

# ST. ANDREW'S

## FALL NEWSLETTER 2025



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**INFORMING, INTERPRETING, INSPIRING...**  
**GOD'S PEOPLE**



## A Letter from the Minister

Hello everyone,

This Fall Newsletter contains a great deal of content that I hope you will find meaningful. Please take the time to read it, noting the various dates and events by marking them down in your calendars. **And please, if you would, lift up the life and ministry we have together here at St. Andrew's in your prayers.**



Why would I ask you to do that? To pray? Well, I imagine you might think it the kind of thing a pastor should ask of a congregation. It might even sound (at the very least) a little bit spiritual, and simply a good thing to ask of God's flock. Perhaps all true! But under all that is a recognition that God is ultimately the active agent in and through a community of believers, which we call a congregation. Prayer is a sign that the creator of all things is also the creator of St. Andrew's. We rely on the Lord. We depend on God. We also pray because we may not be able to see all the things God is doing in and through us as His family. But, of course, God does! We pray because we can not see all that is ahead of us. But, of course, God does! And so, we pray as an act of entrusting ourselves to God, seeking God's guidance, welcoming God's blessing, and learning patience to hold up under whatever trial may come. We also pray, simply because we hope God will use whatever 'water' we bring into congregational life, turning it into 'wine' just like he did at the wedding in Cana. (John 2)

During the week we ran Vacation Bible Camp, the end of August, I came across an interesting story during one of my personal devotional times that has held my attention since. It reminded me why we are called to be a people of prayer as we seek to live faithful lives as a congregation. We may not be able to see what wine the Lord will bring out of our actions, attitudes and decisions, but God does.

*Edward Kimball was a Sunday School teacher in the 1880s, who made it his mission to care for the most troubled boy in his class. "I have met few friends whose minds were spiritually darker," he later recalled, "who seemed more unlikely ever to become a Christian." But through Kimball's consistent kindness that boy did eventually become a Christian. His name was D. L. Moody and he grew up to become one of America's greatest evangelists, leading tens of thousands of people to Jesus. Moody disciplined a man called F. B. Meyer, who helped spark the Welsh Revival of 1904 and he in turn disciplined a fledgling evangelist called J. Wilber Chapman. Chapman disciplined a professional baseball player called Billy Sunday who started a prayer meeting for businessmen in North Carolina. These businessmen invited an evangelist called Mordecai Ham to speak at a citywide gathering in Charlotte, NC and, in 1932 during one of these meetings, a 15 year-old surrendered his life to the Lord. That boy went on to preach the gospel to more people, live and in-person, than anyone else in history, leading 3.2 million people to Christ. His name, of course, was Billy Graham.*

Now I'm not suggesting the next Billy Graham is going to be traced back to St. A's NOTL (although nothing is impossible for God of course)! However, I am saying that we never know how God may choose to use us in our present, to bless others in the future. The ripple effect of our lives (and our faith) is often beyond what we can see ... and so we pray. We pray for the life and ministry we have together at St. Andrew's, and as individuals. We pray for each other. And we pray that we will stay faithful in how we show up in



our families and neighbourhoods, bearing cups of 'living water' as best we can, trusting that Jesus will turn it into 'wine' for someone, somewhere, sometime. For as the Apostle Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 3:6-8 ...

*<sup>6</sup>I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow. <sup>7</sup>So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow. <sup>8</sup>The one who plants and the one who waters have one purpose, and they will each be rewarded according to their own labor.*

Friends, thank you for your ongoing faithful labor in this day and season of being St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church --- we do not know what will come of it, but the Lord does. And perhaps our reward some day hence will be ... that we will know it too for the first time and be amazed at what God has done!

By God's Grace,

Rev. Bernie

## **Strawberry Festival 2025**

The Strawberry Festival is a cherished annual celebration that brings together community members, the congregation, and visitors, all united by the spirit of community. As the festival commenced, the air was filled with anticipation and the scent of fresh strawberries. The Piper marked the beginning of the festival with the harmonious bagpipes, and Rev. Bernie opened the festival with prayer, setting a joyful tone for the festival. Our congregation should be proud of the example we have set to our community by the hard work and respect it takes to provide such an enjoyable day.

