



# Tidings

Vol 25, No 4 – Advent/Christmas/Epiphany 2015



## BUILDING BRIDGES

See stories on pages 3 & 7

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**EDITORIAL**

David Flynn [pdflynn@rogers.com](mailto:pdflynn@rogers.com)



**T**he warm enthusiasm of our new minister, the Reverend Michelle Down, has helped restore our belief in the mission of FSA. Maybe it's the honeymoon stage of our new relationship, but it seems as though this great congregation is more confident that it will continue into the future, probably with a new mandate and, no doubt, striking off in new and, perhaps, surprising directions. It is Advent season for the church year, and, maybe, an advent for our future.

I think the articles in this issue convey this renewed vigour—from George Jolink's report on how the Property Committee is coping with the maintenances of our old building, to plans from Worship and Christian Education for the coming year's activities. We have new ideas from the Town Hall meetings which took place last spring, at the end of November, and another in the New Year. It is encouraging that Council and its committees have already started to implement ways to cut down expenses to match our decreased congregational size. We can only hope that we will dare to look further into the future than the current year, to look carefully at the uses of our magnificent structure in ways outside those of the past.

As part of this wider perspective, *Tidings* is beginning a new series on what we are calling Community Collaboration—our association with other groups which rent our building, as well as groups with which we share our ideals. In this issue we feature JASNA, the Jane Austen Society of North America, which has long used our building. The writers are long-time member, Nancy Johnson, and her playwright sister Marion, whose play *Tecumseh* will be read at FSA in the spring.

Besides those groups which rent our premises, we may also write about other groups we work with, from neighbourhood community associations to other churches, synagogues and mosques who share our purpose and our God. In a time of world conflict, we need to model what it means to work with people with the same high value goals.

We have already heard of the dramatic changes being considered by the United Church of Canada as it also faces declining membership and givings. FSA could be a model of what a liberal-thinking, large downtown church can do to solve the problems faced by all religious organizations.

This coming year may be a significant turning point for us. Thanks, Michelle, for giving us hope during this time of Advent. †

*So then, let all of us speak the truth to our neighbours, for we are members of one another. No more lies, no more pretences. Tell your neighbour the truth. Communicate in love. In Christ's body we're all connected to each other, after all. When you lie to others, you end up lying to yourself. When you are unkind to others, you are unkind to yourself ... and so communicate kindness to one another, be tender-hearted, and forgive one another, as God in Christ has forgiven you. (Ephesians 4:25–32 adapted.)*

The early nomads, our ancestral Disciples of Justice and Agents of Peace, named communication as their top priority. They knew that if they were to thrive as a people, as God's people, then they must dialogue, engage and listen as acts of faithfulness. With no e-mail, no tweets, no Skype to rely on, our ancestors instead communicated by: following the Star in the East; the Wise men had Dreams and Visions; the Prophets and Sages taught lessons and

told stories; the hunters and gatherers listened to the animals to be led to water; the Diviners watched the rivers and streams above ground and below to seek direction and guidance.

If we, as today's Disciples of Justice and Agents of Peace, also name communication as our top priority, how are we going about it? Are we willing to be transformed by the words found in the letter to the Ephesians calling them to "communicate, tell the truth, be kind, tender-hearted and forgiving?" Are we ready to communicate in ways that can transform ourselves, our church, our community and our world?

We are in a time within our church calendar, when we are anticipating the birth of Jesus Christ to come to us anew. We are also in a time in our world, when hatred, fear and prejudice are being communicated stronger than love, hope and inclusion. Let **US** be agents that help to reverse that trend. Let **US** be disciples that reach out not only to our brothers and sisters in France, but also to those migrating around the world seeking a land of peace and freedom. (Cont'd. on page 19)

## Notes from Michelle



## TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION Part 2 of 2—Reconciliation Steve Elson

The following is a quote from the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Reconciliation at the crossroads.*

*To some people, reconciliation is the re-establishment of a conciliatory state. However, this is a state that many Aboriginal people assert never has existed between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples. To others, reconciliation, in the context of Indian residential schools, is similar to dealing with a situation of family violence. It's about coming to terms with events of the past in a manner*

*that overcomes conflict and*

*establishes a respectful and healthy relationship among people going forward. It is in the latter context that the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada has approached the question of reconciliation.*

To the Commission, reconciliation is about establishing and maintaining a mutually respectful relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples in this country. In order for that to happen, there has to be awareness of the past, acknowledgment of the harm that has been inflicted, atonement for the causes, and action to change behaviour. (Cont'd. on page 19)

## View from the Pew





**KATHRYN, JACOB,  
REBECCA AND  
ELIZABETH SKELLY**  
Pat McGregor

When asked what brought the family to FSA, Kathryn replied that she grew up here, and the church has always been a special place for her. Kathryn and Jacob were married here, and when their children were born Kathryn knew that she wanted them to have the opportunity to grow up within

before marrying Jacob, who is originally from Hamilton. Their family is comprised of “two beautiful daughters,” Rebecca, who is seven, and Elizabeth, four. They also have a cat named Orion.

Outside of the home Jacob is a customer service representative for TD Ameritrade, and Kathryn a physiotherapy assistant at a long-term-care home.

As a family the Skellys like to play board games or cards, ride bikes to the park, and also play on the computer. Kathryn’s personal hobby is cake decorating, saying that she often makes custom cakes and desserts for family and friends, leaving me to wonder how long it would take for me to become a friend! She enjoys crafts of all kinds with her girls.

Rebecca’s favourite book is *Wombat Stew* by Marcia K. Vaughan, and Elizabeth enjoys Mo Willems’ *Elephant and Piggie* series. They also like anything by Robert Munsch. Kathryn and Jacob don’t have much time for reading these days, but when they do they prefer science fiction and fantasy books.

When asked about favourite foods—apart from those cakes and desserts of course—pasta is a family favourite, especially with homemade garlic bread. Kathryn also really likes Japanese food.

One of the questions the *Tidings* team likes to ask is, “What feeds you spiritually?” Kathryn’s thoughtful reply, “I’d say that the most important thing for me is making a difference in the lives of others. I have always felt drawn to helping those in need; it brings me a sense of peace knowing that I can improve the world around me with a simple word or act,” speaks volumes about the character of this young woman.

