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# ST. ANDREW'S IN ACTION

Winter Edition, 2015

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## Advent Reflections

*Rev. Dr. Karen Dimock*

In his Bible Translation, known as The Message, Eugene Peterson translates the verse (see right) in this way: The word became flesh and blood and moved into our neighbourhood. We saw the glory with our own eyes, the one of a kind glory, like Father, like Son.

And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth. -John 1:14

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Generous inside and out, true from start to finish.

I love this translation and the way it reminds us just how close God seeks to be to us. That the maker of the Universe, seeks to make a home among us. How awesome is that? And how trusted are we that when he comes, God's son comes as a child. Small and vulnerable into our midst. Are we ready for that?

Are our eyes open to the world around us? Do we seek to behold him in our own neighbours and neighbourhoods, and in the neighbourhoods of all kinds around the world today? Do we look at those we spend time with and those we pass on the street, those we read about in the papers and those we pray for in church, as the very ones among whom God is prepared to dwell?

This I believe is part of our work in Advent. We are called not just to behold Jesus but to look at our own lives as places he seeks to make a home. To get ready for him, whatever that entails.

The word advent finds its roots in the Latin, *advenire*, which means come forward. The word advent itself means something is coming. And in these days, it is Christ who is coming. Not just any kind of something but Christ. Christ is coming. Into our neighbourhoods, into our lives, bringing with him the redeeming love of God. May we welcome him and celebrate his arrival well this year. Merry Christmas!

## Participate!

*Rob R.*

In my first few months as the Session's Administrative Clerk I have learned that a big part of the job is recruitment. St. Andrew's is a busy congregation, constantly in need of replenishing its committees and filling its many key positions. The effort to match the talents and interests of church members with congregational needs is continual.

Of course the job of recruiting belongs not just to me and my fellow Elders. At a church, everyone should be a talent scout. It starts with all of us trying to be aware of the full range of work that our congregation accomplishes. Next, we need to examine our own gifts and where they are best used to do the Lord's work. And finally, we should be aware of the gifts of others. We should encourage each other to pursue the type and form of service that best suits them. And we should never be shy about noting for

### About St. Andrew's in Action



The quarterly newsletter is published for the first Sundays in March, June, October, and December. The next edition will be available March 6<sup>th</sup> and the deadline for submissions is February 19<sup>th</sup>. You may email your articles and photos at any time to [StAndrewsInAction@gmail.com](mailto:StAndrewsInAction@gmail.com)

others their talents and suggesting how they can advance our faith.

We are passing through a period when we consider our own stewardship, and the covenant we make with God to provide financial resources for His Church. At the same time, let's consider how our human resources match the continuing need for service in the great variety of callings that make up a congregation of purpose and accomplishment. If you would like to serve in any capacity, don't hesitate to contact me, your elder or our minister, and share what you believe is the contribution that you can make.

## A Word about Worship

*Rev. Dr. Karen Dimock*

*This is the second of four articles, each focussing on one of the four different stages we move through as we worship.*

The place of the prayers of thanksgiving and intercession and the sermon: are you wondering about this? In September a change was made to the order of service in both services, moving the prayers of thanksgiving and intercession so that they now occur after the sermon. This has allowed the reading of the scriptures to be followed more closely by the sermon that reflects on them and has moved the prayers themselves to a place in the service where they are now part of our response to God's Word.

In my article in the September newsletter, I began by noting that in the Presbyterian and Reformed Traditions, worship is often shaped so that it goes through four movements. The first of this, *our approach to God*, I went into in more detail in that article. It includes the call to worship, hymns, prayers of approach and confession and assurance of forgiveness. Together these guide us into our time of worship, uniting us, preparing us and making us ready *to hear the word of God*, which is the second movement in our worship.

The hearing and preaching of God's word is at the heart of our worship in the Presbyterian Tradition. John Calvin called the Word and the Sacraments the marks of the church and taught that where the word is preached and the sacraments administered, there you have church.

At St. Andrew's the hearing of God's Word, most often begins with the reading of a responsive psalm, and it is usually led by one of our children. There is a poignancy in this that reminds us that we are called not just to instruct our children but to learn from them as well. The psalms themselves are the prayer book of the church, teaching us the language of lament and praise. They bring the deepest of human emotions and experiences into intimacy with God.

During the 11am service, we follow the reading of the psalm with a children's hymn and a time with the children up front on the chancel steps. Although it is called

### *Erratum*

In the October issue of St. Andrew's in Action, there was an error in the article about the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration of the Ordination of the Reverend Bob Hill. The 4<sup>th</sup> last paragraph should have read: Bob was Interim Minister from 1997 to early 1999 at St. Andrew's, Ottawa during the search process which ultimately called the Rev. Dr. Andrew Johnston.

children's time, it is a very important part of the service for all of us. If we are sincere in raising up people of faith, disciples who find home and nurture in the worshipping community, then it begins with welcoming children in our worship and sanctuary today. Just as we need to hear the Good News in worship ourselves, we are called to share it with our children. In collaboration, Christine, Aisling and I have been giving thought and prayer to this particular time in the service, working so that it connects meaningfully with both the Sunday School lessons that follow, as well as the rest of the worship service.

