

ST. ANDREW'S NEWSLETTER

ST. ANDREW'S UNITED CHURCH
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FOODGRAINS PROJECT

Central Alberta Foodgrains Project seeded its 140 acres of yellow peas on May 1st on its field just west of Blackfalds. Thank you to the local volunteer farmers that provided their time, machinery and fuel to get our 2026 crop in the ground.



Coffee Makers are needed for June 29, plus some Sundays in July & August. Please sign up on the sheet in the hallway between the sanctuary and auditorium. BIG thanks to all who make this fellowship happen each Sunday!
Tilly Meyer/Congregational Life

MAY, 2026

MAY / 2026

REVEREND DAVE HOLMES

Separation politics: what is a faithful response?

Politics are taking up a good deal of psychic space these days, and using up a lot of air. We had 9 referendum questions laid before us not that long ago, questions that upset many of us in that they seem to deflect blame for provincial issues onto the federal government, and onto already-vulnerable immigrants. Now even these are overshadowed by a tenth referendum question, about Alberta separating from the rest of Canada. It looks like we are in for a divisive summer and fall.

I confess – I'm angry. Really angry. I often catch myself rehearsing angry arguments in my mind. And while my arguments might seem brilliant in my own mind I doubt they'd persuade a single person. Sadly, most of us seem pretty entrenched. And for someone who professes a spirituality of love for all neighbours, angry argument doesn't seem like quite the right response. So what do we do? How do we respond to these referendum questions? How do we talk about this – even and especially to those who take a different position from our own?

These are just some thoughts as I struggle with this – and I welcome yours as well. I've picked up a couple of books for my sabbatical time, about spirituality and politics, and maybe there'll be some wisdom there (I'll let you know). Please talk to me, though, and to each other, and let's see if we can discern a faithful path forward. I've already talked a bit about the nine referendum questions (March 1 sermon) so let me focus here on the separation issue. For now, three thoughts:

First, I hope Albertans think this through carefully. I know that the separatist movement here in Alberta is primarily an expression of frustration, alienation, and resentment. There is some basis for these feelings, and as Duane Bratt in his Herr lecture here noted, a long history of them as well. I recently read a news article that referenced a poll indicating that significantly more people intend to vote for separation than those who actually want to separate. In other words, folks are frustrated enough to want to send a message to Ottawa, but they think there's an off-ramp before we get to the place of ACTUALLY separating.

The trouble is, a referendum is both a message and a policy decision. If we vote to begin a process towards separation, I'm sure Ottawa will get the message. I'm also pretty sure that investors and businesses and families, both in and out of Alberta, will get a message too, that Alberta's place in Canada is now precarious -- and I think there's real (if unintended) damage there. Quebec has never passed a referendum on separation, and yet the message sent by the election of the Parti Quebecois caused a very significant personal and business flight from Quebec. It is not an accident that the Bank of Montreal is now headquartered in Toronto. Continued...



SEARCH TEAM

The work of the search team is moving ahead. Our initial meeting as well as our first meeting with the representative from Chinook Winds Regional Council both took place earlier this month. The search team has decided to re-post the Pastoral Care Minister position (0.35 FTE) on Church Hub for an additional three months. Here is a reminder of those named to the search team: Jim Dixon, Tilly Meyer, Donna Gish, Alida Burnard

REVEREND DAVE HOLMES

To me, the principle of “love of neighbour” means that we must not act out our feelings of resentment, frustration, and anger. Those are important emotions that indicate something is wrong and needs to be addressed. These emotions can be expressed (carefully). But I think anyone who is or has been married can attest to the fact that acting out resentment, frustration and anger within a relationship is not a solution! It makes things worse. If you really want to separate, fine – vote for it. But if all this is, is a threat or a cry of anger, I think we need to do something more constructive. Actually, I think “more constructive” is actually happening right now.

