

ST. ANDREW'S UNITED CHURCH ADVENT 2022

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Fall Display

HOWARD WOODROW

A very special thank you to Howard Woodrow for lending St. Andrew's two handmade displays. The one pictured below of a Case steamer/thrasher and combine along with a photo to commemorate Alberta Wheat Pool memories.



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Reflection

REVEREND DAVE

And just as I was getting used to summer being over, BANG! It's Advent. Happy church new year, everyone! The liturgical year always begins with the first Sunday of Advent, so here we go on a new year.

And again as always, we are in the midst both of blessing and challenge. Covid is still with us – and on the rise again, apparently, though in this province we don't really seem to be measuring the progress of the disease. Along with Covid, though, we also face the usual round of colds and flu, from which we have been shielded these past few years by our masks and distancing practices. I'm noticing that a lot of folks are sick.

There is also an overarching feeling of... what is it exactly? Fatigue? Maybe a bit of depression? We were hoping that with our October "Dare to celebrate/lean in" campaign we'd see a surge of energy in the church. That hasn't really happened (though it may still be too early to tell). And in many places and organizations, I'm sensing low energy right now. Might that be the whole Covid thing over the past couple of years catching up to us? I often think that depression/fatigue lags behind stressful events, and so the timing is probably right for a low.

In any case, we're not flying out of the starting blocks this fall. And I think that's okay. It's pretty important to rest when we need to rest, and there is great blessing in a time of lower activity.

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Reflection Continued...

Here are a couple of the blessings I've noticed in the past few weeks:

- As I was “preaching through the mission statement” in October I really came to appreciate our mission statement! It’s about being a genuinely caring community, about nurturing love of God and neighbour, and about spiritual practice. These are all solid and important things in our world right now! Here it is, again:

St. Andrew’s United Church
Strives to be a caring community
Which nurtures love of God and neighbour
Through worship, teaching, fellowship, and service.

- One of the things that we did in October was to have several informal conversations about what is “calling” to us. There were some very interesting things noted down on those sheets of newsprint! We’re trying out a few of those, some this Advent, and it looks like a group will start at the church looking at environment, and what we can do to encourage sustainability, lower our own carbon footprint, and care for Creation.
- To some extent I think I was looking, in October, for an increase in activity. That didn’t necessarily happen, but when we are less active, we can be more reflective, and that’s what I think I’ve noticed in me. I think the lower energy this fall is pushing me a bit deeper, to think more carefully about what’s really important in terms of church and spirituality, and to make sure that my own life is in line with my values and faith. And that brings me to Advent...

Continued Page 4...



Reflection Continued...

This Advent, our theme is paying attention, listening. In particular, we're listening to our own stories of Advent and Christmas. After a couple of years of pandemic interruptions in Christmas programs, church attendance, and so forth, we felt that our kids in particular needed a reminder of the Christian stories that go with this season! But also, we thought it was important (if this is a time of lower energy) to encourage us to pay attention to the signals our bodies are giving us, to reconnect with God, to practice things like rest and silence. All those things might help us avoid the frantic over-busyness that sometimes goes with the pre-Christmas season as well.

So, our Advent season won't be over-full of activity. Look for the "Lift Someone into the Light" event in front of the church during Lacombe's "Light up the Night" event, which is becoming a meaningful evening both for us and for the wider community. We'll be doing an outdoor walk through our Christmas stories in mid-December. There will be a couple of more reflective services – an evening contemplative worship on December 11 and our annual "longest night" service on December 21. And we're planning the return of the Choir Cantata this year, and a full set of Christmas Eve services. Along the way, we'll be encouraging you to take some time this season to stop, to rest, to be in silence, and to pay attention to the wonder and grace in which we live.

In this newsletter, you'll see a number of events and programs for Advent. Some are programs of St. Andrew's, others come from the wider church or other congregations. If you find something of interest, try it out! At the same time, don't feel obliged to do what does not call to you! And as always, feel free to let me know what's happening for you – especially if you are finding something is really working to connect you with God.