The worship service continues with one or more readings from the Bible. A short prayer for illumination always precedes this reading, asking for the Spirit of God to open us body and mind and soul to the hearing of God's word. This is a particularly reformed prayer and reflects our belief that the Holy Spirit is both the power by which God's word is revealed to us and the means by which we understand its application in our own time and place. Whether the readings for the day come from the Hebrew Scriptures (which we also sometimes call the Old Testament), and/or the Gospels and Epistles of the Greek (or New) Testament, all of Scripture testifies and points to Christ.

The sermon is what follows next. Preparing for and preaching the sermon are an important part of my role as teaching elder and pastor of the congregation. In preparing and delivering it I pray that it will be a vessel through which the Word of God and Holy Spirit can work and move. In reading the texts and working with them each week, some of the things I look for are how God's transformative grace is at work in the text and how that helps reveal what God is doing in the world around us and where we are being called to join with what God is doing.

This then brings us to the completion of the second part of the worship service. The next part, *our response to God*, is where the prayers of thanksgiving and intercession, also called the prayers of the people are now found and I will write more about that next time.

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"Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver" - 2 Corinthians 9:7

## Christian Education Updates

*Christine Ball*

This fall I have experienced the joy of a warm welcome. I have benefited from the help and preparations of so many of you. I am grateful for the patient guidance of the whole congregation. Together we wait with great expectation for the arrival of Huda's twins.

It occurs to me that these are the themes of Advent: a time of welcoming, of preparation, of waiting and a time for joyful expectation. In all of the busyness of the season, as well as in our waiting, what a

joy to realize that Christ has come and dwells among us, at St. Andrew's and in the world around us. Like the angels we can proclaim—"Behold—we have news of Great Joy!"

I look forward to celebrating this Great Joy of Advent and Christmas with you.

## A few special events for families during Advent:

DECEMBER 5, 4-7 P.M. WAITING FOR CHRISTMAS

This will be an all age's advent celebration and pot-luck dinner. Join us for an evening of singing, storytelling and making your own personal advent candle. Dinner will be pot luck, so bring your families favourite holiday dish to share.

### SUNDAY SCHOOL

During Advent, Sunday school children will be grouped in multi-aged classes. The children will learn about the visits of angels in story, crafts, baking and games. Throughout Advent the children will be collecting mittens, gloves and toques for children at Queen Mary Public School on the mitten tree set up in Grant Hall. Following worship services the children have pageant rehearsals.



Huda's well-wishing  
and Christine's  
welcoming Sunday,  
October 4th.

## Rev. Russell Daye

*Taji E. and Barbara S.*

St. Andrew's Church welcomed Rev. Russell Daye<sup>1</sup>, as guest speaker, on November 12, 2015 to talk about his recent trip to the Middle East. His travels took him to Turkey and Lebanon where he investigated the Syrian refugee crisis. His aim was to find ways in which the faith community in Canada can be of help.

During his presentation, he spoke about the refugees he met in camps and communities he visited, the challenges they are facing and also the people who are helping them. Despite the

sad images of despair one could see, Russell was elegant and articulated positively with respect to the dire situation. His presentation was genuine, touching and very moving.

No one could have guessed that just a day after this inspiring presentation, we would all see a horrific terrorist attack in Paris, where more than one hundred people would lose their lives at the hand of misguided people in the name of God or retaliation.

It is shocking but peace can be found in the following lessons from the presentation:

Someone remarked to Rev. Daye that the enemy was not an individual or people, as one would think, but the enemy was bigger. In other words, we cannot identify the enemy through social labels. The enemy is not a face, a name, a race neither is it the religion on the other side.

Lebanon has been through so many wars and occupation over the decades which is challenging for the people who found themselves becoming refugees. It was pointed out that Lebanon has as many refugees as its population; hence relations between refugees and host communities are not always rosy and at times even hostile. To decrease the tensions this creates and to promote social cohesion, NGO's and associations are trying to help everyone in need, not only refugees. I cannot imagine myself living in a country where I am not welcome due to prejudices passed down from parents (generations) or maybe because of my religion.

When a country is in a civil war, children and their families pay the price. Families are broken down and separated. But in spite of losing it all with no knowledge of a way forward, Rev. Daye mentioned the resilience of the refugees who keep on trying to have a better life: growing a baby olive tree in the midst of a camp, welcoming him warmly at home—when home is made up of burlap and fabric—or sharing with him the little food they have. These are just a few examples of the unbroken spirit of the refugees.

We should not forget the number of amazing people and organizations who are assisting locally. Men and women working very hard in challenging situations so change can happen.

<sup>1</sup> Rev. Russell Daye has been a United Church minister for 25 years. He has served churches in Quebec and outport Newfoundland and was overseas personnel in Fiji, where he worked on a national reconciliation program. In 2002, he received a Ph.D. in Comparative Religion from Concordia University for his research on South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

Without regard to social background or nationality but with love and compassion, they bring hope to the hopeless. Keeping a sense of proportion in knowing that all cannot leave and choosing to support facilitators who remain on the ground is significant.