Second, I hope we’re not playing a “blame game.” Blame is when we lay the responsibility for a problem on someone else. It’s not my fault, it’s theirs. It’s Ottawa’s fault, it’s Justin Trudeau’s fault, it’s the separatists’ fault, it’s Danielle Smith’s fault. It’s one thing to point out a problem, or to challenge another on their behaviour. It’s another thing entirely to pretend that someone else is the problem. They’re not problems. They’re people.

Our call is to love one another, to love our neighbour and to see even our enemy as a neighbour to whom we owe a duty of care. That means, I think, that we always need to subject our actions and our arguments to the “do unto others as you would have them do unto you” rule. We always need to at least try to look from the other perspective, to try to understand the other side(s) in any argument. We need to try to recognize that our opponents are not caricatures but complex human beings (provinces, national governments), with their own legitimate interests and concerns. Maybe I’m naïve, but if we listen to our opponents with some respect, perhaps we’ll earn a hearing as well.

And third, I hope we’ll engage with this. One way or another, this set of referendum questions is going to shape this province for the next couple of years at least. If polls are correct and over 30% of Albertans intend to vote for separation, then anything less than a 60% turnout probably means the separation question will pass. Sometime in the later summer or fall, the Chinook Winds Region of our church will be offering some reflection sheets on the referendum. Groups like Forever Canadian are active, as are, of course, the separatist groups. Think carefully. Have some constructive conversations. Get a lawn sign. And please... when it comes time, vote. I’m pretty sure this one will matter.

Grace and peace,
Dave

FINANCIAL UPDATE

	Jan - Apr Actual	Jan - Apr Budget
Income	\$85,328	\$102,067
Expenses	\$112,937	\$124,172
Surplus/Deficit	\$-27,609	\$-22,105

April contributions were down, and expenses were higher due to some annual payments being made in April.



Circles of Care members, Doris and Tilly were invited by the Lacombe IODE ladies for a lunch at Leto's. A traditional monthly gathering they have to socialize and celebrate a Birthday or two.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!



Birthday Girl Joan Fredeen celebrated 93 years on May 11.



Ruth Craig celebrating her 95th Birthday May 16, 2026. In picture Tilly, Ruth, and one of her three daughters. Happy Birthday JOAN and RUTH!



May 3, 2026, our guest Elder Beverly Keeshig-Soonias, held the congregation spellbound with her Indigenous stories relating to Red Dress Day. Her soft-spoken voice that shared stories about languages relating to culture, home and family was so meaningful. Then she spoke on the relationships of lost sisters, touching everyone to the heart.



Don Fraser hosted an Indigenous smudge with the participation of the congregants.

A meal of beef on a bun, berries and banook was shared with Beverly, her husband Rodney Soonia and the Living into Right Relation Group

SUMMER CAMP 2026!



Summer Camp is just around the corner and we are actively seeking volunteers from the congregation! Planning meeting to take place at 7pm on June 10th at the church! Please attend if you are able!

YOUTH GROUP

It has been an exciting month for the children and youth of St. Andrews! Following their service on the Good Samaritan, our Youth Group volunteered at the Backyard Friends Community Dinner on May 20th. With the help of other church and community members, we served dinner to over 200 people!

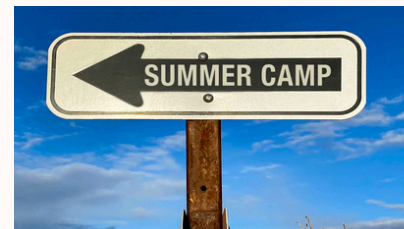


THANK YOU!

St. Andrew's is so fortunate to have someone who takes the time to make our grounds look so beautiful. Thank you to Hans Haefliger for our amazing flower beds every year. They truly make our church a warm and inviting place!

Key Dates Ahead!

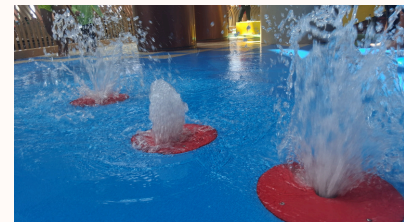
June 10: Summer Camp Planning Meeting at 7pm



June 14: Final Sunday School until Fall. Children to host coffee hour.