Plans for next year's Strawberry Festival, on June 20<sup>th</sup>, 2026 are already underway...

## **Gateau & Grace 2025**

We were blessed once again this year with three wonderful summer evenings that filled our stomachs with scrumptious gateau and our souls with the grace of music and Word.

Musically, James ensured we had an excellent cast of musicians throughout as we enjoyed his fine (and at times catlike;) touch on the organ, the classical guitar by Adian Papez, the trumpet by Paul Sanvidotti and Nathan Pol, and the eclectic combination of trombone, recorder, piano and the human voice by trio Katie & Greg Walshaw and Shawn Oakes. We were pleased to be touched by messages of Peppercorn Grace through three of Jesus parables (The Good Samaritan, The Feisty Widow & Unjust Judge, and The Leaven).

It was a privilege and joy to host our NOTL friends and neighbours once again, trusting that each returned home lighter in heart and step.





Thank you to all those who brought such fabulous baking, and to all those working in the background to ensure all went smoothly (including no lawn sprinklers mid gateau!).



## Vacation Bible Camp

August 25<sup>th</sup> to 29<sup>th</sup>, St. Andrew's hosted the Vacation Bible Camp. It was a great week together - reflecting on God's love for us, learning or reminding ourselves of Bible Stories/lessons from the New and Old Testament, learning memory verses, singing, snacking, doing crafts, and playing games together. A good time was had by all! We hosted 12 children during the week and provided each family with a Bible Story Book on Friday. Please continue to pray that God will bring about His kingdom work in the lives of each child and volunteer in the year ahead.





## Worship and Nurture News

This Fall, during our Sunday morning worship services, we are walking through the opening section of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5:1-12, better known as The Beatitudes. In a struggling world filled with those who long to be known, and in a culture that wants it all and where more is seen as better, what does it mean to be counted among those who are blessed? What does a blessed life look like? Jesus, as he often does, invites us into an upside-down way of understanding what it is to be 'blessed'.

As for Sunday morning worship services, here are a few dates to keep in mind:

- September 21<sup>st</sup> – St. Andrew's 231<sup>st</sup> Anniversary service with congregational BBQ to follow
- October 5<sup>th</sup> – World Communion Sunday – Food Collection with presentation to Newark Neighbours
- October 12<sup>th</sup> - Thanksgiving Sunday
- October 26<sup>th</sup> – Presbyterian Sharing Awareness Sunday (Guest Speaker: Rev. Joel Sherbino, Malawi Friends of Prisons Ministry)
- November 2<sup>nd</sup> – Daylight Saving Time ends
- November 9<sup>th</sup> – Remembrance Day service
- November 30<sup>th</sup> – Advent begins (Communion will be celebrated)

Other upcoming special services of worship to note:

- December 6<sup>th</sup> – St. Andrew's hosting an evening presentation of the "Messiah"
- December 14<sup>th</sup> – St. Andrew's Festival of Carols

## Holy Communion

On **Sunday, October 5<sup>th</sup>** – the **Sacrament of Holy Communion** will be celebrated. Since New Testament times, Holy Communion has been a key part of Christian worship. This simple meal has many meanings. It is **a meal of remembrance** where the bread and wine recall and dramatize how Jesus at the Last Supper with his disciples, broke bread and poured wine to point to his body about to be broken and his blood about to be poured out in death for us. The Lord's Supper is also **a meal of communion**, a shared community meal, in which believers participate as members of the body of Christ. What we share isn't merely bread and wine, but our union in the powerful love of the crucified Christ now risen and reigning. The Supper is also in the New Testament **a meal of hope**. St. Paul writes at *1 Corinthians* 11:26: 'For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.' Paul suggests here that Holy Communion is provisional; that is, bread and wine feed our faith now; but when Jesus returns in triumph, we won't need bread and wine, for we will have communion with the Lord Jesus in person! The Supper is also **a meal of thanksgiving**, the Greek word for thanksgiving being eucharist. At the Last Supper, the Gospels say that Jesus gave thanks, something that Paul also notes in *1 Corinthians* 11. Not surprisingly, this emphasis appears when we celebrate Communion during the Thanksgiving season. The thanksgiving theme goes back to how Jews celebrated Passover, the greatest of all the Jewish festivals that annually recalled the deliverance of the Israelites from slavery in Egypt. What Jews gave



thanks for was how God intervened to save his people. Likewise, at the Lord's Supper we're called to thank God for all that he accomplished for us through Jesus. You are invited!