Russell Daye's journey from Anjar, Minyara, Bourj Hammoud and NEST, reminded me how important it is to step outside, observe and listen. I felt convinced: ready to stand still and see the bigger picture despite what happened on November 13, 2015.

We can respond not only by sponsoring refugees fleeing desperate conditions but also, by supporting the organizations and institutions like NEST who are serving many individuals and families left behind to survive in the squalor and dangerous communities. They are like beacons of light in a dark corner of the world, offering hope to many.

Russell Daye's presentation to me complemented the work of our Refugee Settlement Team.

When compelled to help, even in a small way, let us not hesitate. Matthew 25:35-40 comes to mind. We are all connected, one family, one person at a time.



## Refugee Settlement Team (A. Family)

The Refugee Settlement Team (RST) has met twice, on October 6<sup>th</sup> and November 3<sup>rd</sup>, to start planning for the arrival of the Syrian A. family.

This young family is comprised of Issa (35 year old father), Rasha (31 year old mother) and Bushra (soon to be 5 years old daughter), who have been living in Beirut since January 2014. While our church began the process of sponsoring the family in 2014, the refugee application was submitted to the Canadian government on September 18, 2015, and the applicants were interviewed and approved in Beirut on October 14, 2015, pending security and health checks. The family's medical checks are scheduled for November 18, 2015, so the process is proceeding rapidly and it is apparent that we can expect them before the end of this year.

The RST's appeal for furnishings and clothing received a tremendous response both from our congregation, and from our team's personal contacts. As a result, most of the needs that were identified have been received, sorted and transported to the basement of Farid (who graciously offered this space for the purpose, short term). There are still a number of larger pieces of furniture that are being held by the donors, with the expectation that they will be delivered sometime in December to the family's new home.

Members of the team have researched suitable housing for the family, and have identified potential apartments in a Minto development in the Meadowlands area, which is accessible to church, school, shopping and public transportation.

Each team member has taken the lead on one or more of the various tasks that are required to welcome and accompany our new refugee family over the period of one year. We look forward to making their transition as smooth and inviting as possible, with your help, bearing in mind their losses and challenges they will face in adapting to a new homeland.

The RST thanks you for your support and contribution to this important humanitarian ministry. The team includes: Barbara S., Diana B., Farid A., Frances I., Ian T., Peter L., Sue H., and Taji E.

PWS&D: Gifts of Change

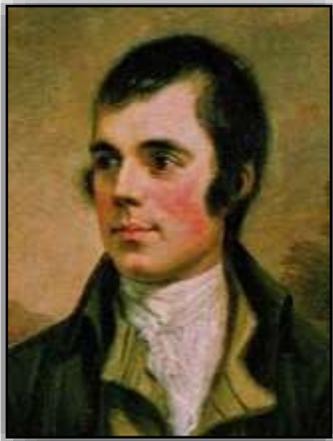
Rob R.

Presbyterian World Service and Development (PWS&D) is our organization. It's the way that Canadian Presbyterians promote sustainable development, provide emergency relief, and manage our support for refugees. As a new member of its national committee, and as a person who has worked in international development for much of my life, I am dazzled by what it is accomplishing in all our names, and in the name of Jesus.

I know that many of us support PWS&D through responding to urgent requests and as part of our weekly PAR givings. This Christmas, there is another way to target our givings to issues closest to our heart through the Gifts of Change program. Take a look at the opportunities offered on the PWS&D web site at <http://presbyterian.ca/pwsd/donate/gifts-of-change/>. This presents specific ways that

you can bring fresh water, health care and food security to our brothers and sisters for relatively small sums of money. My favourite option is the one that offers educational support to girls. As the caption says “Education is one of the most critical tools in breaking cycles of poverty. By opening classroom doors and providing the necessary supplies, your gifts will help children reach their full potential and access better opportunities for the future.” For \$15 you can buy a school uniform; for \$45 you can provide a girl with training in peace, gender and human rights; for \$300 you can pay all the expenses of one child attending school for a year.

At this time of year there are many calls on our wallets and purses. Please give special consideration to the impactful work of PWS&D. It is a way that reflects God’s love for the world.