June 19: Youth Group summer wrap up Splash Park Party.



August 4-7: Summer Camp! Woo!

What an exciting time of year for your Green Team! The Woodland Sanctuary is bursting forth with leaves, grasses and blooms after its first winter! On May 20, Green Team members, the head City Gardener, interested supporters and Cynthia Pohl did a walk-about at the Sanctuary to assess the trees, plants and shrubs that were planted last June. We were happy to see water in the ephemeral pond! Saskatoons, blue violets and three flowered avens were in bloom and most of the trees are in leaf. We will need to replace four paper birches, three wild red currants and one Canada Buffaloberry. We had planned for some loss, so this is not surprising. We are very pleased, and invite you all to go and see how the sanctuary is greeting spring.

The Green Team is happy to report that Dr. Delano Lewis of Burman University is doing research at the Woodland Sanctuary. He has hired two summer students, Shamim and Niharika who will collect data on insects. This will be an ongoing study to document the changing numbers and species of insects as the sanctuary matures. You may see these students and their equipment in the sanctuary on one of your summer visits.

In June, we will celebrate the one year anniversary of the Woodland Sanctuary! You have an opportunity to join the Eco-Design and Maintenance Workshop on June 10 and the Sanctuary Seasons Reflections Event on June 20. Also, coming up on June 20 in honour of National Indigenous Peoples Day, we will Walk and Talk in the Sanctuary with an Indigenous knowledge keeper and educator, Clare Butterfly. See the posters in this newsletter. And you may just wish to walk the pathways alone and visit the trees and flowers that you planted last year. Come. You are welcome!

ECOLOGICAL DESIGN AND MAINTENANCE WORKSHOP WITH CYNTHIA POHL



WEDNESDAY, JUNE 10 – 9 AM TO NOON

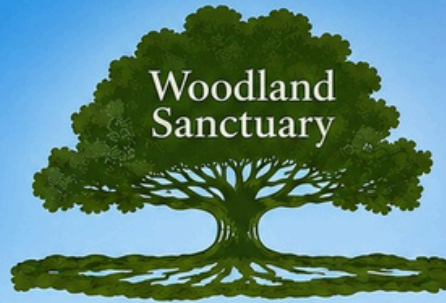
Indoor presentation at St. Andrew's United Church hall
Followed by interactive walkabout in Lacombe green spaces

2026 INDIGENOUS Day PEOPLES

Plant Walk & Talk with Clare Butterfly

Join us as Clare shares Indigenous knowledge about native trees and plants, including their traditional uses and sustainability practices.

Saturday, June 20th | 10:30am to 11:30am
Woodland Sanctuary



CREATING FOREST REFLECTIONS

Summer Solstice Gathering

Walk • Notice • Create

Join us for a gentle evening of wandering, quiet creativity, and reflection.

Photography • Sketching • Painting
Or simply sitting and listening

Woodland Sanctuary, Lacombe
(on Woodland Drive just west of 58 St)

Saturday, June 20 | 6:30 pm

Bring a journal, camera, art supplies—or just yourself.
A chair, snack, and drink are welcome • Rain or shine

*If inclement weather, creative time will be
at St. Andrew's United Church.*

MOTHER'S DAY CELEBRATED AT ST. ANDREW'S

Children gave out a beautiful colourful carnation to all the ladies in our congregation during coffee fellowship.



This spring, an appraisal for insurance purposes was completed by Loss Control Consultants Limited, a company based in Calgary. The buildings and contents were valued at \$9,207,857. The cost of the appraisal was \$2,467.50.

The utilities cost (gas and electricity) is about \$16,000 per year. The insurance of the property is just under \$15,000 yearly.

During the Music Festival, with the snow piled against the bell tower, a leak appeared over the doors leading from the Narthex to the Sanctuary. It stopped after the snow had melted. Greg Pallister contacted Smith Roofing, and one of the times they have a lift, they will stop by the church and have a look to see if any patching needs to be done.