I concluded by asking Kathryn, if she had the last question, what would it be? She said maybe the biggest question in her life these days is, “What’s next?” but figures she’ll just have to wait to find out.

Our lives are enriched and blessed by having the Skellys within our FSA family.



FSA too. She says that she always tells people that the best thing about her church is that everyone is welcome here. She loves the come-as-you-are attitude that they have always received. As a mother of young children Kathryn says it is nice to have a church “where we can all feel at home, and that kids are welcome to be kids.” The new recognition as an Affirming Ministry is also something of which she is very proud.

Kathryn has lived in London since she was a baby, but spent a year in Toronto



**MARILYN AND DAVID BEACH**  
David Flynn

"What am I doing here? What is my purpose in life?"

This was David Beach's response to the last interview question: "If you had the last question what would it be?"

Marilyn is from London but David grew up in Vancouver, where he fondly recalls walking the Pacific beaches. He trained as an airplane mechanic, specializing in propeller repair. His final job was restoring WWII propellers from the North African campaign. Working in Toronto he met Marilyn while attending a Gilbert and Sullivan performance in which Marilyn and David's sister performed. After a few years David and Marilyn left for Edmonton and lived there for seven years.

The Beaches moved back to Marilyn's hometown, where they first joined another church, but were not happy with the Sunday School. Marilyn already knew about FSA and they were much happier with our Sunday School, Marilyn teaching there until their two boys outgrew it.

They soon discovered the real strength of our congregation: the warm fellowship, and soon FSA became their community. Marilyn joined MOE and became active in the many outreach programmes of that committee.

Seven years ago David suffered a heart attack, which put him on permanent disability. He now volunteers to maintain our grounds, saying, "The grounds of FSA have become my yard." His work there has become a spiritual experience, a return to nature.

David is also an active member of

the Men's Brown Bag Lunch (BBL)—quick to volunteer for extra activities, such as welcoming people to the recent Boutique Bazaar. As well, his comments at the BBL help bring our wild theological discussions back to earth. Marilyn belongs to the FSA Book Club, and loved a recent book selection, *The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society*.

Their two boys, Ryan (22) and Jeremy (19) are both off at college and doing well. Jeremy, before he left, was a scripture reader, and, with his mother's help, was exceptionally well prepared. The Beaches can indeed be proud of these boys.



It seems to me that both Marilyn and David have answered the question with which I began this Profile: what are they doing? They have raised two fine young men; Marilyn has found a purpose in MOE's outreach; David's purpose is maintaining the beauty of the grounds surrounding this ancient edifice.

Thanks to both of you. †



**LUDHIANA SOJOURN**  
Mary McKim

**O**n Christmas Eve a group of carollers shuffled along dusty pathways between campus homes and I imagined it to be snow! We had arrived in early October, 1960, missionaries of the United Church assigned to the Christian Medical College, Ludhiana, Punjab, India. Dame Edith Mary Brown had founded this college in 1895 to train Christian women to serve the Muslim women who were prohibited from being

the Korean War eliminated that goal. John, who had expressed interest in going to China, started a paediatric practice in London in 1953. We joined FSA where Angus McQueen, arguably the greatest preacher in Canada, was an inspiration! The goal of mission service remained. In 1959 we volunteered to the Foreign Mission Board to serve overseas. With John's specialty they sent us to a medical college where his teaching could be utilized.

New staff residences were built on the school property of the American Presbyterian Mission, where courtyard gates opened to a busy thoroughfare thronged with bicycle rickshaws, bicycles, pedestrians in colourful costumes, beggars, and "holy" cows wandering freely, with a few cars honking horns to get through the press. A community church held Hindi Sunday morning services and afternoon English ones. All the denominations worshipped together.

Household necessities required many rickshaw rides to the "Bazaar," a warren of narrow alleys with open shop fronts. Different items were in separate alleys and



viewed by male physicians. Following independence the college expanded to include fifty percent male students with a greatly increased staff, and a new hospital still under construction. Language study was mandatory, but John began his clinical work immediately, establishing a paediatric ward, while I organized a new house with cement floors and high ceilings with fans. We were assigned a cook, an ayah, and language "pundits" for daily Hindustani lessons.

Growing up in China in a mission community, I entered medical school intending to return. But Communism and

much searching was required. I was especially taken by the gorgeous saris and bought some for myself and friends at home. Winter was cool if snowless. We adopted Punjabi dress: cotton "Salvar-Kameez," wide-legged pantaloons with knee-length tops, and sweaters.

In contrast, summers were unbearably hot. Families retreated to the hills and were able to take the children out of "boarding." The long vacation was in winter when snow came to the hills. We hosted a number of student evenings.

*(Cont'd. on page 19)*



## FSA ROUNDS UP ITS CIRCLES—PART 2

Jane Daichendt

**T**idings' 2015 September issue demonstrated that FSA and Circles became partners in fighting local poverty. This issue further explores Circles, FSA's involvement, and Circles' "leaders."

Circles' coordinator, Shane Clarke, started the "Getting Ahead" programme, an eight-week workshop which screened Ontario Works (OW) recipients for suitable motivation levels and personal understanding of individual barriers. In November 2013, FSA hosted this programme for Circles and twenty-five "leaders" were chosen.

FSA's Circle consists of twelve leaders, and Youth for Christ's Circle has thirteen. FSA's Circle of volunteers (formerly the Hospitality Team) has three teams, each consisting of a captain and ten volunteers. Volunteers and staff prepare the room and a dinner meal for our guests. What a presence of compassion!

Leaders meet with Megan Pyper, their coordinator and mentor, three times monthly. Over the course of a year, six topics are studied: financing; emotional, mental and physical wellbeing; support systems; relationships and role models, and knowledge of hidden rules of the economic class. Every third Monday, Megan conducts a "Big View" where leaders receive one-on-one attention and discuss their confrontations with systemic poverty.

Leaders are in their twenties/thirties. Their monthly income is only \$625—for shelter, food, clothing and transportation (varies with family and medical needs).

Leaders receive OW incomes while they take part in Circles and are not penalized if they discontinue. Leaders' self-regard improves and they acquire practical life and employment skills. With forty-nine percent of leaders enrolled as students and/or employees, OW has deemed Circles successful.