## Robbie Burns

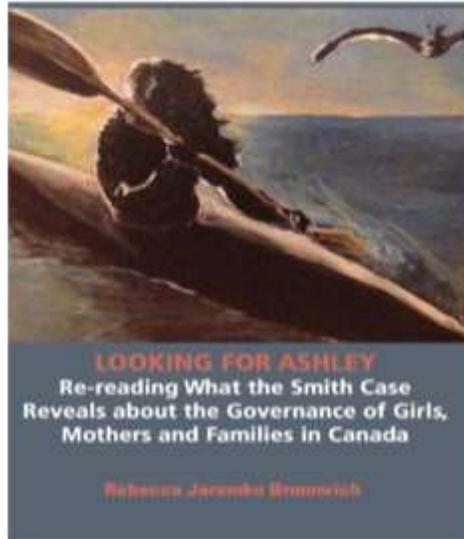
St. Andrew’s will hold its family Burns Supper again in St. Andrew’s Hall at 6 p.m. on Saturday the 23<sup>rd</sup> of January. This will be the third family-orientated event building on the long tradition of Burns Suppers organised for many years by the Men’s Fellowship. Be prepared to be entertained by our guests the Bytown Highland Dancers as well as members of our own congregation. For those of you who have perhaps never attended such an event in the past perhaps now is the time to reconsider. The 25<sup>th</sup> of January marks the anniversary of the birth of Robert Burns, the Scottish national poet. The supper in his honour is usually held on the closest Saturday to this date. Although not renowned as a very religious figure Burns was a great humanitarian espousing an egalitarian view in his renowned work *a man’s a man for a’ that* and rejecting slavery in the song *a slave’s lament* widely attributed to him. He was heavily influenced by the Church of Scotland as is evidenced by his many works which take religion or the Church as their theme. The supper consists of chicken soup, steak pie and a taster of haggis, Scotland’s national dish whose ingredients can best remain shrouded in mystery. Coffee and desserts are also served. The dinner also features a number of toasts to Burn’s memory amongst others. A dance workshop for children will be held before the dinner. Tickets will be on sale at the Church in the New Year. Volunteers who would like to assist in the preparation or provide entertainment are asked to contact Bruce F.

### Let’s Talk About...

A study and discussion group for all adults, we meet the last Sunday of each month in the Pottinger Room. Simple lunch from 12:30-1 p.m., followed by a time of discussion. No preparation is needed and it’s okay if you didn’t make it to last month’s meeting. Please join us for our next gathering on December 20. This gathering will be a little different, we gather at 2 p.m. for Coffee and Conversation at Bridgehead (Bank and Albert) and then will walk over to the church for the choir concert. Speak with Alex F. or Maureen R. if you have any questions.

# Rebecca B.'s Book Launch

The Ottawa launch of the book recently published by Rebecca Bromwich is going to be a fundraiser for the Church Council on Justice and Corrections (CCJC). January 28, 7-9 p.m. in the Vista Room Lago Grill at 1001 Queen Elizabeth Driveway. Free admission, donations will be collected for CCJC.



VISTA ROOM LAGO

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# Art Contest

On Sunday October 25<sup>th</sup>, the children of the church school worked with Rebecca B. to create art on the theme "Imagining Justice." An art contest was being held by the Church Council on Justice and Corrections and the children and teachers were able to have a bit of fun while learning something about restorative justice.

## BOOK LAUNCH 28 JAN 2016 7-9 PM

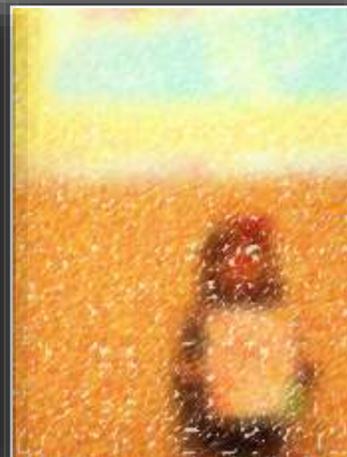
Vista Room - Lago Grill - Ottawa



donations will be collected for CCJC



DEMETER PRESS



## Caregiving Across the Lifespan

For many years, the Caregiving Group at St. Andrew's has been meeting monthly to share stories, experiences, challenges and coping strategies in giving care to others. Currently, our members are seniors, dealing with the effects of aging on themselves, their spouses and families. It is a close supportive group, which has obtained strength and wisdom from prayer, theme based discussions, and through listening and caring for each other. Our discussions have opened powerful feelings of long time love and selfless commitment, joy and happiness and humor, anxiety and fear, guilt and sorrow. Sometimes there is bewilderment and often an overwhelming sense of responsibility accompanied by fatigue. The transition to this role of caregiver within a partnership and family is not an easy one.

On November 10, the Pastoral Care Committee was pleased to have a presentation from Elspeth R., one of our congregants, a mother of special needs children and a dedicated member and leader of support groups within our community. She shared her life story in adopting and parenting two sons with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder and raising her grandson, highlighting the processes and support groups that helped during this journey.

In her words: "Caregiving is more than for seniors. Many people find themselves in the sandwich generation caring for elderly parents and children. All caregivers have needs for information and education, support and understanding, and appropriate services. Caregiving for seniors has much in common with caregiving for children and adults with

complex conditions, mental health problems, and developmental disabilities including Autism and Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder.

We all need help with system navigation, and agencies need awareness and training. Families need: respite (getting a break, caring for ourselves), help with school (IEPs, Special Ed.), finding knowledgeable professionals, transition help to adult services, finding assisted living arrangements and assisted employment, creating a 'circle of care', power of attorney, and wills and trust funds".