On April 6, Bob King and Lawrence Hrycan replaced the burned-out bulbs in Exit signs. The bulbs are 3 different sizes and, fortunately, we can purchase what we need in town. We replaced 7 bulbs.

On April 7, Bob met with Civic Mechanical Ltd. The plumber fixed the toilets in the main bathroom and the girls bathroom downstairs. They both needed the seals to be replaced. Total cost was \$155.38.

The automatic door opener for the outside doors leading into the elevator area had stopped working. Stanley Access Technologies, in Red Deer, was contacted. The original door mechanism was installed in 2002. The invoice to replace the controller was \$579.60.

Bob called McMullen's regarding the HVAC. They changed the belts and filters. Total cost was \$546.84. The furnace is quieter in the Sanctuary now.

Bob phoned Ever Clean regarding furnace duct cleaning. Kelsey came on April 7 and gave a quote of \$600 plus GST for cleaning the ducts in the East hallway downstairs and all the rooms along that hallway. The work was completed on Thursday, May 7.

On May 17, Bob King and Bryant Burnard removed a motor and the venting that was not being used for the downstairs bathrooms.

Every year the elevator must be inspected – usually in the spring. Greg Pallister arranges this. The cost is mileage, 2 hours of labour, and parts if any are needed.

Eight white folding tables have been purchased for the Sunday school classrooms. Of the \$1256.98 cost, the Legacy Fund covered \$1175. Thank you to the Legacy Fund.

The church is being used a fair amount by church groups and rental groups. Jill and Diane have been able to keep up with the demands. There is a concern, however, that doors are not always locked after the church teams meet: lights are left on, and thermostats are not adjusted.



Baking can be dropped off Thursday until 4 PM, or Friday morning!

This team was tasked by the board to present a plan for the use of St. Andrew's building that fits with our values and missional priorities.

The team has met several times and, based on conversations that Greg Pallister has had with various committees, Sunday school, rental groups, and people in general, it was found that the church is quite busy with our own church teams, Sunday school, youth group, and current rentals. The focus has shifted to how we can make the basement more user friendly.

Priorities as of May 26, 2026
Keeping in mind the priorities are for our Sunday School, our church teams use, and community use of the building.

New Furnaces – Cost to replace furnaces is about \$8000 per furnace. The plan is to replace 5 now and 4 in a few years (up to 5 years). Two are good for probably 10 or more years. There is a total of 11 furnaces. Three companies were requested to submit quotes.

New bathrooms – A proposal is coming for new bathrooms downstairs. Cost to come. Jill has been asked to spruce up the existing bathrooms downstairs. She did an excellent job on the bathroom upstairs in the office area.

Replacing windows that have not yet been replaced. Cost will be about \$50,000 for downstairs and other floors. The 4 windows in the parlour would each cost 1532.98 plus GST for approximately \$6439. The 2 windows in the kitchen would cost about \$3220. Greg would like to do all the windows at the same time.

Downstairs flooring – Replace all flooring in the whole basement. About \$56,000.

Roof – should be good for about another 10 years. Approximately \$100,000.

Solar – Estimated cost \$68,000. First year saving of \$2400.

Other – Incidentals like locking cabinets, hand washing stations, baby changing stations. We could use another 50 chairs for hall (\$37 each = \$1850). There are currently 107 chairs for the Hall now. Groups that come in sometimes are larger than 100 people.



JUNE 7th CONGREGATIONAL MEETING: Discussion Points

This is the motion St. Andrew's Board passed for the Legacy Fund changes and will be discussed during the 07 June congregational meeting:

- 1** That the Legacy fund be renamed The Legacy Fund for Sustainability.
- 2** That the purpose of the Fund is to protect and support long-term viability of the St. Andrew's congregation and facility.
- 3** That the Fund be allowed to appreciate to \$500,000.
- 4** That the approximately \$70,000 presently in the Fund be augmented over the next year or two by \$200,000 from existing reserves as certificates come due.
- 5** That no further disbursements be made from the Fund until the principal achieves \$500,000.
- 6** That disbursements from the fund resume once it has achieved its financial goal of \$500,000.
- 7** That future legacy bequests and donations, not specifically directed to ongoing church projects, be deposited to the Fund.



