



St. Andrew's United Church Newsletter

JANUARY 2025



IN THIS ISSUE:

BLESSINGS FOR 2025!	PAGE 2
"THE ROBIN SINGS TO ME"	PAGE 3
LIFT SOMEONE...	PAGE 4
MEALS ON WHEELS	PAGE 4
CHRISTMAS ON THE FARM	PAGE 5
SPOT THE DIFFERENCE	PAGE 6
FOODGRAINS PROJECT	PAGE 6
ROBBIE BURNS LUNCHEON	PAGE 7
100 TREE PROJECT	PAGE 8
COMING UP...	PAGE 9

MEALS ON WHEELS



St. Andrew's for many years has provided drivers to deliver meals for Meals on Wheels operated by Lacombe FCSS.

We have confirmed with FCSS, that July will once again be our month to deliver.

Last year, we had over 20 drivers and their helpers engaged in volunteering for this valuable local program.

Ko Bruning and Doug Maas for the third year will co-ordinate for St. Andrew's and be the contact for FCSS.

Looking forward to assisting our community once again.

BLESSINGS FOR 2025, THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE UNITED CHURCH AND OUR 103RD ANNIVERSARY, AS A UNITED CHURCH!

It looks like it is going to be a full year, with some significant things already on the books – we have a new photo directory, we're planning to plant 100 trees as a centennial celebration (a bigger undertaking, maybe, than we thought?), and we're hosting the Chinook Winds Annual General Meeting (and our Moderator) in May. I know there's more to come!

We also have a few big things coming that AREN'T anniversary-related. I'd like to note a couple things to watch for this month.



Our annual meeting this year won't be until the first Sunday of April. This is a big change for us, and will allow our financial folks to get everything in order with a bit less panic. It means we'll be well into the budget year before we approve a budget, but we hope that will be okay! There will, however, be two big things coming to the table between now and the annual meeting. One will be a new set of "identity statements" – mission, vision, values. We've been having discussions on this since the summer, and the small team that's been working on this has the results of all our conversations and consultations. If the draft passes the board, you should be seeing it within a few weeks. The second big thing is a new organizational (governance) structure and policy book. Policy may not get too many of us really excited, but it's still important. What we asked for at the last annual meeting was a policy structure that would allow our Board to focus on mission, vision, and goals, and which would place the day to day decisions about ministry and administration closer to where the work is actually done. The small team that's been working on this (a big, hard job, and I'm REALLY impressed by the folks on the team) is almost ready to present something to the board, and again, if it passes the board, you can expect to see something in a few weeks.

Here's my request: when you see these things, please look at them carefully and yes, even critically! If you see problems, or have questions, or think we're missing or mistaking something, please let us know! You are NOT being troublesome when you do this, you are being helpful. For sure, we won't necessarily respond to or accommodate all objections – but we want to do this well, and it's WAY better to find the problems BEFORE we go ahead with this, than to find them after.

One last thing. I hope we'll soon have a nominating committee going – and it's going to be a big job this year, too. If we do shift our structure, we'll be essentially looking for a whole new board (I do hope that at least a few current members move to the new board). There are some key positions in the church's team and committee structure that also need to be filled. So I invite you to look at the life of the church and see: is there anything in our life together that is calling to you? Places where you might consider leading, or helping? If so, or if you'd just like to talk about it, give me a shout. I will gladly push other work aside to talk to you!

Blessings for this year – another of excitement, I think, and challenge!
 Reverend Dave

"THE ROBIN SINGS TO ME"

1994

Debbie Reimer

My life, 'til now,
 Enshrouded in long winter
 Spent in an icy hell
 Despair, depression, loneliness
 Sorrow, fear, pain
 Self-destroying
 Sick self-loathing
 With no relief, save now

My soul, seed's germ,
 The essence of my self,
 God kept it safe from harm
 And He kept it safe from me,
 In tough seed-coat
 Quiet oh so long
 Inanimate potential

My hopes and dreams
 Preserved beneath
 Hushed, insulating snow
 Seed now, finally, seeking succor
 Awaiting thaw, awaiting sunlight,
 That, with its warmth to share
 Will spark a life anew

