

ADVENT TIDINGS



Ways to Give This Christmas Season

Each year at Advent, St. Andrew's helps with the collection of food items for the Lacombe Food Bank.

Starting **Sunday, December 8**, please bring non-perishable items to church to support the hungry in our community.

Also, we support the Fill a Fridge program operated by FCSS. Last year, this program helped 667 individuals in Lacombe County at Christmas time, by providing grocery certificates to eligible families to purchase groceries of their choice. Donations are made directly to Lacombe FCSS at its office above the Lacombe Library or online at www.lacombefcss.net. Charitable tax receipts will be issued for all eligible donations.

Thirdly, we support Santa's Anonymous by collecting new, unwrapped gifts starting **December 8** at the church. Gift cards from local merchants are an idea, especially to support teens. Possible ideas are gift certificates from local sports or electronic stores. The Lacombe Kinsmen Club partners with Lacombe FCSS to operate Santa's Anonymous.

For more information on the programs involving Lacombe FCSS, contact Wendy Griffin at 403-782-6637.

Thank you for caring and spreading joy.

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Advent Is Upon Us...

Once again I find myself surprised that December is around the corner, and Advent is upon us. Advent is the beginning of the Church liturgical year; the time when we prepare for Christmas, the festival of Christ's birth. Advent and then Christmas are reminders that – not once long ago, but year after year, generation after generation – Christ is born into our real world in the darkest of times.

Of course, the Christmas season is also a time of celebrations, lights and trees, parties and feasts and family gatherings. For all our reservations about the busyness and commercialism, celebrations are good and important things, and I hope we are able to enjoy what this season offers, live the family-and-friends gatherings with grace and gratitude, give and receive gifts with generosity, joy, and gratitude.

Here are my hopes for this coming season: I hope that I'll be able to enter into the celebrations, gifts, and gatherings with whole-hearted joy. I hope not to be full of "shoulds" and anxiety about doing it all perfectly, but with more attention to the fun of it all. I hope to participate meaningfully and significantly in the social ministry of our church at this time – with the food bank, the benevolent funds in the church and in Lacombe, Santas Anonymous, and Fill-a-Fridge. And I hope to take the necessary time to soak in the spirituality of this season – waiting for, yearning for, and looking for the presence of Christ in the real world in which we live.



I confess I dropped the ball on any central planning for Advent this year – but plenty of creative things are happening anyway! This year we are focussing Advent around some resources provided by Kate Bowler.

Kate is well-known for her blog and podcasts called "Everything Happens." She's also a professor of the history of Christianity at Duke University. In 2015, having started her dream job and feeling blessed in every way, Kate was diagnosed with stage IV cancer. This struggle (which has NOT ended as the doctors predicted) is the focus of her book *Everything Happens for a Reason* (and other lies I've loved) and has shaped her outlook on life and faith.

We'll follow her lead through our Sunday service themes this year, but we are also offering her daily devotional guide for Advent, and a weekly discussion group (normally meeting on Tuesdays, see the notice elsewhere in this newsletter) as well. If, like me, you are looking for ways to open yourself to the spirituality of the season, here's our suggestion!

The long dawn of Advent will soon begin, and now we are all learning to wait. Christmas is coming and the baby Jesus will be born, but for now we must sit in the darkness.
-Kate Bowler-

Continued..

Other events: we'll be Lifting Someone Into the Light again, starting on November 28 from 5:30 - 7:30. This gives you the chance to remember someone significant to you by making an ornament and hanging it on the tree outside the church. We'll also have cookies and carols that night!

Sunday December 1 will be followed by a pot-luck lunch, organized at least in part by our Friends in Faith group!

On December 13 (Friday the 13th!) we'll have another Christmas on the Farm event, something I know that many of us REALLY look forward to each year - thanks to our CD committee for that!