Elsbeth also shared some excellent online resources including the Caregiver's Living Room blog [www.donnathomson.com](http://www.donnathomson.com) and the Citizen Advocacy [www.citizenadvocacy.org](http://www.citizenadvocacy.org). There are contacts for families with developmental disabilities, mental health problems, Autism, and Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder. (For more specific contacts, please connect with Elspeth.)

The Pastoral Care Committee encourages members of our congregation to share personal experiences, challenges and needs for support in caregiving. What circumstances do you find yourself in? What resources have you accessed in the past and found useful? Sharing can be very beneficial to others in similar circumstances through venues of discussion and support groups and/or on line blogs and written accounts in our quarterly newsletter "St. Andrew's in Action".

Questions, suggestions, ideas for sharing can be directed to any member of our committee or by email to Diane S.

**Each Friday, the bulletin sent direct to your inbox!**

Sign up for our weekly emails to keep up to date with all that's going on over the winter.

Sent each Friday afternoon - subscribe at [StAndrewsOttawa.ca/StayInTouch](http://StAndrewsOttawa.ca/StayInTouch)



## China 2015

During August 2015 Tim, Elizabeth and daughter Heather P. went on a trip to the city of Lanzhou and Gansu Province, in north central China, where Tim attended a geological conference. It was a special trip for us as it was in Lanzhou that Heather became our daughter in June 2002. We look forward to sharing this adventure with our friends at St. Andrew's.

In the late 1990's China's one child policy, combined with the Chinese traditional preference for male children, was creating a situation where large numbers of baby girls were being abandoned in public spaces and placed in orphanages. China was permitting international adoption of these baby girls and our sons (4- and 6-year-olds at the time) thought it would be "way cool" to have a little sister. So Tim and Liz decided to turn China's loss into our gain. Very selfish of us to be sure. After a lengthy application process we received an offer to adopt baby Jin Ting Yan from an orphanage in Jinchang, a gritty mining town in northern Gansu Province, right on the border with Inner Mongolia. We flew via Vancouver to Beijing and then Lanzhou with 13 other families. Ting Yan was literally thrust into our arms 5 minutes after checking into the J.J. Sun Hotel. Ting Yan is an interesting name. In Mandarin it translated roughly as 'exquisite creature'. However a Cantonese-speaking friend from Hong Kong, who is Christian, translated the Chinese characters representing her name as 'Gift from God'. And so she is, although she now goes by the name Heather.

Our visit this year began with 5 days in Lanzhou for the conference, followed by a 4-day road trip northwestward along the old silk road into the Gobi desert. We capped off our trip with a 3-day visit to Beijing. With the exception of Beijing, our travels took us to places where Westerners rarely visit.

While Tim was at the conference Heather and Elizabeth explored Lanzhou and Tim came along when he could. Lanzhou was once the eastern terminus of the Silk Road. That legacy remains today in the form of a sizeable Muslim minority (who have a lock on the street noodle business), Christian churches, the very tall people who live there, and a surprising number of people with blue eyes and hooked noses. We watched 100's of local people taking their morning exercise together in traditional fashion in a city park,



and returned to the very hotel lobby where we first met Heather.

Our most westerly stop was in the ancient oasis city of Dunhuang, where we toured the Mugao Grottoes (caves of the 1000 buddhas), a World Heritage Site. The grottoes were built over a period of 1000 years, beginning in the 4th century, by wealthy merchants as a place for Buddhist pilgrims to pause while traversing the Silk Road. The art work in the caves was stunning. We would also like to share with you our visits along the Great Wall of China. We started at its most westerly and ancient terminus near Dunhuang, built by the Han Dynasty between 200BC and 200AD, where the wall is made of mud and straw. While still up in the desert we visited a more 'modern' section of the wall at Jianyuguan Pass that was built during the Ming Dynasty (late 1300s). We also spent a day hiking at the Mutianyu section of the wall in the rugged, forested mountains north of Beijing.

We have many more highlights to share with you and wonderful pictures to show you. Please join us on January 17<sup>th</sup> for a lunch and learn in St. Andrew's Hall after worship.

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## Giving During Advent

### White Gift & Mitten Tree

This year, St. Andrew's will support Queen Mary Public School on White Gift Sunday, December 13. You can check the website and Grant Hall for a listing of books for the school library. We have also accepted the invitation to support the school with a Queen Mary Mitten Tree! Cindy Beauchamp, Principal at Queen Mary Public School writes: "Our students love to play outside during the winter months. As a staff, we take it upon ourselves to make sure that our kids are always dressed for the weather. We would welcome your support with the collection of warm mittens for our students. Our area of need is mittens for children ages 4 to 12. We are grateful for the opportunity to have a partnership with St. Andrew's Ottawa and we look forward to meeting with you on December 13<sup>th</sup> to share with you some great stories from our students and staff. Thank you for reaching out."

### The Pause Table at Carleton University

The Christmas exam period for Carleton University has been set and the Ecumenical Chaplaincy is inviting St. Andrew's to once again help out: our date is Tuesday December 15<sup>th</sup>. Suggested food gifts: homemade sandwiches and cookies, muffins, lots of bagels & bananas, juice, yoghurt. On previous days, we have served over 1,500 students! Contact Rob S. or Don G. to make a contribution of food or finance.