Old attitudes and negative stereotypes of poverty are other obstacles. "Bridges



out of Poverty" offers the public some ideas about how this can be overcome. Also, Circles enhanced its public visibility by establishing a Guiding Coalition—essentially a board of directors.

In November, London Circles secured its funding to operate in 2016, and discussions are under way to maintain funding for this programme.

FSA is pleased to be involved with this successful endeavour. †



## TOUR TO IRELAND

Bob Swartman

**D**avid McKane led a great tour to Ireland in early September, ably assisted by his wife Susan.

We landed in Dublin on August 28<sup>th</sup>, after an uncomfortable flight. It seems that Air Canada, operating their charter service as Rouge, had not had many complaints, so they moved the seats closer together, more like tightening a tourniquet!

We climbed on the tour bus with Willi Cusker, the affable Irish driver, and took off for Belfast. We had a get-together and opening dinner that evening, and next morning we travelled to Downpatrick, the burial site of Saint Patrick. Willi had warned us that David was determined to follow a long tradition and have a 90-minute service in the nearby cathedral, but David gave a spiritual message appropriate for the location. Bless the lad! Back to Belfast and tours around the city. We saw the Catholic and Protestant neighbourhoods,

and the scene of the Troubles near the Ulster Constabulary HQ in the '70s. Plus we visited the Titanic Museum and saw where the good ship was built.

We set off on Monday morning, along the north shore of the Belfast Lough, through David's hometown of Jordanstown, and on to the Giants Causeway. We continued on to Londonderry where we had a day trip to the Genealogy Centre in Omagh; a tour of Derry; past the Bog-side (another site

of the Troubles) and a walking tour on the wall that surrounds the old town.

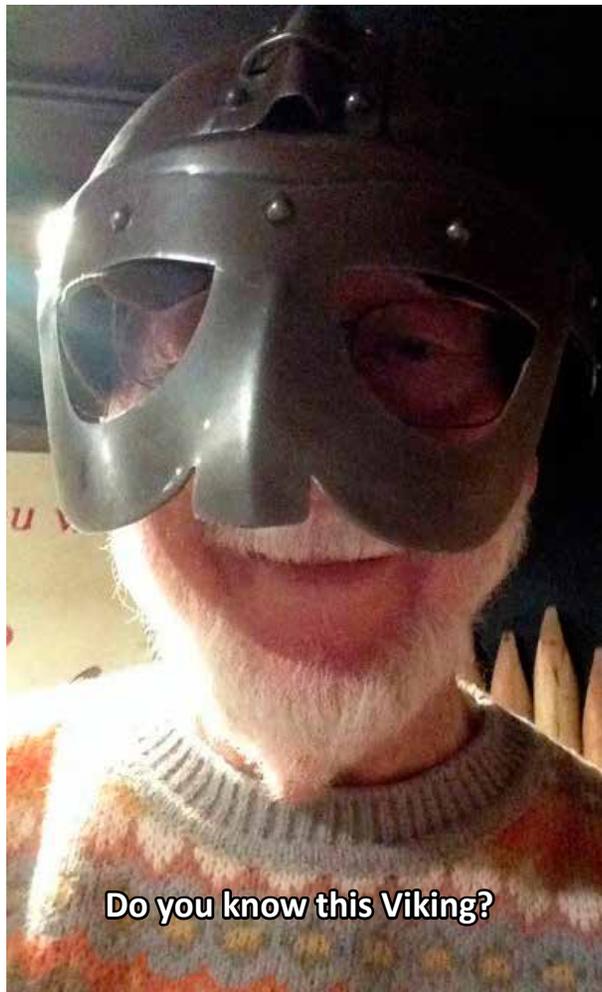
From there we headed in to Eire, visited the Belleek porcelain factory and Yeats' grave, and stayed in Westport. I had dinner with someone whom I had known when he was a graduate student at Western and now a retired civil engineering professor from Galway University. Our group toured the wild and romantic Connemara, then on to Limerick where we visited the Cliffs of Moher, followed by a medieval dinner at the 15<sup>th</sup> century Bunratty Castle.

Then on to Killarney and tours of the Ring of Kerry and Dingle Peninsula. At that time my grandson and his wife, both medical residents in Germany, arrived on their own holiday, so we had a family reunion and dinner together three nights running. I had to apologize to the group that I couldn't get rid of my grandkids!

Proceeding on to Waterford, founded by the Vikings 1,100 years ago, we visited the House of Crystal, with a stop overnight in Kilkenny. We then travelled to the National Stud farm where only the best horses are bred for racing. Arriving in Dublin, with eleven days of magnificent wild scenery behind us, we saw Trinity College and many other historic sites, including two Protestant cathedrals, St. Patrick's and Christ Church. All very interesting, as Dublin was founded about 850 AD by the Vikings who stayed for about 200 years, but after two centuries of intermarriage were absorbed by the Celts, now called the Irish.

On the penultimate evening I went to Monkstown to have dinner with the father of a friend from London, ON. I returned by bus but got off a bit early. As I wandered through the maze of one-way streets and detours I asked directions from two mechanics installing boots on illegally parked cars. I mentioned the hotel but they didn't know it; then I said it was next to the Black Horse pub. They said "Jump in and we'll take you there," so I was delivered to my hotel by two employees of Dublin Parking Services. Only in Ireland you say?

*(Cont'd. on page 19)*



Do you know this Viking?

