love. And for that, ALL God's children can say ... AMEN! †

>>View from the Pew (cont'd. from page 3)

As Elder Jim Dumont explained at the Traditional Knowledge Keepers' Forum in June 2014, "In Ojibwe thinking, to speak the truth is to actually speak from the heart."

The words spoken, the stories told "from the heart" at the commission are

powerful. They are difficult to read, difficult to accept and difficult to live with.

Of course, it pales in comparison with the lived experience and the legacy carried forward to today and beyond. But it is our responsibility, as a community of faith, as members of an organization that contributed to the suffering, to read, to listen, to absorb and to reflect deeply on this new truth. To learn more go to www.trc.ca

Next time ... reconciliation. †

>>Behind the Scene (cont'd. from page 9)

In most cases, buying a book does not give the purchaser the right to make reprints in whole or in part." To overcome this sanction, we now subscribe to a hymn copyright broker, CCLI, which acts as an agent for many (but not all) church music copyright owners.

What happens when we return to the Sanctuary on September 13th? Alas, we won't be able to project the service since we don't have the equipment to do so. As they say on Broadway, however, we would love an "angel" to come along and provide some backing. In the meantime we will continue to show the announcements only on our little Sanctuary screen. Stay tuned! †

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MUSINGS

ODE TO MY TREE (my tree is speaking)

*HERE WE ARE JUST YOU AND ME
YOU'RE THE HUMAN AND I'M THE TREE.
YOU WATCHED ME GROW SINCE I WAS SMALL,
YOU LONGED TO SEE ME SLIM AND TALL.*

*IN SUMMER MY LEAVES BEGAN TO SHADE
WHILE ALL YOUR LITTLE ONES STAYED AND
PLAYED.*

*BUT ALL THINGS CHANGE, IT COULDN'T BE
I ONLY WANTED TO BE A TREE.*

*GOOD BYE MY FRIEND I'VE GOT TO GO,
I GOT SO SICK I COULDN'T SHOW
MY LOVELY COLOURS IN THE FALL.
MY WOUNDED TRUNK YOU SAW IT ALL.*

*SO SIP SOME WINE AND THINK OF ME;
I'LL ALWAYS BE YOUR FAVOURITE TREE.*

(After thirteen years my backyard tree was chopped down, shredded and hauled away.) Barbara Bain



**PAUL & BOB
AT THE WHITE SQUIRREL**



**YOUTH SERVING
MARCHERS AT
PRIDE PARADE**



**OUR FISH THAT WENT
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Windows on First-St. Andrew's



MICHELLE MEETS THE QUILTERS



**ADELE'S "WARDROBE MALFUNCTION"
AT BAPTISM**

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OUR MISSION STATEMENT

First-St. Andrew's United Church is an inclusive Christian family encouraging spiritual growth through worship, friendship, learning and action.