### Fair Trade Table

Stop by after services to peruse great stocking stuffers that will support small growers in the developing world, Christian olive producers in Palestine, and our own Refugee Family Project at St. Andrew's.

## The Mitten Trees

The mitten trees will be up as Advent begins. In Grant Hall we will be collecting knitted toques, scarves, mitts and gloves, as well as toiletry items to be shared with the Mission and Bruce House, two organizations in our city that minister to people who are living on the streets and people who are suffering from HIV and AIDS. Gifts of hats, mittens and scarves for children at the Queen Mary Public School can be hung on the tree located in Grant Hall.

## Christmas Eve offering dedications

### Community Laundry Co-op

Most of us take clean clothes for granted but for people on low incomes they often take a back seat to food, rent and transportation. The Community Laundry Co-op makes clean laundry an affordable reality for over 400 members and their families who can do their laundry for just a dollar a load while having a cup of coffee with friends, getting help and advice on their problems and developing their skills by volunteering.

The Co-op, sponsored by First United and McLeod-Stewarton United Churches and the Centretown Community Health Centre, was founded in 1999 in response to a problem identified at the "People's Hearings on Poverty" held in Ottawa in 1997. The demand for our services has increased with our move to the Rideau-Vanier Ward which has the lowest average income in the city. Your contribution will help us extend our hours of operation to allow even more families to send their children to school in fresh clean clothes.

### The Millennium Refugee Fund

As a congregation we have made a commitment to support the arrival of a family who are refugees from Syria. They are expected very soon now and if you would like to make a Christmas donation to support them in their first year here, please mark it on your offering envelope. The amounts will be forwarded to our Millennium Refugee Fund.

### Gracefield

This year our focus is on some substantial capital improvements, including dedicated quarters for the staff and the boathouse. And we are within about \$7,000 of our fundraising goal for the roof replacement program.

### *White Gift Sunday*

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

This year, White Gift Sunday will take place on December 13 and will support the library at Queen Mary Public School. Principal, Cindy Beauchamp, writes "Our small school desperately needs new books. Many of the books on our shelves are terribly out of date. Our school demographic is such that we are unable to raise funds for the library on our own." You can check out the school website and see that Queen Mary Public School is indeed a very special place. <http://www.queenmarystreetps.ocdsb.ca>

The Christian Education Committee thanks you in advance for your support.

## Youth In Mission 2015: I Love Taiwan



*Nolan G.*

In July 2015, I was fortunate to have had the

opportunity to participate in the Presbyterian Church in Canada's Youth In Mission – I Love Taiwan trip. It was an amazing three weeks!

The aim of the Mission trip is for young people to experience God's grace and love, to learn and live out their faith, and to challenge them to devote themselves to God through the participation in mission; and further, be willing to be involved in ecumenical movement and construct a life of identification, devotion and growth. The objectives are: To widen overseas youth's knowledge and understanding about people and the church in Taiwan through mission involvement (e.g. teaching in summer camp) in a cross cultural and multi-religious context alongside Taiwan's young people; Develop a network among overseas youth, Taiwanese youth and churches; Leadership training and nurturing through participation in community mission and evangelism; and Motivate ecumenical involvement in local churches.

In Taiwan, I met a large number of other youth from different Presbyterian churches around the world, including Japan, Malaysia, Germany, United States, Zimbabwe and New Zealand. There were five of us from Canada.

The first thing that the Canadian group did, was visit the statue of Dr. George Leslie Mackay in Tamsuie. The Presbyterian Church in Taiwan was founded in the 19th century by Dr. James

Laidlaw Maxell Sr. of the Presbyterian Church of England, and Dr. George Leslie Mackay of the Presbyterian Church in Canada. Mackay was the first Western Presbyterian Missionary to travel to Formosa in Taiwan. He served with the Canadian Presbyterian Mission. To this day he is one of the most well-known Westerners who lived in Taiwan. In Taiwan there are 1,214 Presbyterian churches, with over 238,000 members.

Once all the youth were gathered in Taipei, we split into groups and went to different Presbyterian churches around Taiwan, to provide different volunteer services. My church was Tektung Church. We stayed with the Minister and his family. I helped run a Vacation Bible School for over 150 youth, similar to that held at St. Andrew's Church in the summer. The children were a happy group and were really fun to work with.

We attended church services. Church in Taiwan is basically the same as here at St. Andrew's. During the services, we sang hymns and prayed. I learned from the Minister, that his church was new to the area, and that many of the people who heard of the new church became quickly interested and started to attend Sunday worship.