*Editor's Note: Occasionally we will publish articles on groups in the wider community with which FSA has some connection. Currently we have five long-term tenants, Meals on Wheels, which has exclusive use of Farquhar House; Soul Care, a health and wellness programme, which uses rooms on the second floor; DevaTree, a yoga school, using the Chapel and a second space for breaks; S.O.U.P., (Southern Ontario Ukulele Players) using the Fireside room on Monday evenings, and JASNA (Jane Austen Society of North America).*

*In addition to these tenants, we have several regular and recurring users. We are pleased to be a facility of choice for the Kiwanis Music Festival, Amabile Choirs, Pro Musica, Fanshawe Chorus and, occasionally, the Musicians of Orchestra London.*

*In this issue, Marion Johnson, sister of Nancy, a long-time member of FSA, writes about the Jane Austen Society, which meets regularly in our building.*



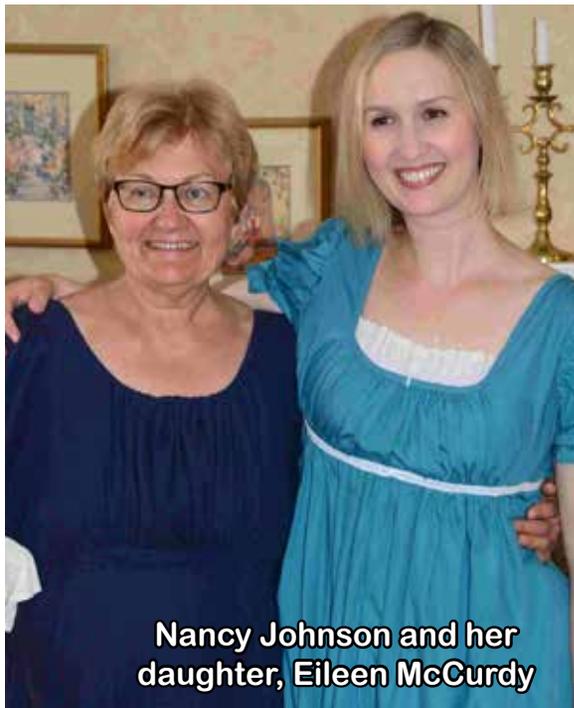
**JANE AUSTEN  
SOCIETY OF NORTH  
AMERICA (JASNA)  
London Chapter**  
*Nancy Johnson (with  
Marion Johnson)*

In October 2000, a bright young grade nine student at Medway High, Eileen McCurdy, came up with a highly original project for her English class: organize a local chapter of the Jane Austen Society of North America. The launch of the club in the parlour of FSA was a great success. Soon afterward, Eileen's Mom—Nancy Johnson—took over as coordinator, and Jane Austen fans in London have never looked back.

The group meets four times a year, with speakers coming from as far away as Vancouver—or closer to home, from the Toronto JASNA chapter, from our own Western University, or from some of the highly knowledgeable members of the local club. Topics include various aspects of the Regency period (including the life of the military, Regency clothing,

the clergy, etc), as well as examinations of Austen's six celebrated novels, her letters, her juvenilia or her two unfinished novels.

One of the unique qualities of the London chapter is the abundance of talented members in the arts. Musicians Norm Abbott (pianist) and Nancy Quinn (soprano) share music of the period at many events, while resident playwright Marion Johnson has presented numerous short adaptations of scenes from Austen novels, as well as two Fringe plays (based on *Pride & Prejudice*, and *Emma*). Meanwhile, dance mistress Maureen Ryan regularly teaches Regency dances to the group, a great boon to those



**Nancy Johnson and her  
daughter, Eileen McCurdy**

fortunate enough to attend one of the JASNA AGMs, which always feature a full-scale ball.

Back at home, there is an annual summer picnic, high tea in August at a posh locale and, around December 16<sup>th</sup>, a party to celebrate Jane's birthday. Next January 23<sup>rd</sup>, there will be a Jane Austen Day at the Central Library, a chance to reach out to the London community and find those individuals who just can't get enough of Jane Austen! She is a writer whose integrity, wit, charm, eloquence, originality and wisdom never fail to educate and entertain. The only regret of the true Jane-ite is that "dear Jane" didn't write more books!





## **KEN WRIGHT WINS CARING CANADIAN AWARD** *Jim Silcox*

**O**ur own Dr. Ken Wright has won the Governor General's Caring Canadian Award,

which recognizes "living Canadians and permanent residents who have made a significant, sustained, unpaid contribution to their community, in Canada or abroad." It usually goes to those who work behind the scenes and display humility, compassion and engagement about what they are doing. Does that sound like Ken? Definitely!

As founder and director of the Dental Outreach Community Service (DOCS), he has provided free dental care to hundreds of low-income families in London since 2008. In addition, as a volunteer with Community Living London for over 17 years, he has bettered the lives of people with developmental disabilities through his instrumental role in the creation of the Scatcherd Centre.

Ken received his honour at a ceremony at the Lieutenant Governor's Suite at Queen's Park on Tuesday, November 10<sup>th</sup>. †



**Ken Wright, the Governor General and Jean Wright**

## HAVE YOU HEARD?

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

#### **from MOE**

- Feb. 21<sup>st</sup>: Mission Sunday: Glen Pearson, director of the London Food Bank and former MP, will be speaking.

#### **from Christian Development**

- Dec. 13<sup>th</sup>: Community Christmas Party
- Mining the Mystery—exploring our faith through the lens of science, music and theology. Jan. 31<sup>st</sup>, Mike Bancroft; Feb. 21<sup>st</sup>, Bob and Jill Kennedy; April 2<sup>nd</sup>, David McKane. Mark your calendars for these exciting opportunities.

#### **from Music**

- Dec. 11<sup>th</sup>: Advent Recital: The Laudamus Bells, Paul Merritt conducting.
- Jan. 31<sup>st</sup>: Bluegrass Hootenanny, after church, with "Kevin's Bacon Train." Watch for more details.

#### **from Worship**

- Dec. 13<sup>th</sup>: Children's Pageant
- Dec. 24<sup>th</sup>: Family Service at 6:30pm and Candlelight Communion at 10pm.

### **CHANGES**

#### **Deaths**

- Fredrick Bruce Eggett, Sept. 26<sup>th</sup>
- Cecil Shaver Johnston Jr., Sept. 30<sup>th</sup>

#### **Weddings**

- Robert Ernest Jordan and Heather Marie Mabee, Aug. 15<sup>th</sup>
- James Melville Deacon and Gail Norma Jamieson, Sept. 12<sup>th</sup>
- Gene Richard Vicente Mercer and Elyse Catherine Ross, Oct. 9<sup>th</sup>

#### **New Members**

- Joyce Payne, Sept. 21<sup>st</sup>

# Committee Reports



## COUNCIL

Jo Ann Silcox

*See, I am doing a new thing ... Isaiah 43:19*

Scripture provides no better guide to the renewal of hope that Christmas brings than to read anew the promise of the Servant Songs from Second Isaiah, which have comforted generations of anxious people of God through the millennia.

We are as a church community daring to believe that we are living through and out of a long season of anxiety into a growing awareness that the new thing which God has promised is already taking root among us.