There is some dread
 As with all things new
 Uncertain, unfamiliar
 But courage need ne'er be summoned forth
 Unless, first, that fear is there
 There is excitement, also
 And a joy in fresh beginnings
 I rise, a phoenix, from the ashes
 Soaring through to clear blue sky

I raise my eyes and hands and heart
 Toward heaven, with great joy
 Thanking God and praising Him
 Prayers for strength, love, peace and joy
 To fill my cup gone too long parched
 Firmament'll gently shower the earth
 With quenching, cleansing, healing rain

The shoots spring forth
 The flowers unfurl
 Cocoons present such flying beauty
 To the ether
 Those butterflies skip 'round the garden
 Drinking in the petals' dew
 Risen up from disguised sleep
 Mirac'ulous metamorphosis

'Tis the springtime of my spirit
 The earth we tread
 Is warming evermore
 As are my temple, heart and soul
 The garden awakens
 I rise up as well
 I greet my God, I greet the day
 I greet my new-discovered self
 And the robin sings to me.



LIFT SOMEONE INTO THE LIGHT

Once again a tree was set up on the front lawn of the church in celebration of what has become an Annual event – Lift Someone into the Light. We asked the community and the congregation to celebrate those special people in their lives to place a picture, a word, or two of their stories, or their name, into an ornament and hang it on the tree. This was in conjunction with the City of Lacombe and their Light up the Night Celebration.

This year we placed approximately 150 ornaments on the tree. Our thanks go out to Bruce and Cecile for supplying us with the tree and thank you also to the men's group for helping to get it set up and lights put on to it.

A little history of this Event. We just celebrated our 4th Annual Lift Someone into the Light. A city in the Netherlands has a celebration known as Joris' Christmas Tree. People gather in the town square to decorate and hang ornaments on a huge Christmas tree.

There are other events going on at the same time all around the square. Four years ago, Anneke introduced this idea to a few people with the hope that we could try something like it here at St. Andrew's. We did and Lift Someone into the Light was born.

Once again, Joris Linsson the TV program maker for Joris Christmas Tree in the Netherlands, got in touch with Anneke expressing how happy he was that we were continuing this wonderful Tradition.



MEALS ON WHEELS

St. Andrew's for many years has provided drivers to deliver meals for Meals on Wheels operated by Lacombe FCSS. We have confirmed with FCSS, that **July** will once again be our month to deliver.

Last year, we had over 20 drivers and their helpers engaged in volunteering for this valuable local program.

Ko Bruning and Doug Maas for the third year will co-ordinate for St. Andrew's and be the contact for FCSS. Looking forward to assisting our community once again.

FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

Preliminary Year end finances for 2024

Income \$285,430

Expense \$304,274

Deficit -\$18,844

CHRISTMAS ON THE FARM

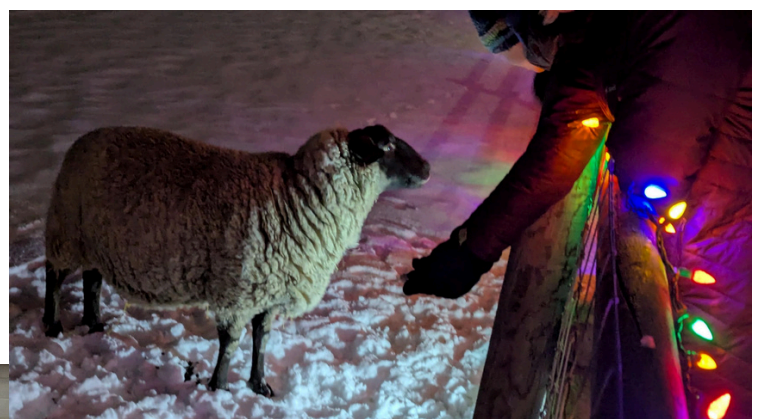
It is a beloved tradition by now – Christmas on the Farm. For the fourth year in a row the congregation was invited to meet on a winter's night in the season of Advent. This year we went to the family farm of Theo, Claudine, Emma, Kaiden and Madison Bruning.