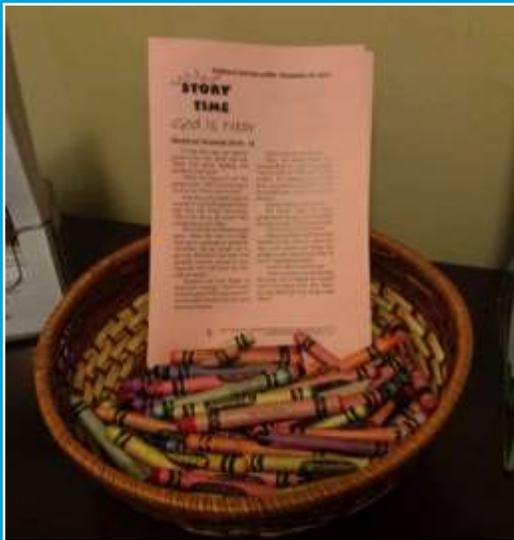
In addition to activities at the church and church camp, we participated in local activities such as visiting the night markets. At these markets, people set up small stalls and sell food, clothes, household items and toys. I particularly enjoyed the squid on a stick. It was delicious. I also ate stinky tofu. It really stinks and was not delicious.

I really enjoyed my time in Taiwan – working with the youth in the Church camp and meeting the congregation of the church. I also enjoyed meeting the other youth from Presbyterian churches around the world.

I feel blessed that the Presbyterian Church in Canada and Taiwan gave me the opportunity to participate in such an awesome Mission trip that allowed me to learn more about the work of the Church around the world and to experience the Taiwanese culture.

Thank you, to the Kirk Session and the Presbytery for supporting me financially. I also thank the congregation of St. Andrew's for supporting me with your prayers and by purchasing the cookies, loaves and cupcakes at the bake sale. And, thank you to Minister Dimock, Huda and Aisling for helping to make the trip happen for me - I really appreciate the time and effort that you put into helping me.

I feel blessed that I had such a wonderful opportunity to worship and grow in faith. Thank you.



### Story Time

Families, look for the new pink pamphlets by the crayons at both entrances! Story Time is a bulletin just for kids, with the bible story and colouring activity based on the lessons the children are doing in church school. There's a new one each week, so grab one on your way to your pew on Sundays!

## VBS school gift update

This year at our VBS Summer Camp, children collected school supplies to be donated to Action Réfugiés in Montreal. They put us in touch with Hay Doun, an organization that has sponsored over 600 Syrians to come to Québec. Their thank you is below, thanks to the kids and their families for their generosity!

*Hello Huda*

*We just got the 2 boxes of school supplies. I would like to thank you for all the good materials you have sent us. We have 150 young students who will profit from these supplies!*

Thank you again, Nayiri and Narod

# Reflections on Building a Modern Church

Matthew B.

Henry Ford famously said, “If I had asked people what they wanted, they would have said faster horses”. By this he means people don’t always know what they want when they don’t already have a vision of what the future could look like. The Reverend Mark Whittall from St Alban’s Anglican Church asked us to think not so much about “HOW we want to DO church, but more about WHAT we want our church to DO”. In doing so, we were asked to think not so much about faster horses, but about our desire to get places faster. We were asked to think about what a church does, or could do.

I found this an interesting exercise to disentangle the performance of church, the trappings of tradition, the routines and expectation from the root purposes of Church. The conversation was well situated in Gracefield as merely by being there we had already disentangled ourselves from the usual trappings of our more secular lives. Gracefield affords visitors with opportunities for reflection with its many quiet areas, closeness with nature and its spectacular vistas. However, despite the serenity and apparent isolation, paradoxically, it draws people together and builds community. Perhaps it is the team building activities that require



interdependence or perhaps some more basic human instinct that is telling us that our survival depends on community. As the African proverb reads, “If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together”.

Togetherness, welcoming and community were discussed in another related group session. It became apparent that to be a successful church we must not only focus on the needs of the current members but also create avenues to engage non-members. We must not only keep what we have, but find ways to welcome the new, the different, the modern. Perhaps churches are not places where like-minded people gather to perform rituals, but perhaps they are places where community minded people gather to build sustainable societies that value stewardship, engagement, education, families and Christianity.

Like the cold, crisp and clear water in the lake, Gracefield provides a clarifying space in which to discuss, reflect and imagine the future of St. Andrews. You should go. If you haven’t been before you will not regret the experience.

# A Children's Choir is an amazing gift!

*Tracey Stabback*

As a young person, I sang in the Woodlawn United Church Girls' Choir in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, an experience that still influences me today as a singer, a conductor, and a church attendee. In fact, it was one of the biggest influences on both my musical and church life, and a large reason was our director, Mrs. Hill. She inspired excellence while at the same time encouraging and leading us with a positive demeanour.

My friends and I were often giggly teenagers, and I don't know how Mrs. Hill managed to contain us for any length of time so as to produce such high quality choral music. Although not one to yell, it was not unusual for our corner of the choir to get Mrs. Hill's serious "teacher look". Yet somehow she inspired us, instilling a love of music, a love of God, and a desire to do our absolute best. She had high expectations for which we were only too glad to reach.