Rev. Michelle Down has brought to both the ministry of preaching and pastoral care a hope-filled presence,

which prompts even the worst worrywarts among us to dig deeper and to try harder to be a people of God in the now, not just in some fear-filled future.

Council is working harder to bring down walls of division in favour of consciously seeking out joint activities in which we might learn together to do a new thing in a new way with new joy.

As we work on resolving differences within, we are increasingly conscious of the call of our neighbourhoods—church and unchurched—to reach out in genuine welcoming, listening closely to the Spirit's call to be a renewed and renewing people.

There are miles to go before we sleep but, with the God whom Isaiah reminds us is constantly our companion, all things are possible.

May this Christmas season be one in which love, joy, hope and peace shine in each of your hearts. ✚



## MUSIC

Anne Cummings

This year's Friday Advent Noon Recitals had a wonderful start of seasonal music from the talented Kennedys, with Bob

on the clarinet and Lynda accompanying him on the piano. We are so fortunate that these gifted musicians continue to enrich our lives at FSA through their beautiful music. This recital was followed by Paul Merritt on the organ, where he displayed the many colours and moods of our mighty instrument, as enjoyable Christmas music filled the sanctuary. The final concert, on December 11<sup>th</sup>, will be by the Laudamus Bells, directed by Paul Merritt. They will be playing arrangements of some of your favourite Christmas carols.



Will Todd and Lynda Kennedy during Will Todd Weekend, Oct. 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup>

On Sunday, January 31<sup>st</sup>, the Music Committee is sponsoring a Bluegrass Hootenanny luncheon in Proudfoot Hall at noon as a fundraiser for the operating budget of the church. This is going to be a fun event for the entire church family with good food and lively entertainment from the bluegrass band of Kevin's Bacon Train. Our own Mark Schram and Marty Kolls are members of this band. You will be able to shake off the midwinter blahs with high-energy music and dancing for children of all ages.

Save the Dates: **May 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup>** for a **celebration of Paul Merritt's 32 years at FSA and his retirement**. This will be a very special weekend that begins on the evening of May 28<sup>th</sup> with a choir concert. On the morning of May 29<sup>th</sup>, Paul will be honoured by the congregation in the Sunday service, followed by a celebration luncheon for the congregation at 1:00 pm at the Lamplighter Inn. ✚



## MEMBERSHIP AND NURTURE

*Audrey Coulthard*

The committee has met monthly during the fall. Thanks to the dedicated committee members for their support.

Following the membership roll review, a small task force is investigating a consistent process to ensure that office files are kept updated for members, adherents and potential members. Part of the plan includes a renewed effort to integrate new members into our faith community, emphasizing the need for volunteer mentors.

It has been noted that mail is not being picked up from some slots for prolonged periods. It was suggested that if we know a friend who has not been at church for a while, offer to take their mail to them.

Thank you to the UCW for their continued support, which provides a small gift taken to confined members by the Congregational Visiting Team at Christmas.

Your continuing efforts to keep the pastoral care and visiting team informed of those who need support are appreciated.

- Welcoming young people.
- Welcoming families of diverse composition.

We welcome anyone interested in serving on our committee or on one of the task teams. Feel free to approach any member with your interest or suggestions.



## Affirm Sub-Committee

*Anne Cummings*

For the third year, the KnitWits have been knitting red scarves for a public awareness project at the Regional HIV/AIDS Connection (RHAC). Last year, knitters from around Southwestern Ontario donated over 1500 scarves for this project. RHAC places an information card on each scarf about HIV/AIDS and then passes them out to people at the Covent Garden Market and other downtown locales during AIDS Awareness Week at the end of November. On November 15<sup>th</sup>, George Jolink artfully arranged 55 scarves from our KnitWits around the chancel. In the service that day, Rev. Michelle invited those members of the congregation who wanted to stand for peace in action to come forward, don one of the scarves, and stand as witnesses in the chancel. We were privileged to have the coordinator of the Red Scarf Project at RHAC, Martin McIntosh, attending the service. Rev. Michelle called him forward, removed the red scarf she was wearing as a stole, draped it around him, and commissioned him to go forth to educate and raise awareness while knowing that he had our supportive love and caring with him. As we sang the closing hymn, the full chancel of children, teens and adults presented their scarves to Mr. McIntosh to take into the community from FSA. †



## Welcoming Sub-Committee

*Heather Locking-Cusolito*

The Welcoming Committee, consisting currently of Anne Cummings, Heather Locking-Cusolito, Barry Tiffin and Pam Turner-Langley, was formed arising out of a decision at the 2014 Annual Congregational Meeting. Our mission is to examine ways to enhance our welcome to all people, including the eleven groups identified in the FSA Vision Statement. Since our formation we have met six times and have accomplished the following:

- Developed and approved our Terms of Reference. Established liaisons with the Membership and Nurture Committee.
- Developed, distributed and analyzed the results of a Needs Assessment regarding priorities for welcoming, (see results below).
- Begun to establish task teams to focus on the three priorities we have established for the coming year.

We know that there are many welcoming activities that already are taking place in our congregation. For the coming year we intend to look into the following three areas to identify current welcoming practices and explore ways in which we could enhance them:

- General welcoming practices.