The evening couldn't have been more perfect with a full moon, clear skies, and a temperature of -8C. With the help of our special guest, Dotty the Christmas Donkey, we followed Mary and Joseph on their way to Bethlehem. As always, a roaring fire, hot cocoa, and cookies added warmth to our gathering and some younger folks even had fun sledding.

A big thank you to all who joined us or supported this evening in other ways,
your planning team,

Annerie, Claudine, Barbara.

P.S. We are in touch already with another farm family for Advent 2025.



CHRISTMAS DECORATING

Eleven people came out to help set up the Nativity Scene and decorate the tree and church with lights. Afterwards, those who wished, went to Milly Oak for lunch. A fun time was had by all!

SPOT THE DIFFERENCE WITH GRATITUDE TO DEL

We are celebrating the 100th Anniversary of the United Church and our 103rd Anniversary, as a United Church in many ways. This little competition is among them:

The photo, Delores MacIntyre shared with us, depicts our building from a few years ago. If you were to take a photo today it would not look the same (and not only because we are in a different season of the year).



Here's what we hope you do: spot the differences between the photo in the newsletter and today's view of our church building. Identify the differences and share them with Barbara at blieurance@telus.net or phone/text (403) 318-4000.

We'll pull one name from all the correct entries. And that lucky person will receive a swell price. Have fun!

Reverend Barbara

CENTRAL ALBERTA FOODGRAINS GROWING PROJECT

Another successful year for the Central Alberta Foodgrains Growing Project. At the end of December, we sent almost \$92,000.00 to the Canadian Foodgrains Bank in Winnipeg.

At Agri-Trade in Red Deer in November, we had a booth and spread the word of our project and the great work the Foodgrains Bank does in helping feed some of the world's hungry.

Thank you to St. Andrew's for your generosity once again with donations, and help with growing the canola crop. As well, one of our member's family provided the land in Lacombe County so we could seed a crop.



We are currently looking for land for 2025 - YEAR 30 for us. Please contact Doug at 403-318-5733 if you have land availability or want more information on the work of the Canadian Foodgrains Bank.

ROBBIE BURNS TEA & LUNCHEON

On Saturday, Jan. 26, UCW 1 and 2 hosted a Robbie Burns Day themed luncheon. This tea was all things Scottish, complete with tartans and plaids, music and poetry.

Our table centrepieces this year started with tartan. Each clan in Scotland has its own tartan. We added sand for the sandy beaches, mist for the constant damp, rocks for the mountains and crags. Wood for the forest, then thistle, which is the National flower of Scotland. We added a sprig of heather which grows and blooms amongst the rocks and peat. And there were hearts! The heart ❤️ is reminiscent of the Heart of Midlothian, a mosaic heart embedded in the High Street in Edinburgh outside St. Giles Cathedral. Apparently, it is good luck to spit on this heart - not ours though!

On the children's table this year, we had a Highland cow theme going, with various placemats with the 'Hairy coo' on them. These cows can be seen throughout Scotland.

We had a tremendous turnout from the congregation who enjoyed a luncheon served by our UCW members. There was a freewill donation taken which amounted to \$639.00. The money is split between the 2 Units and is given to various causes within the Church and the community.

Thank you to Bruce Jackson for his fine Scottish brogue when reciting "To a Mouse" and the Selkirk Grace. Thank you to Joan Fredeen for supplying us with our tartan napkins and some amazing baking.

Once again, thank you to all who attended and to all who helped make this such a successful event.

UCW Unit 1 & 2



THE 100 TREE PROJECT UPDATE

There has been swift progress on our tree-planting project. The Green Team has a clear vision and mission:

Vision: A natural forest ecosystem in Lacombe that inspires, celebrates, and makes a positive environmental impact.

Mission: In recognition of the 100th Anniversary of the United Church of Canada, our mission is to transform a 1.7 acre grassy municipal reserve into a natural forest ecosystem, planting 100 primarily native species trees as well as shrubs, perennials, and grasses.

To achieve this, we have contracted with Living Lands Landscape + Design from Delburne which has experience in creating environments that support all lifeforms; plants, pollinators, people, and wildlife. You can be part of the design process! Come to the Workshop on Saturday, February 1 from 1 - 4 pm in the Church Hall. Register through office@lacombeunitedchurch.ca.