## Thanksgiving Sunday

**Sunday, October 12<sup>th</sup> is Thanksgiving Sunday**, a wonderful opportunity to heartily thank God for all he provides. The sanctuary will be beautifully dressed for the occasion! At the same time, how fitting that we thank the Lord for his provision by sharing what he has provided for us with others. You will find below in this *Newsletter* an appeal to supply food for the Thanksgiving hampers Newark Neighbours will give to those in Niagara-on-the-Lake whose limited means makes food buying a real and daily challenge.

## Our Daily Bread

A non-denominational, non-profit Charitable organization located in Windsor, Ontario and affiliated with over 37 offices around the world, Our Daily Bread provides materials to help people grow in their relationship with God.

Here at St. Andrew's, every congregational member is encouraged to Take Ten minutes daily to read God's Word and the reflection provided in the devotional "Our Daily Bread".

You will find copies of the devotional and the Discovery Series in the Kirk Hall at the top of the stairs. Please feel free to pick one up. Once you have read it, please return to the Narthex so that others may also share in God's Word.



Below is an example from the Discovery Series titled "*The Struggle Cycle*"

When caught in the Struggle Cycle, we immediately take steps to reduce our distress. Distress reduction strategies fall into five categories:

1. **Distraction** – We distract ourselves from distressing thoughts and feelings by watching TV, shopping working, exercising, gambling, gaming, volunteering, helping, cleaning, reading, or doom scrolling social media.
2. **Opting Out** – We avoid doing things and going places. We avoid people, places, activities, and situations associated with our unwanted thoughts and feelings.
3. **Fixation** – We spend unhealthy amounts of time and energy fixated on and talking about our problems without a clear path forward. We get second and third opinions from trusted sources. We blame others, blame ourselves, worry, rehash the past, fantasize about success, and use positive thinking to counter negative thoughts.
4. **Substances** – We can turn to food, drugs, medications, tobacco, caffeine, and alcohol for quick relief.
5. **Self Harm** – Self-inflicted physical pain is a powerful distraction from emotional distress. Other forms of self-harm include reckless behavior that could lead to injury or completely undermine our opportunities for success.



All of these strategies might reduce our distress in the short term. We feel less bad until the effect of whatever we are doing to control and avoid our discomfort wears off. Then, we are back where we started, feeling bad and stuck.

While such a “struggle cycle” is not alien to any of us, Our Daily Bread devotional is a tool that helps us to recenter ourselves on the presence of God through Scripture and prayer. ‘Take Ten’ each day to position yourself to experience the peace of God that transcends understanding. (Philippians 4:6-7)

## Nurture

Other **Nurture ministries** at St. Andrew’s, includes our little **Sunday school**, led by the quiet, faithful work of Ashley Paines. We are thankful for Ashley’s dedication, and hopeful too that a few more children may be part of her group. If that happens in the next month or two, we will need to recruit a few helpers!

As to the nurture of adults, **Prime Time** is back – starting **Wednesday October 1<sup>st</sup> at 2.00 pm** in the Kirk Hall. As to what learning will be shared, that remains unknown. But what we do know is that Prime Time has been enjoyable and will no doubt remain so. If you haven’t been, or are new to St. Andrew’s, come, and bring a friend with you!

We are also resuming **The Chosen** discussion group on **Wednesday October 8<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m.** in the Kirk Hall. It will run on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesdays of each month. The Chosen is a multi-season TV series dramatizing the life and ministry of Jesus. Since it’s inception in 2017, it has become a phenomenon winning praise not only for it’s production quality but also for it’s moving and thought-provoking portrayal of Jesus.