Brewing Soon...

Sunday, May 31 we will hold our first ever online coffee fellowship time via ZOOM!

If you worship online with us and would like to join, please watch for the link at the end of our service!



WHAT'S AHEAD DURING SABBATICAL TIME: 12

During the months July through October of 2026, Rev. Dave Holmes will be on sabbatical. As a congregation, we are thematically focusing on rest, discovery, creativity and health, to inspire our rejuvenation and renewal as we too embrace this time of sabbatical.

Worship will be led by a variety of people and may take different forms. The sabbatical planning team of Jamie McCamus, Darryl Langille, and Cecile Fausak are excited to see how we will learn and grow through these experiences. Your feedback will be invited each Sunday. We hope you will find that "a change is as good as a rest."

You may wish to pray and ponder this guiding scripture **Matthew 28-30**:

28 "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. **29** Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. **30** For my yoke is easy and my burden is light." (NIV)

Here follows the worship plans for the next 4 months:

July 5

Communion service led by Dave including a "Blessing for Sabbatical"

July 12

An ecumenical service during Lacombe Days at MEG Energy Field. No service at St. Andrew's.

July 19

Rev. Bob Settle on the theme of sabbatical rest

July 26

Rev. Ross Smillie

Aug 2

In remembering the bombing of Hiroshima and honoring the 40th anniversary of Lacombe's friendship with Rikubetsu, we will start a sabbatical project that will teach us all how to make origami cranes like Dennis Ethier does. In the next 3 months we will create a dynamic display of what we hope will be 1,000 peace cranes, following the story of Sadako.

Aug 9

Hannah Polasek,
Lay Worship
Leader from Olds

WHAT'S AHEAD DURING SABBATICAL TIME: 13

Aug 16

Rev. Margaret Lange, who will be our pastoral charge supervisor and emergency pastoral care coordinator during the sabbatical period

Aug 23

Rev. Bob Settle and Rev. Cecile Fausak will remember and reflect upon the United Church's 40th Anniversary of the 1986 apology to Indigenous peoples.

Aug 30

Outdoor service and potluck picnic at Casey's Cabin amphitheatre, on the grounds of Burman University. Our leader will be Rev. LeAnn Blackert, founder of Wild Church in BC Okanagan, now living in Okotoks, practicing land-based spirituality.

Sep 6

Barry Brouwer, will lead us in exploring contemplative practices to heighten our sense of peace and grounding in faith.

Sep 13

Brenna Trimble and the Day Camp will be sharing their day camp experiences through the theme of finding God in Nature.

Sep 20

UCW 1 team coordinated by Tilly Meyer will use the "Together We Worship" resource

Sep 27

Led by the Living into Right Relations team in recognition of the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation on September 30, (Orange Shirt Day).

Oct 4

Worldwide Communion Sunday led by Rev. Cecile Fausak and the Lenten Study Group, drawing from the resource Bless, Break and Share.

WHAT'S AHEAD DURING SABBATICAL TIME: 14

Oct 11

Thanksgiving Service with a focus on music and storytelling led by Darryl Langille

Oct 18

On World Food Day, Doug Maas will focus on the work of the Canadian Food Grains Bank and the local growing project

Oct 25

Welcome Reverend Dave Holmes back from sabbatical as all of us reflect on the meaning and learning we derived from this sabbatical time. Display our completed project?

During the sabbatical time, Rev. Margaret Lange, a retired minister in Red Deer, will be coordinating emergency pastoral care for us. Her email is rev.margaret.lange@gmail.com and phone number is 403-391-3412. If she is unable to respond, she may refer the call to one of the following ministers: Nancy Chegus, Leila Currie, or Ray Goodship.