## FINANCE COMMITTEE

Harold Jackson

### Financial Stewardship 2015

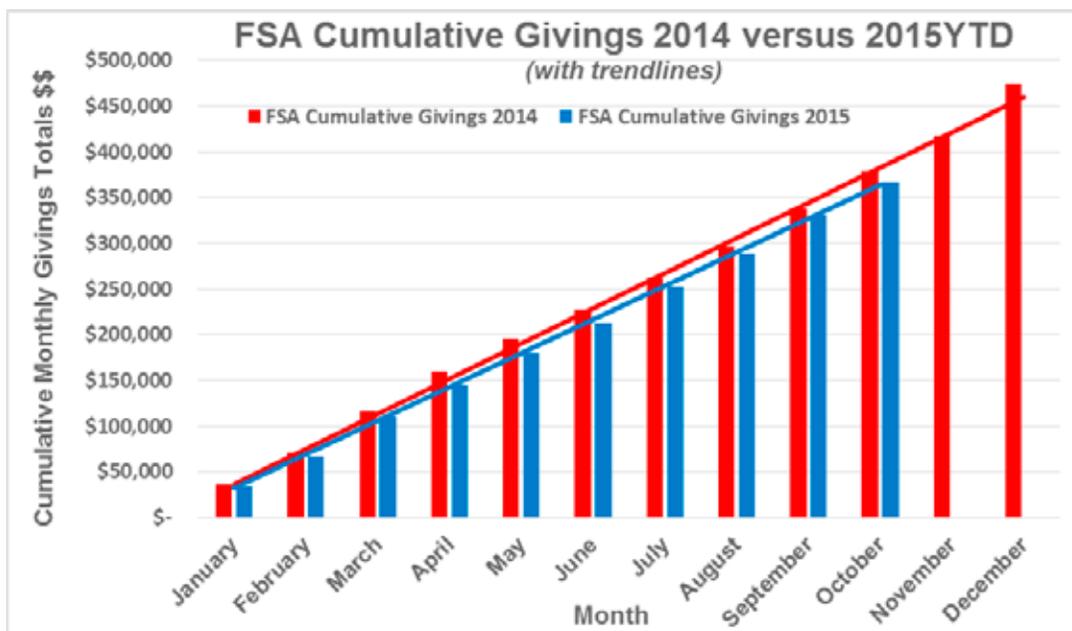
***“Some people are always grumbling because roses have thorns;  
I am thankful that thorns have roses.” Alphonse Karr***

Financial stewardship has not been without its “thorns” in 2015. The 2015 budget approved by the Annual General Meeting of the congregation forecast a deficit of \$57,025. Considered deliberations by Council and input from a May “Town Hall” meeting generated a June Revised scenario to balance the 2015 budget. Immediate financial initiatives instituted then have resulted in a small surplus of \$4,336 as of October 31<sup>st</sup>. With two months of actual results to be received, there remains the potential of a small deficit at year-end. The operating reserve fund currently at \$26,963 would be used to balance expense excursions.

Planning for the 2016 budget forecast is in progress. The objective of preparing a balanced budget remains an operational priority. Revenue is forecast from local sources, (givings, rentals, gift card net profit and other planned funding initiatives), in addition to the availability of specified support from Trust Fund investment growth. Ensuring a financial picture that allows stewardship revenue to meet expense projection plans is essential to realizing congregational growth objectives.

Generosity remains **“At the Heart”** of attaining revenue needs. Stewardship givings in 2015 are behind the same period in 2014 by \$12,280. Can we still count on each of you to be among those good and faithful stewards? The need is real.

The accompanying graph presents congregational-giving results to date (October 31<sup>st</sup>, 2015) by comparison to results from the prior year



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## COMMUNICATIONS & MARKETING

*Jim Silcox*

This fall the committee has been busy on several fronts. First, we've been working with administration and the shopping and gift card folks to get as many of the FSA family as possible to use our gift cards when buying groceries, gas and everyday items. We are aiming to increase the numbers of regular weekly card buyers. In addition, we remind those who are buying items for church committee functions to use our cards. Don't forget that you may order your cards online. Just click on the Shopping and Gift Card icon on our web pages.

Our linkages with other committees of the church remain strong. We have liaised with the Welcoming of

Membership & Nurture to turn out the name badges that are now ubiquitous, and are currently working with them on a new pew card that will extend a warm and informative welcome to those who attend service and other events in the Sanctuary. We are also proud to have joined forces with the UCW to publicize the recent and very successful Boutique Bazaar. Music, MOE, Stewardship and Worship have also partnered with us in getting the word out about various church events this fall.

Finally, a joint sub-committee of Worship and C&M has been working diligently on improving the mechanism for broadcasting our announcements, aiming for coordination of the email blast, the weekly printed announcement insert, the Sunday Slide Show and the outdoor lawn sign. We know it is a work in progress and will continue to make adjustments as called for. †



## PROPERTY

*George Jolink*

*Heather Vouvalidis*



As 2015 draws to a close, the Property Committee looks back with pride on the work completed over the course of this year. Maintaining a large property and historic buildings with aging infrastructure presents challenges. In this past year the Property Committee completed several projects both planned and unplanned and, as a result, we at First-St. Andrew's can enjoy improved heat distribution, aesthetic enhancements, improved curb appeal, improved safety and cost savings.

- During 2015 the following projects were completed:
- Exterior LED lighting;
- Interior flooring to St. Andrew's hall main floor;
- Atrium door repairs;
- Boiler inspection, repairs to heating distribution;
- Organ inspection, repairs to faulty pipe fasteners;
- Exterior high-level painting;
- Safety enhancements at Farquhar House.

The costs for maintaining our historic structure are significant, and this could not be accomplished without the support of the Board of Trustees. We owe them a huge thank you, not only for the management of our trust funds, but also for the commitment they display to helping the Property Committee address ongoing needs

and improvements to our physical plant.

At present our committee is working to establish priorities for next year. Items under consideration:

- Improvements to Fireside Room—flooring, ventilation;
- East/West narthex entrance repairs;
- Improvements to heat distribution;
- Main floor bathroom ventilation;
- Modifications to Custodial Supplies closet;
- Low-level painting;
- LED/dimmer light conversion in Sanctuary;
- Projection system in Sanctuary/Proudfoot Hall;
- Replacement of sign at Queens and Waterloo.

Priorities will be established based on need, payback and affordability. It is our expectation that some items can be handled in our regular budget; however, it is very likely that some form of capital fundraising will be required to tackle larger, more costly items. Stay tuned.

As always, Heather and I extend our thanks to the committee for their ongoing work, and especially to Tim, our facilities manager. †

**SERVICES:**

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**UCW**  
Jay Snyder

### Boutique Bazaar 2015

What was once known as the Holly Bazaar this year became the Boutique Bazaar on November 14<sup>th</sup>, 2015. Hundreds of people were attracted to the event and the many items ranged from baked goods, preserves, jams and jellies, handmade cards, pet items, jewellery, to the wonders of needlecraft work.

The event included a French Café that served tantalizing pastries, croissants, baguettes and quiche to hungry visitors. The God Squad served guests to the Café, adding an extra special touch to the event.