**Tuesday Bible Study**, beginning September 23<sup>rd</sup> at 11:00 a.m. It will run on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> weeks of the month – for those who wish to join others in going a little deeper into God’s Word. Just bring yourself, a notebook and a readiness to discuss and ask questions.

**St. A’s Book Club** – we will meet Monday October 27<sup>th</sup> @7pm in the Kirk Hall to discuss the book “What if Jesus Was Serious ... About Heaven?” by Skye Jethani (2023, Brazos Press). The book unpacks what Jesus really said about heaven and how it can transform our faith today. There are a few copies available in the Narthex (\$8.50/book).

Everyone is welcome to **Quiet Prayer** on Thursdays at 11:00-11:30 a.m. in the sanctuary. It is our way of making the sacred space of the sanctuary available during the week for those who desire to experience the reality of Matthew 11:28 & Psalm 46:10.

*“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.”*

*“Be still, and know that I am God;”*



## In-Reach and Outreach News

### Some Thoughts on what St. Andrew's is up to Locally

The hot summer that has just ended meant a larger than usual number of wildfires across Canada and also meant cooling centres being set up in our cities to help those without homes. As for us in Niagara-on-the-Lake, it was a close thing – would the heat on the evening of the first Gathering for Gateau and Grace force us to serve gateau in the Church Hall instead of the lawn? We braved the elements and stayed outside! When you stop and think about it, we live privileged lives!

Speaking of privilege, the greatest privilege we have, one that none of us has earned, is that we know Jesus, the One who reveals God to us and the One who restores us to God. No wonder Jesus is given so many titles in the New Testament – our rock, friend, saviour, foundation, lion, hope. But as you know, with privilege comes responsibility. One responsibility for us as a congregation is to keep growing in our knowledge and reliance on God – hence the importance of gathering for worship, teaching and fellowship. But we have a second responsibility – to represent God in the local community in which we're placed. This is always a huge challenge for congregations.

So, how do we at St. Andrew's let our neighbours know that God has a blessing for them? We do that in two ways. First, how each of us lives and acts among the folk we meet each week speaks volumes; that is, they hear from us and see in us either someone whose life aligns with the faith we profess – or doesn't. What a witness is possible if such an alignment is in place! For one thing, we'll find it easier to speak the name of Jesus to others if we're consciously trying to live for him. I confess that I sometimes speak and act in ways that make me ashamed to wear a clerical collar! Yet God forgives my stumbles, and yours, and lifts us up so that we can stand up for Jesus.

The second way in which we represent God locally is by giving our neighbours glimpses of God's grace and goodness in our congregational life. This leads me back to our Gatherings for Gateau and Grace. Our GGG evenings are a delight for our tastebuds and ears; but there's more to them than that. The GGG ministry is designed to deliver the good news – gospel – of Jesus. It begins with us as a congregation inviting neighbours to join us; it continues in the warm welcome they receive from us, especially when we make no pretence to being saints but appear as people as much in need of God's grace as any. Then there are the gateaux, made with great care; for a few moments, out on the lawn, community is created among friends and those we've never met before. What follows in the [air-conditioned] sanctuary is music, whose beauty and giftedness fill all who gather with a palpable sense of wonder that readies us to hear Bernie speak words that reveal the Giver of every perfect gift. And so, God's grace is extended and God's blessing falls. *Rev. Clyde*







Another way in which St. Andrew's engaged in outreach to our neighbours this summer was our Vacation Bible Camp. Its scale was modest – twelve children attended - but its joy and unity, as those kids soaked up bible verses and bible songs – some of them wild – and as they worked, played, and ate together, though with the occasional “moment,” delighted the leaders, none of us exactly young, and surely also our God! How God will use our VBC and the one next year, and the next, none of us know. But this we know: God's word, like rain and snow that water the earth, making it bud and flourish, will accomplish what God desires [taken from Isaiah 55:10-11].

Ways to bless our neighbours are many – read elsewhere in the Newsletter how to participate in the Thanksgiving Food Drive - and include every Sunday, when we take time to invite neighbours to worship and greet folks on Sunday whom we don't know. Outreach to others doesn't have to be elaborate; yet it's a priority that the followers of Jesus be winsome so that they win some!