We have a signed Agreement with the City of Lacombe outlining each of our roles and responsibilities and it passed unanimously by City Council on January 13th! As part of the process, we sent a Letter to the Neighbours with close proximity to the Woodland Drive Municipal Reserve (west of the church at 58th Street) informing them and inviting them to join with us.

We are working on communication plans to further reach out to the community and gain feedback and public support. A host of volunteer planters are needed for planting days in June; it will be a fun and inspiring experience to be part of this legacy project!

Fundraising continues with three Grant applications in process for a total of \$25,000.

With the ongoing success of the Donate-a- Tree campaign, we will meet our budget goals.

Thank you to St. Andrew's congregation for your enthusiastic support!

The Green Team



COMING UP!



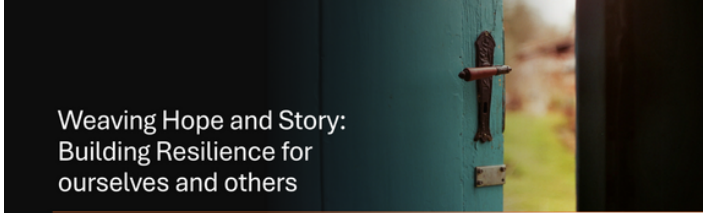
COMMUNITY DESIGN WORKSHOP

Workshop Includes:

- Project description on Woodland MR
- Presentation on Ecological Landscaping and Native Plants
- Hands on design work
- Collaboration
- Habitat building tips
- Refreshments

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 1 - 4 PM
ST. ANDREW'S UNITED CHURCH HALL
5226 51 AVE, LACOMBE

Facilitator: Cynthia Pohl, Living Landscapes & Design (Max 40 attendees)
 To Register Call/Email: 403-782-3148 / office@lacombeunitedchurch.ca



Weaving Hope and Story: Building Resilience for ourselves and others

Zoom presentation offered by Geoffrey Simmins to the Central Alberta Cluster, February 6, 2025



Men's Breakfast!

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 9AM



Designed to bring children, youth and adults together in fun and interactive activities, Messy Church is a new way to explore the values and stories of Christian Faith in an atmosphere of creativity, hospitality and celebration!

2025 CALENDAR

FEBRUARY 7
MARCH 7
APRIL 4
MAY 2

5 PM: Activities-crafts, games, etc.
 6 PM: Celebration in the Sanctuary
 6:15 PM: Supper-Free food to enjoy together

"Come as you are, parents/guardians required to stay and enjoy the activities and free food!"

VIRTUAL WORKSHOP
Beyond the Binary

REGISTER:




WALKING GROUP

The Monday morning walking group has resumed its saunters in Lacombe and area.

All are welcome to this time of nurturing social, spiritual and physical wellness in nature.


Please contact the office if you'd like more information!

Broadview

To subscribe at group rate (\$30/year, 10 issues)

DEADLINE: FEBRUARY 3!!

Truth Telling & Authentic Reconciliation



St. Andrew's Living Into Right Relations team is represented in this founding coalition and encourages all interested in advancing truth telling and reconciliation in our city to attend these strategic planning sessions Jan. 21 and Feb.11.

Developing a strategy for Lacombe and area.

Businesses, agencies, and members of the public interested in Indigenous and non-Indigenous relationships in our community are invited to take part in these planning sessions.

Location: Lacombe Performing Arts Centre 5227 Calgary Edmonton Trail

Tuesday, January 21 & Tuesday, February 11
 7 PM - 9 PM

COMING UP!

GAMES NIGHT!

Wednesdays in February 6-9pm
Friday, February 28 from 7-10 pm
Friday, March 28 from 7-10 pm

All ages are welcome. Bring your favourite board or card games and a snack to share.

Questions? Contact Sandra Smith at 403-348-1219

Taste and See!



Join us for "Taste and See"
A Chocolate Tasting and Holy Week Tour
Monday, March 3, 2025 at 4:30 Pacific/7:30 Eastern
\$60 - Please contact the office to reserve your Zoom registration!