A new organization, Bridging the Gap—artisans with Autism Spectrum Disorder, had a popular table at this year's event showcasing their artwork. The event also featured the talents of FSA musicians from harp to flute to piano and voice.

This event, always a favourite in the community, has occurred for over 60 years. All monies received from this event go to local charities and to the Mission and Service Fund of the United Church of Canada. Our UCW remains the second-highest donor to Mission and Service in Canada.

The UCW sends a heartfelt thank you to all who contributed to and attended the Boutique Bazaar.

### Other UCW News

**National Project:** The National UCW project, "Bread Not Stones," focusing on helping children in poverty, continues.

**Doll Project:** Our UCW continues to be active in the "Doll Project," initiated by the women in Alberta that has been in effect for over five years. This project raises awareness of child poverty in Canada. In London alone, 22% of children live in poverty. This is well above the national average of 14%. A major factor in this problem is the lack of affordable housing. †



Nov 14<sup>th</sup>, The French Café wait staff at the Boutique Bazaar



Nov 14<sup>th</sup>, the colourful French Café tables at the Boutique Bazaar

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## CHRISTIAN DEVELOPMENT

Allyson Watson

There are a few upcoming events that you will want to mark on your calendar:

- Advent series led by Michelle, December 2<sup>nd</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, and 16<sup>th</sup> in the Chapel at 7:00 pm.
- Christmas Pageant December 13<sup>th</sup>, followed by the Community Christmas Party from 2:00–4:00 pm.
- *Mining the Mystery* led by David McKane, Bob and Jill Kennedy and Michael Bancroft, January 31<sup>st</sup>, February 21<sup>st</sup> and April 3<sup>rd</sup> in the Chapel (5:30–7:30). This series will be exploring our faith through the lens of science, music and theology.

If you are interested in helping with the Community Christmas Party please contact Allyson Watson or

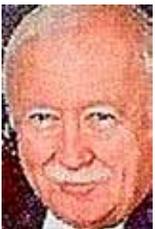


Katie Glaves. We are in need of volunteers the day of the event and also donations to fill the baskets for the families who are attending. There will be a sign-up sheet in the Fireside Room.

We have seven youth who are fundraising in order to attend a mission trip in the summer of 2016. Please keep your eyes open for opportunities to support them.

We look forward to bringing you new and exciting programming in addition to our regularly scheduled events. If you have something you are interested in, please chat with one of our wonderful CD members (Jane Dockrill, Michael Feeney, Katie Glaves, Nancy Howard, Chris Lindsay, Susan McKane, Deanne and

David Pederson, Glenda Robinson, Jo Ann Silcox, Monique Silcox, Pam Turner-Langley and Allyson Watson). †



## WORSHIP

Stephen Adams

As we enter the seasons of Advent and Christmas, we know there will be celebrations of a happy season of the year, in church and elsewhere. But events in the outer world shadow our lives, and our minds are heavy, too, with confused feelings of fear and helplessness. This year, there is special urgency for Christians to reflect on the true meaning of being Christian in a secular, divided world. In worship, we welcome the seasonal rituals: Advent Sunday, with its Festival of Lessons and Carols, comes November 29<sup>th</sup>. The Children's Pageant will be presented on December 13<sup>th</sup>. The two services on Christmas Eve will occur at their usual times. We will

take joy in the Christian message, but let us pray too for the victims of senseless violence, and for the homeless, both abroad and here in London. And let us pray for the peace of the season to all, whatever their faith.

We on the Worship Committee are responsible for planning the Sunday morning worship services throughout the year. If you have compliments or (constructive) criticism about worship at FSA, please address them to the committee through the main office, or to individual members: Jane Westmorland (Chair), Rev. Michelle Down (ex officio), Paul Merritt, Jim Silcox, Barry Tiffin, Kerry Stover, Joan Bancroft, Barbara Cunningham, Stephen Adams and Pam Turner-Langley.

The Worship Committee wishes the best of this Christian season to the congregation of FSA. †

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## MISSION OUTREACH & ENVIRONMENT

*Barb Dalrymple*

### SYRIAN REFUGEE APPEAL

On November 15<sup>th</sup> Linda Badke and Marilyn Beach proudly presented a cheque for \$3,240.00 to Don Scanlon from the Syrian Refugee Committee of Byron United Church. Last spring their first two families arrived from Damascus. The children are flourishing in school and the adults are attending ESL classes and looking for work. What we at FSA raised, along with money from Metropolitan and others, has allowed the committee to complete a sponsorship application for a third family, which is now being processed. They are also completing the paperwork for another two families. As Byron stated, it is “the right thing to do.” Thank you FSA for helping us do “the right thing” as well.

The United Church also has a Syrian appeal for their partners’ work with refugees in Lebanon, Jordan and Syria. Over \$400,000 has been raised across Canada. In addition there have been 81 applications by United Churches for sponsorship. BRAVO to our United Church of Canada. The Canadian Foodgrains Bank is also providing food in these Middle Eastern countries.



## STEWARDSHIP

### Gratefully Sharing: Stewardship at FSA

*Tara Gonder*

It’s been a busy month for stewardship at FSA. The fall pledge drive is bringing our church a much-needed financial boost, and our volunteers have been so busy that it’s difficult to keep track of all the wonderful things that are happening at FSA.

As the Christmas season approaches, we will have even more opportunities to give generously of the resources we have to offer. We may volunteer more of

## ST. PAUL’S DAILY BREAD FOOD BANK

Our Thanksgiving Food Drive was quite successful. The need is always there for non-perishable items such as cereal, tuna, as well as toiletries, including razors, shaving cream, toothpaste, shampoo, etc. The number of clients continues to increase. Please continue to support them.

## CHRISTMAS SHARE FOR ELUCO—WHITE GIFT SUNDAY

Thanks for your generosity in picking up tags and purchasing Gift Cards. Those purchases benefit both our outreach projects, ELUCO and FSA operations. Our own Nancy Howard, the ELUCO chaplain, identified the needs of her community. With two weeks to go before WHITE GIFT SUNDAY, we have collected \$1,500.00 to help brighten the Christmas season for Nancy and her community.