Although my St. Andrew's singers are younger than I was when first joining a church choir, I still have many of the same expectations as Mrs. Hill: focus, listening, blending, clear pronunciation, attendance, punctuality, team work and respect for each other. I was proud to work towards achieving those goals when younger, and it has given me confidence in both my personal and professional life. The children in the St. Andrew's Children's Choir, with help and support from their families, also do their best to achieve these goals. It is my hope that they will benefit from this type of work too.

"My level of happiness goes way up when I'm in choir. I enjoy singing, praise, and music."

-Children's Choir member

"I love singing in front of the whole congregation...singing makes me social."

-St. Andrew's Church Children's Choir member

The core group of friends I had in choir were a vital part of both my singing and my social life in my teenage years. My best friend's mother ensured my transportation to every rehearsal and performance, something I will always appreciate. We sang in choir together, were active church youth group members, and took Confirmation Classes together. We laughed together and found mischief together. With the passage of time, we grew apart and searched for answers outside of the church, yet in time, many of us came back.

I recently reconnected with several of my old singing friends and colleagues. Having made a clean break from my high school life many years ago, it has been amazing to see how music still influences most of those former choir members. Additionally, I was struck by how many of these ladies are now professional musicians, music teachers, worship leaders, and ministers. The choir was a big influence on us all, and we still turn to some of our favourite songs and anthems for inspiration.

"It makes a difference in my life by giving me a chance to sing and perform in front of people."

-Children's Choir member

The choir not only taught us music, vocal and performance techniques, and how to carry ourselves in a professional manner, it also taught us about scripture, the church calendar, the life of a church, and about being active members in the body of Christ. We all had different paths to follow, and although

“Since joining choir I concentrate more. I’m ‘confidence’ now.”

-Children’s Choir member

not all had careers in music and/or ministry, it doesn't change how this choir shaped each of our lives. It is like a homing beacon calling us back to a life full of meaning.

Since becoming the Children's Choir Director at St. Andrew's, I have wanted to give a similar experience to my wonderful young singers. I want to offer them the same opportunity to find community and friendship, while discovering the joy of singing and learning about God. At such a young age, many of our singers have learned that choir is making a difference in their lives.

At last year's June BBQ, when asked what they most enjoyed about choir, “the food”, “the songs”, “the retreat” were the children's most common answers. Something I could relate to! I distinctly remember post-choir concert reception food, as well as staying up late on overnight choir trips. However, when recently asked again what they liked about choir, and also how it has made a difference in their lives, the children's answers revealed some finer details.

Singing in a choir is about working towards goals larger than the individual. It is about supporting each other and working together as a team. This experience can be life changing, and its influence long-lasting. A choir builds both confidence and community, as well as promoting personal growth. As members of a church choir, the children of St. Andrew's are also leading worship, serving others, and growing closer to God. The Children's Choir is an amazing gift we are giving to the young members of the congregation, and I am blessed to be a part of it!

“I love singing with a professional teacher who can help me get better.”

-Children’s Choir member



## St. Andrew’s life online

Next time you’re online wondering what to look at next, wander over to the church website (StAndrewsOttawa.ca). You’ll find the weekly sermon recordings and the monthly Days of... newsletter. Click under “Worship” for the themes of the Sunday services and to browse the bulletin. The blog is updated with posts reflecting on the Sunday morning worship, news and updates for the congregation. There’s lots to see!

# Mark your Calendars!

December 5, 4-7 p.m. Waiting For Christmas: An all-ages advent celebration and potluck.

December 10, 7 p.m. Christmas Cookie Exchange: Sign-up in Grant Hall to take part.

December 13, 12:30 p.m. Congregational Christmas Lunch in St. Andrew's Hall.

December 20, 4 p.m. Candlelight Carols for Choir and Brass Ensemble

December 21, 7 p.m. Blue Christmas: A service of light on the darkest night.

December 24, 6:30 p.m. Christmas Pageant and Carols.

December 24, 10 p.m. Lessons and Carols

December 25, 11 a.m. Christmas Morning: A joy-filled service of carols and readings.

December 25, 12:30 p.m. Christmas Dinner: RSVP by Dec 21 by calling the church, 613-232-9042.

December 27, Sunday Worship: One combined service at 9:30 a.m. ONLY

January 10, Children's Choir Sunday: afternoon retreat and dinner

January 17, 12:30 p.m. Lunch and Learn: Tim and Liz P. sharing their trip to China

January 23, 6 p.m. Burns Supper

January 24, 11:30 a.m. Confirmation class

January 30, Kid's Church and Mission Possible Kids

January 31, 11:30 a.m. Confirmation class

February 7, PWS&D Sunday: We welcome Guy Smagghe, Director of Presbyterian World Service and Development as our guest in worship

February 7, after worship: Congregational chili competition and lunch followed by skating on the canal

February 9, Pancake Tuesday

February 10, First day of Lent and beginning of the six week dinner and study session

February 21, 11:30 a.m. Confirmation class

February 21, 12:30 p.m. Lunch and Learn: Kate Paterson, the stonemason who repaired the Durie monument

February 27, Kid's Church and Mission Possible Kids

February 28, 11:30 a.m. Confirmation class



Mandy Grace '10

ministry-to-children.com