Advent:

It has become a favourite tradition – the Advent calendar. This year we want to invite you to use a different kind of calendar – one where you with your family and or groups of friends look to bring a gift to each day by showing kindness, generosity, and gratitude. Our calendar shows three examples with plenty of space for you to fill in the blanks. One day you may want to support Santa’s Anonymous (more about that and a lot of other options further down in this newsletter), another day you may want to help your neighbour, still another day, in a moment of silence, you may want to pray for peace. The idea behind this calendar is to find something every day in Advent that brings us closer to God. Together let’s be creative! In an additional step, please write down your acts of kindness on a piece of paper and bring them to church, for we are collecting them. Look for the Kindness Box!

Blessings of hope, peace, joy and love, Barbara.

ADVENT 2022

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
27	28	29 Give someone in your family an extra big hug	30	1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8 Make a Christmas card for someone	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19 Light a candle in gratitude for something good that happened today	20	21	22	23	24
25 CHRISTMAS DAY!	The extraordinary thing that is about to happen is matched only by the extraordinary moment just before it happens. Advent is the name of that moment.					
						- Frederick Buechner



Dennis Ethier, Bruce Jackson, Bob Settle, Ko Bruning, Gary MacDonald, Lawrence Hrycan

Men's Breakfast Club

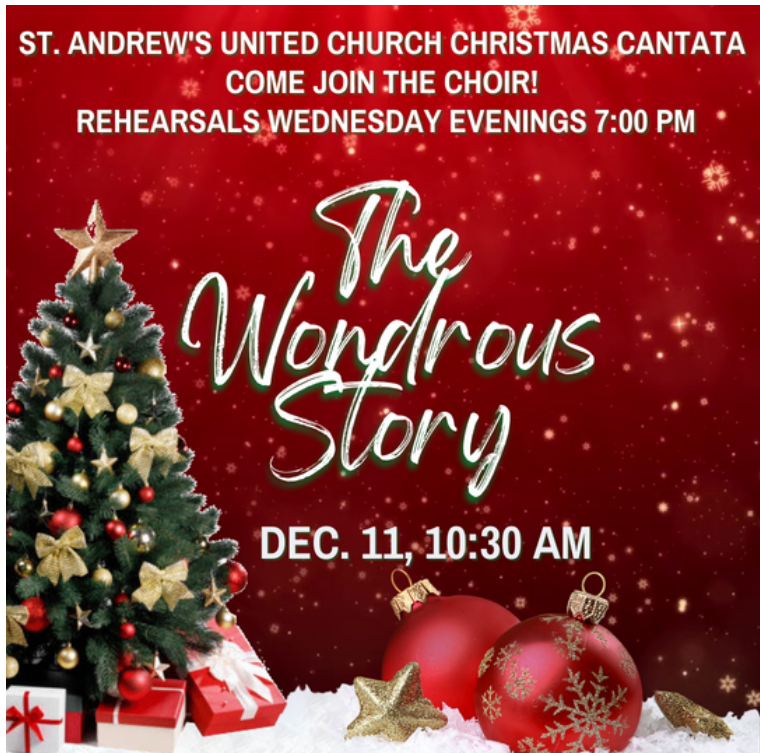
On Saturday, November 19, members of the Men's Breakfast Club met for breakfast and then put up the Nativity Scene and the lights on the 'Lift Someone into the Light' tree at the front of the church. At the same time, Shelley-May Lloyd and Pat Crozier decorated the outside of the church with lights and wreaths. Thanks goes to Henk Kassies and Jurjan Dunnwind for finding and putting up the tree.

Baby News!

Congratulations to Aleesha, Jason, and Declan Hradoway on the birth of Sage Corrie!

Christmas Cantata

"The Wondrous Story" will be performed December 11, 10:30 AM.





Advent Giving Opportunities

SANTA'S ANONYMOUS

A manger will be set up in the sanctuary to collect gifts for Santa's Anonymous. If you are looking for a suggestion, early teens would love gift cards to local sports stores, Shopper's Drug Mart, or the Red Apple. If you would like to donate cash in an envelope or make out a cheque (to Lacombe Kinsmen) and leave that in the manger that would be wonderful too.