## CANADIAN FOOD GRAINS BANK—GROW A ROW

Another successful campaign and corn roast with our special guest, David Epp, the new coordinator of the CFGB, on hand to bring us up-to-date and answer questions. Our total is \$4,545.75. Our partner church, St. Marys United, as well as the actual crop, raised \$2,860. The total is matched 4:1 by CIDA. †

our time to help with the many FSA Christmas initiatives. We may divert a few more dollars to support FSA or other charities which make a difference in both our own community and in the wider global one. We may take an extra moment to help someone in need. It’s a time when we are especially reminded to focus not on ourselves, but on the needs of those around us.

Let’s take a moment this Christmas season to be thankful for all that we have, and even more thankful that we have much to share. On behalf of the Stewardship Committee, I wish a very “Happy Christmas” to all, and a prosperous and joyful New Year for our FSA community. †

*Jim Deacon*  
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David Manness

The Proudfoot Legacy Restricted Fund (PLRF) and the Proudfoot Legacy Unrestricted Fund (PLUF). The PLRF contains a principal amount, initially set at \$2,500,000, which is the “factory” needed to generate investment revenue. Based on returns coming from capital gains, interest and dividends, this generates the annual operating income necessary for ongoing church operations, without encroaching on its principal. The PLUF is available to the church for capital projects and other purposes as approved by Church Council.

### A New Proudfoot Legacy Fund is born ...

At its November meeting, your Church Council made an important decision to move from our previous “cap” system to a newly-created Proudfoot Legacy Fund. We have outgrown the need for the cap system, as we are now using investment income from Trust Funds to provide revenue to support the annual operations of the church. This is a decision, jointly recommended by Trustees and Finance, which will greatly benefit and position our congregation for a prosperous future.

Previously, the cap system established a “rainy day” fund, initially representing two times the annual operating budget, and set it aside as savings. This is a system that is no longer relevant given our ongoing need for operational financial support from the Trust Funds.

The new Proudfoot Legacy Fund has two components:



Our church has additional restricted funds, (the Jean Brown fund being the largest), that will continue to exist and be managed in accordance with the conditions of those individual gifts.

Celebrate with us the blessed position that First-St. Andrew’s is in. This is thanks to the generosity of your caring support, as well as the vision and legacies of the many who have come before us, in our remarkable 183-year history.

Our Founder, the Rev. William Proudfoot’s cemetery marker proclaims: “I have finished my course — I have kept the faith.” We are all keepers and growers of the faith. Please don’t forget to return

your pledges for 2016 and use your intelligent heart to contribute to the church this Christmas in the special Christmas Offering envelope. **Merry Christmas from your Board of Trustees!** ☩

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

Let **US** be disciples that reach out to not only our brothers and sisters in France, but also those migrating around the world seeking a land of peace and freedom. Let **US** communicate with one another and all in our community that, "We have found love, we have found truth, we have found forgiveness."

May this Christmas season bring to you the birth of Jesus the Christ in a way that empowers you to communicate Faith, Hope and Love, with the greatest of these being ... Love.

In Christ's service, Rev. Michelle P. Down. †

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

In important ways reconciliation is a bridge to the future; it's about behaving differently, it's a process of "becoming" in a purposeful and intentional way. This can be done in personal and individual ways that are equally important as group or institutional changes.

Mutually respectful relationships are important to all of us. We know from personal experience when we have not been treated fairly or treated with respect—we feel it. These feelings can create a deep hurt from which recovery is painful and difficult.

While we may not have been personally involved or directly responsible for the harm done to Indigenous peoples, we can feel the hurt—and we should. This empathy should drive us to understand more, to learn, to reach out, and to listen with respect. Our approach, the state of mind we adopt, is important for it gives us the opening to relationship

that might otherwise not be possible.

Like any relationship, it begins with openness and a quest for understanding. It changes over time as it grows and matures. It's by growing and being together that experiences change us and those around us. Let us begin.

At least that's the way I see it, from the pew. †

>>Vignette (Cont'd. from page 6) The girls all knitted—sweaters were a necessity. The Christian students hosted an annual Christmas dinner for non-Christian students. All such events were out-of-doors and a sheep-lined brocade jacket of my mother's proved more attractive than an overcoat! On our second Christmas we entertained lads from the Peace Corps and were able to serve turkey raised by US staff at the Agricultural College. †

*To be continued ...*

>>Travel Tales (Cont'd. from page 8)

The last evening was a farewell dinner at a music pub on the west side of Dublin where we ate, then listened to The Merry Ploughboys, a traditional ballad group. They had a full retinue of Newfoundland songs and Irish dancers! The pub had rules of the house; the one I liked best was, "If there is ever any confusion, the fuller beer is yours."

It was a fabulous tour and my only disappointment was not seeing the little people that I have heard about. But David explained these were actually a figment of Walt Disney's brain. Only in Hollywood you say? It WAS a fabulous tour! †



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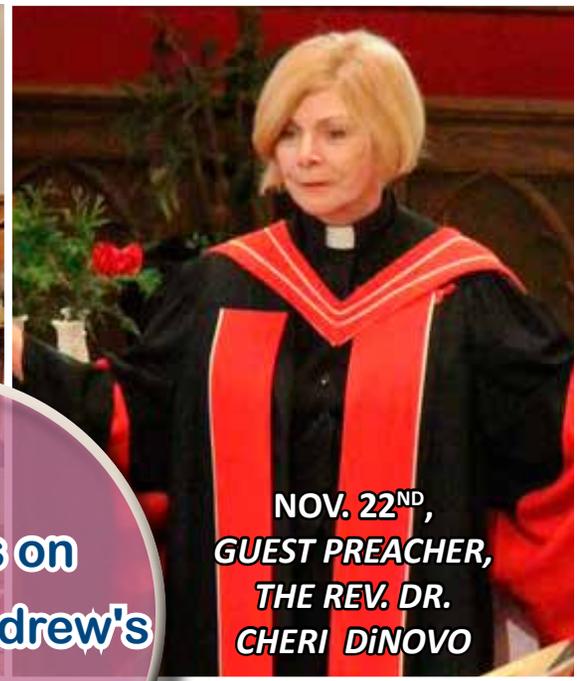
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WITH WILL TODD



NOV. 22<sup>ND</sup>,  
GUEST PREACHER,  
THE REV. DR.  
CHERI DiNOVO

Windows on  
First-St. Andrew's



NOV. 14<sup>TH</sup>,  
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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.*