### **A THANKSGIVING OUTREACH OPPORTUNITY FOR ST. ANDREW'S**



“As long as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease.” Those stirring words from *Genesis* 8 reveal God's wonderful promise to provide us with regular seasons and fruitful harvests. God is good, and God is faithful! So, we will soon gather as a congregation on **Thanksgiving Sunday** to thank God for all he gives.

But Thanksgiving is not only about us receiving; it is also about us sharing. To that end, the St. Andrew's **In-reach and Outreach Committee** invites you, as we do annually, to share generously what God has given you, so that others in our community with limited means can be provided for and encouraged. All our gifts will be collected and given to **Newark Neighbours**, the local agency. The following is a list of suggested items for donation: boxed stuffing, canned gravy, canned vegetables, canned cranberry sauce, juice, cookies, crackers and napkins.

This year, Our plan is as follows:

1. You are invited to bring your **gifts of non-perishable food** to the sanctuary on **Sunday, October 5<sup>th</sup>**, and there build a mountain or at least a hill of food!
2. If you wish to drop off your food donations to the Church Hall during the week prior to October 5<sup>th</sup>, that is fine; they will be brought over to the sanctuary on Sunday.
3. During our October 5<sup>th</sup> worship, our food gifts will be received as a tangible part of our worship and presented to a Newark Neighbours representative who will have an opportunity to say a few words and for whose work in the community we will have an opportunity to pray.
4. During the week prior to Thanksgiving on October 13<sup>th</sup>, our food donations will be taken to Newark Neighbours and shared with local families.

Thanksgiving is a beautiful season of the year. Let's make it even more beautiful by giving with an overflow of generosity. In doing so, we want others – our neighbours - to be blessed and God to be honoured



St. Andrew's will be hosting "Doors Open Ontario – Niagara-on-the-Lake" on Saturday, October 18<sup>th</sup>, 2025, from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Website: <https://www.doorsopenontario.on.ca/pages/events/niagara-on-the-lake>

## Second Chance Movies

Second Chance Movies [SCM] is a neighbouring form of ministry under the oversight of St. Andrew's IOC, that seeks to create a unique and non-intimidating space of hospitality for our NOTL community. It does this through an informal time of watching and discussing movies together from a variety of vantage points and themes that easily touch on the Christian faith. It is the IOC's prayer that this neighbouring ministry will build bridges of friendship within the NOTL community, such that some will explore and/or be encouraged in the Christian faith, and come to enjoy the blessings of a Christian community like St. Andrew's. The first movie, titled "BABE" is on October 4<sup>th</sup> with the doors opening at 1:30 p.m.



## Congregation Potluck Supper – November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2025



St. Andrew's is once again holding its annual Congregational Potluck Supper on Saturday November 1, 2025. Please mark your calendar and come with whatever dish you choose, ready to enjoy good food, fun, fellowship, some music and games. Please invite a friend. It promises to be an excellent evening!

## Cemetery News

We want to thank the Property committee and all the volunteers for their work in the cemetery this spring and summer. The St. Andrew's cemetery hosts many family members and tourists, and we try to keep it as beautiful as possible.

In order to do this, we would like to remind everyone that when you place flowers or potted plants as a family tribute, they will need to be removed when they wither, making St. Andrew's a place of loving care.

Have a blessed day,  
Bonnie



## Custom Sewing Services by Belqis

It has been well over a year and half since Belqis and her two young sons arrived in Canada from Afghanistan thanks to the refugee sponsorship of the Presbytery of Niagara. St. Andrew's was pleased to support this Presbytery initiative through raising funds as well as through the direct involvement of folks like Nancy King (who has been a personal help and support to Belqis and her boys) as well as the Van Egmond family who opened their home for the first couple of months. Belqis has been sewing with a local company for a while and is now also seeking to start her own sewing business. If you know of anyone seeking this kind of service, please consider putting them in touch with Belqis.

### CUSTOM SEWING SERVICES BY BELQIS

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