FILL A FRIDGE

Presents will be on the sides of the manger display and will have slots in their tops. One box will be for "Fill a Fridge" which is monetary donations. Lacombe FCSS will use these monies to purchase gift cards to local grocery stores for people in need to buy groceries. There are tax receipts and if you would like one, please include your address so they can mail you a receipt. If writing a cheque, please write "Fill a Fridge" on the memo line.

BENEVOLENT FUND

There will be another present put out for our Benevolent Fund which was set up to help individuals and families that come to our church looking for help. This is done through FCSS. If you make a donation by cash and would like a receipt, please write your name and mailing address. If paying by cheque, please write the cheque out to Lacombe FCSS and on the memo line please write Benevolent Fund.





Advent Giving Opportunities Continued...

GIFTS WITH VISION

Pamphlets will be available in the display for "Gifts with Vision" which is a giving catalogue from the United Church. There are a huge variety of gifts which could help with poverty, healing, leadership, education, futures or wellness.

Give a  **gift** with **vision**



FOOD BANK DONATIONS

There will be a basket in the front for donations to the local Food Bank. Any canned or packaged items are welcomed. Cheques can be made out to the Lacombe Food Bank, with Food Bank written on the memo line.

GIVE THE GIFT OF KINDNESS

Give the gift of kindness! Your act of kindness could be shoveling someone's sidewalk, thanking a shop clerk or opening the door for a stranger going into a store. We would like to know what you have done, so write your act of kindness on a paper, we will have some papers at the display too and put them in the Kindness box and we would like to compile a list.





Indigenous Advent Series

Four short video reflections will be available in this spot on the Chinook Winds website for people to use – either for individual or congregational reflections. Each video and Sunday sermon will focus on one of the four virtues.

[Indigenous Advent Series 2022 - Chinook Winds Region](#)



Lift Someone Into The Light

"Our annual **"Lift Someone Into The Light"** event will be held Thursday, November 24th 5:30-7:30 PM. Please come out and make an ornament in honor of someone you love. There will be hot chocolate and a fire to keep you warm!



Advent Calendar Of Events:

Thursday November 24, 5:30 7:30 PM: "Lift Someone Into the Light"

In conjunction with Lacombe Light up the Night

Hang an ornament on the tree to honour someone you love!

Sunday November 27, Advent 1, 10:30 AM:

Luke 1:5-25 and 26-38. Mary and Elizabeth are expecting babies! Advent as a season of preparation, expectation of something significant, change, birth. Listening to the whispers of God, the practice/discipline of silence. Advent giving opportunities begin!

Sunday December 4, Advent 2, 10:30 AM:

Communion Service - Isaiah and John the Baptist: Isaiah 9:1-7 and Luke 3:1-20. Paying attention to the poor, those on the margins, and God's call for equity. Practices of generosity and solidarity. Continued Advent giving.

Sunday December 11, Advent 3, 10:30 AM - Choir Cantata:

"The Wondrous Story"

Sunday December 11, 7:00 PM:

Evening contemplative service

Friday December 16, 7:00 PM:

Story Walk at Dunnewind's Farm. Come out to the farm and "walk through the stories of Advent" to a live Nativity, where there will be a fire, hot chocolate, and carolling. (Cold-weather alternate date: Sunday evening December 18)

Sunday December 18, Advent 4, 10:30 AM:

The innkeeper and the shepherds

Wednesday December 21, 7:00 PM: Longest Night/Blue Christmas:

The Bethlehem mourners. Matthew 2:16-18 Practice of lament.

Saturday December 24, 5:00 PM: Messy Christmas Eve

Saturday December 24, 7:00 PM: Luke's birth story (Luke 2: 1-21)

Emmanuel - God with us.

Saturday December 24, 10:00 PM: John's Christmas story, the prologue (John 1:1-18)

The Word made flesh; Christ as the light in the world.

Sunday Worship December 25, 10:30 AM