Sunday the 15th will be our annual Christmas Cantata at our morning worship, and we'll have services on Christmas Eve, of course, at 7:00 and 9:00 pm. We'll have a Blue Christmas service on Friday, December 20 at 7:00 pm. Look for details for all these events (and there may be more!) elsewhere in this newsletter.

As always - lots going on. I hope the Advent and Christmas seasons will be full and good - not stressed, not frenetic - and that they will include, for you, at least a few times when you can look up at the stars and wonder, when you can pause and feel a holy Presence in the air around you, and when you can sit in reflection and let the stories of the season touch you afresh. Grace, peace, and blessing!

Dave



Fruitcakes for sale! \$18 for a large, \$5/\$6 for a small. There are GF fruitcakes available as well. Please contact Pat Crozier or the office if you'd like to purchase! 403-782-3148.

Financial Highlights

	Income	Expenses
September	\$26414	\$23008
Year to date	\$189667	\$223726



Advent Devotional

Advent is a time of waiting, longing, and hoping. Would you like to gather to share this journey on Tuesdays from 7-8:30 PM on **Dec. 3, Dec. 10, Dec. 17** and Sunday after church on **Dec. 22**?

We will use a devotional guide "The Weary World Rejoices" by Kate Bowler which is crafted to be our companion. There are reflections, questions, and practices designed to help us explore the real stuff—the joy, the sorrow, the light, and the shadows - around the themes of Hope-Truth; Peace-Justice; Joy - Restoration; and Love-Compassion.

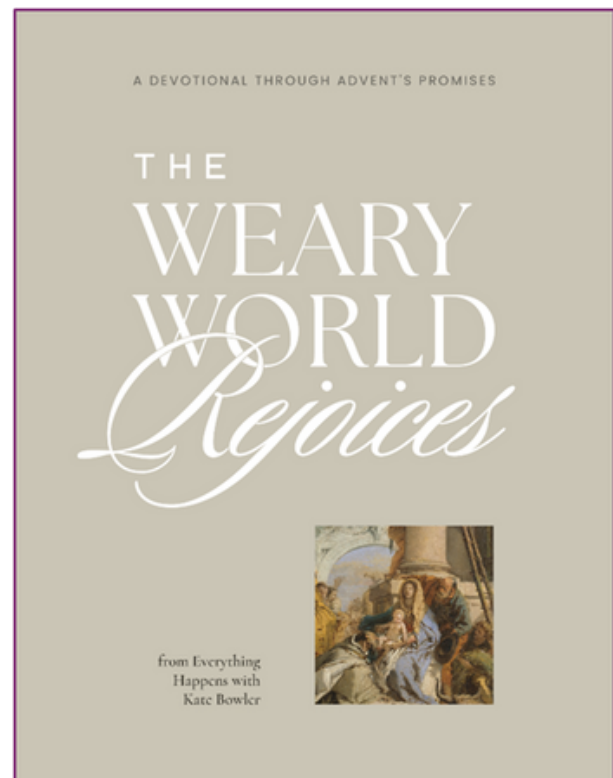
This season isn't about perfect answers; it's about sitting together in the complexity of life and finding a deep sense of belonging as we wait together for the light of Christmas.

Cecile Fausak and Barbara Lieurance want to offer a space to be honest, to listen, and to find connection in the midst of all the waiting and hoping.

You can also follow along with an individual study. Please contact the office for your printed resource.

Come for one or all 4 sessions. Please sign up on the sheet between the parlour doors, and indicate whether you would like a link to the free individual resource

https://katebowler.com/seasonal_devotional/the-weary-world-rejoices/?mc_cid=a5f258f55f&mc_eid=d7256000b9#individual , or a printed copy from the office. And tell us if you would like a ride to the group.





Green Team Luncheon

United Church of Canada is celebrating its Centennial anniversary in 2025. St. Andrews is celebrating 102 years in Lacombe. Our Green Team in conjunction with the city hopes to plant one hundred trees to honour this celebration.