SUMMATION OF ST. ANDREW'S BOARD MEETING

Presentation from the Administration and Ministry (A & M) Team regarding the appraisal of St Andrew's building, possible upgrades to the downstairs bathrooms, and the downstairs flooring. It was noted that our building is being well used.

A motion was brought forward to purchase six (6) new furnaces to start to replace the 25 to 30 year old existing furnaces. The motion was carried. Work will start later in the summer.

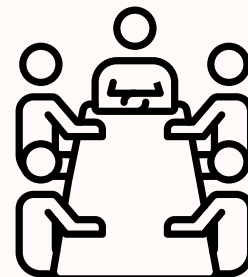
The financial report, including the Stewardship report from Ron Gish was presented.

Ministry and Personnel raised a motion that Martha Winchell to be the new member for a three year term, this was carried.

Sabbatical update; there will be coverage for most Sundays, other Teams will help by filling for services. During this time, Communion will not take place monthly.

We welcomed Donnie Tafts as a new member at large.

Reverend Dave closed with a prayer



On Monday, May 25th, 2026 Reverend Dave Holmes held a senior's service at Royal Oak, the Lodge, and Long Term Care, Lacombe Hospital.

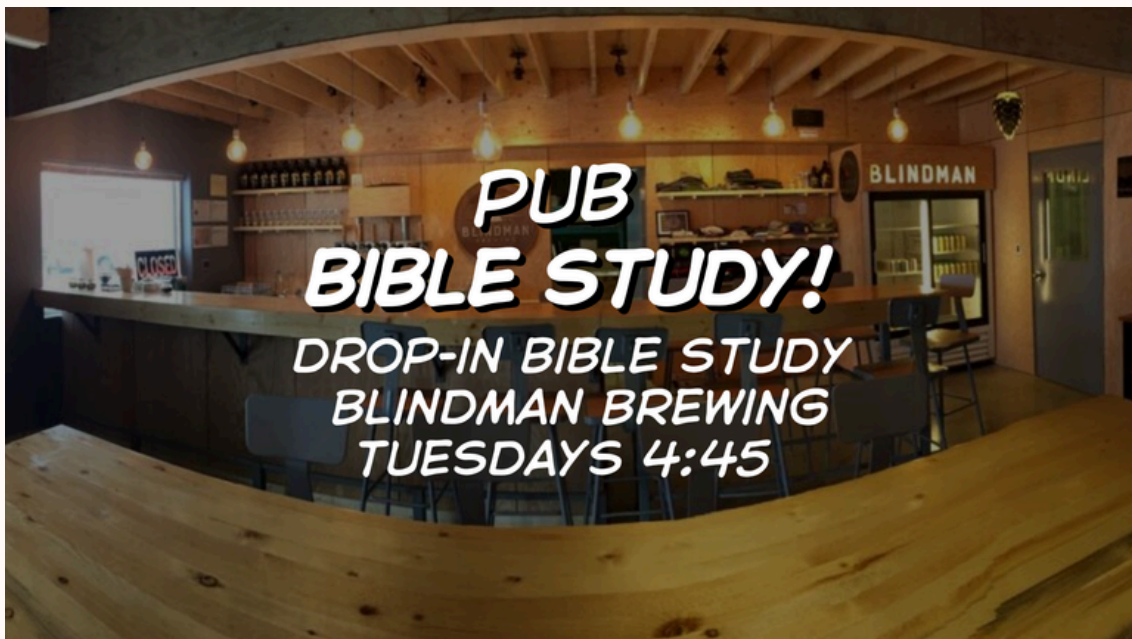
St. Andrew's church members are invited to join in one or two of these joyful services of devotion and hymn singing. Meet and greet the seniors; their smiles will warm your heart.

Please check for future dates, we'd love to **See You There!**

Circles of Care.



Know a grad?
Please forward
their name, photo,
and what they are
graduating from to
Tilly at:
tillygysberta@yahoo.ca



**PUB
BIBLE STUDY!**
DROP-IN BIBLE STUDY
BLINDMAN BREWING
TUESDAYS 4:45