On Nov. 3rd the Green Team hosted a soup luncheon, followed by an update on our work by Cecil Fausak. We also listened to a guest speaker Alice Koning. Alice is Head of Interpretive Services at the Kerry Wood Nature Centre and Historic Fort Normandeau in Red Deer. Alice asked us to go outdoors, open up our senses to the trees near the church and come up with three descriptive words that come into our minds. These words were shared with three volunteer writers whose role it was to write a piece of poetry using the words that were shared with them.

The event concluded with each group brainstorming to remind us about the value of trees in our everyday existence and the importance of trees providing a corridor and home for wildlife.

Submitted By:
Doris Thesenvitz

If a Tree Could Talk

***Age over beauty gnarled
but never obsolete
Casting intermittent shadows
from twisted weathered arteries
I may have been maimed
Now all can see I am naked***

Poet-Tree writers

Carson Pegg

***I am tall, pointed and majestic
My solid features have existed
for many years
I am regal
Under the beauty of the blue sky,
I radiate peace
I am healing.***

Doug Maas

***Sit with me
I sustain you in my roots
And whisper stories that please
Rest beneath my canopy of beauty
Find comfort here
Coexist with me
I am healing***

William Langille

Coming Up...



Governance Team Town Hall will be held Sunday, November 24.



Game Nights: Come out and bring your favorite games! Wednesday November 27 and December 11, from 7-10 PM.




Lift Someone Into The Light Thursday, November 28 from 5:30-7:30. Come decorate an ornament for someone you hold dear.

A DEVOTIONAL THROUGH ADVENT'S PROMISES

THE WEARY WORLD *Rejoices*

From Everything Happens with Katie Bowler



Advent is a time of waiting, longing, and hoping. Would you like to gather to share this journey?

Tuesdays from 7-8:30 PM on Dec. 3, Dec. 10, Dec. 17 and Sunday after church on Dec. 22

Sign-up on the sheet between the parlour doors!

Advent Study, Tuesdays from 7-8:30 PM on December 3, 10, 17 and after church on Sunday December 22.

Coming Up...



Advent Potluck: Sunday, December 1 following the service.



Messy Church, "Christmas in our community" Friday, December 6 at 5 PM.



Write for Rights: Tuesday December 10 from 2-5 PM in the parlour. Come and write for Human Rights!



KEC Benefit Brunch: "the LONG WEEKEND" Saturday, December 14, 11 AM. Please contact the office or Winnie for tickets.

Advent Events

2024

NOV
27

GAMES NIGHT

Our game nights continue for Wednesday evenings Nov. 27, and Dec. 11 from 7-10 PM in the hall.

NOV
28

LIFT SOMEONE INTO THE LIGHT

Thursday, Nov. 28, 5:30-7:30 PM, come decorate an ornament to honour someone you love! Caroling, cookies, hot chocolate, and a warm fire!

DEC
1

ADVENT POTLUCK

Join us following the service on Sunday, Dec. 1 for an Advent potluck! There will be turkey, ham, gravy...and so much more!

DEC
3

ADVENT STUDY

Gather with us to share the journey of Advent. Tuesdays from 7-8:30 PM. Dec. 3, 10, 17, and Sunday Dec. 22 after church.

DEC
6

MESSY CHURCH

Join us for "Christmas in our community" on Friday, Dec. 6 starting at 5 PM!

DEC
10

WRITE FOR RIGHTS

We will meet in the parlour on Tuesday, December 10 between 2-5 PM for Human Rights Day, to Write for Rights for people around the world.

DEC
13

CHRISTMAS ON THE FARM!

Christmas on the farm will be held at Claudine and Theo Bruning's farm. Please contact the office for directions.

DEC
20

BLUE CHRISTMAS SERVICE

St. Andrew's Blue Christmas service will be held on Friday, Dec. 20 at 7 PM, we hope you will join us.

DEC
24

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES

Christmas Eve services will be held on Tuesday, Dec. 24 at both 7 and 9 PM.