

THE CATALYST

The People of St. Andrew's are Called by God TO SERVE IN FAITH, HOPE AND LOVE in the Heart of Toronto.

Four Ways to Celebrate

The Sacrament of Communion is central to Christian faith and spirituality. Ever since that fateful meal on the last night of Jesus' life, his followers have obeyed his invitation to break bread, to share a cup, and to do so "in remembrance of me."

Over the course of those centuries, there has been a great deal of reflection and discussion about what we "mean" by the words that are spoken. Some traditions believe that the bread "becomes" Jesus' body, and the wine "becomes" Jesus' blood (a belief often referred to as "transubstantiation"). Those of us in the Reformed and Presbyterian tradition may not believe that we are actually ingesting His body and blood, but we certainly believe that something unique and sacred happens when we celebrate the Sacrament of Communion together.

Rather than focusing on what "happens" to the bread and wine, it can be good for us to ponder the various meanings that are conveyed to us by "how" we celebrate Communion at St. Andrew's.

Traditional Communion

At least four times a year, we celebrate Communion in a fairly "traditional" manner. That is, the elders come up to the Communion table, receive the elements, and then carry them out to the congregation on trays -- much as a group of waiters or servants would carry food to guests at a

restaurant or at a feast. And therein lies the important "meaning" in this first way of celebrating Communion: that those who have been called by the congregation to be its leaders (or "ruling elders") demonstrate their calling by serving the people of God.



In so many other parts of life, those who occupy positions of leadership or authority are served -- or expect to *be served*; not so in the Christian community. Rather, in the church, it is in servanthood rather than in power that true leadership is revealed. And the "traditional" way of Communion -- in which the elders serve the people -- is intended to remind us of this core belief.

Aisle/"Walk Up" Communion

There's a second "way" that we celebrate Communion at St. Andrew's: when people are invited to rise from their pews and walk up to the front of the church in order to receive the bread and wine. This second way of celebrating Communion involves a greater degree of participation. And, often, while coming up towards the front, there can be a greater awareness of the other people with whom we are "in communion."

This second "way" of celebrating Communion reminds us of our own individual and personal choice to stand up and participate; but also reminds us of the presence of those with whom we are making the journey of faith. We walk together towards Christ, and then walk together back into the world.

Chancel Communion

Every Thursday from 12:15 to 12:45 pm, a small worship service, which includes the weekly celebration of Communion, takes place in the chancel area at the front of the sanctuary. As it is a much smaller group than our typical Sunday morning services, it is possible to sit together in the old choir pews in the chancel, creating a more "intimate" sense of connection with the others with whom we gather. When the time for Communion comes, those who



Continued on next page.

participate come out of their pews and stand in a semi-circle (or all the way around the table in a circle when, occasionally, a larger number of worshippers gathers). The bread and wine are carried around the semi-circle until each person is served.

This “way” of celebrating Communion reminds us of our connection with others: we are quite literally gathered around the Table. We stand in a circle, shoulder to shoulder, as we receive and remember.

Extraordinary Communion

I was not sure what to call the fourth “way” that the Sacrament of Communion is celebrated at St. Andrew’s, and thought that “extraordinary” might work. After all, the word “extraordinary” can mean remarkable, but it can also simply mean “unusual” – not ordinary.

This fourth “way” is certainly not as visible or as common as the first three ways – but it is no less meaningful. That is, in times of crisis or need, the Sacrament of Communion is taken

to people who cannot be present in church – those who are in unusual or “extraordinary” moments in their lives. In hospital rooms, in nursing homes, in the residences of those who are limited in their mobility, the ministers and elders are honoured to bring Communion. There are times when the requests to celebrate Communion in this fourth “way” come at times of great significance – when a person’s life is drawing to a close, or when a person is facing a serious operation or procedure. At such moments, the bread and wine serve as a visible way to demonstrate to the person that they are not alone, that God is with them, and that their church community loves them and cares for them, even when we cannot all be together.

None of the four “ways” to celebrate Communion is better or worse than any of the others. But in each case, we should find great spiritual consolation – and joy – in the knowledge that we are drawn together, in love, by the One who invited us to perform this simple yet profound act of breaking bread and sharing the cup together – in remembrance of Him.

Will

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Catalyst is published two times annually for members and friends of St. Andrew’s Church. Contributions on the life and work of St. Andrew’s Church are welcome.

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At The Peace Bridge, Fort Erie, Ontario

Blessed are those whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the Lord their God, who made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them; who keeps faith forever; who executes justice for the oppressed; who give food to the hungry. The Lord sets the prisoners free; the Lord opens the eyes of the blind, the Lord lifts up those who are bound down; the Lord loves the righteous. The Lord watches over the strangers, and upholds the orphan and the widow; but the Lord brings the way of the wicked to ruin. The Lord will reign forever, your God, O Zion, for all generations. Praise the Lord. - *Psalms 146*

I had an opportunity to travel on a Prayer Pilgrimage this month. I was with a group of people gathered from around the GTA, and we spent the day together at the border in Fort Erie, Ontario. The prayer pilgrimage began when we left Toronto. We listened to a CBC Radio podcast on the way to the border. In 2017, CBC Radio had posted a documentary on this particular Canadian border in Fort Erie, where many have crossed over from the US into Canada—explaining that “in Fort Erie, it has been the year of the refugee for a very long time — centuries, in fact.”

We arrived at the Refugee Welcome Centre, which is located at the Canadian border. Here is the first face a refugee sees and experiences when they are crossing the border—faces of care and support. This welcome centre shares a wall with the Canadian Border Agency, and the two groups work together on a daily basis.

We were given a special tour of the centre, as well as the border patrol side, where the refugees come in for fingerprints, interviews, and questioning. It’s a process that is important—and must be followed. But it’s frightening for those seeking safety and fleeing from a violent past. The welcome centre hosts and the border patrol agent understands the need for the other, and the respect is mutual. One works better when the other also does their job well.

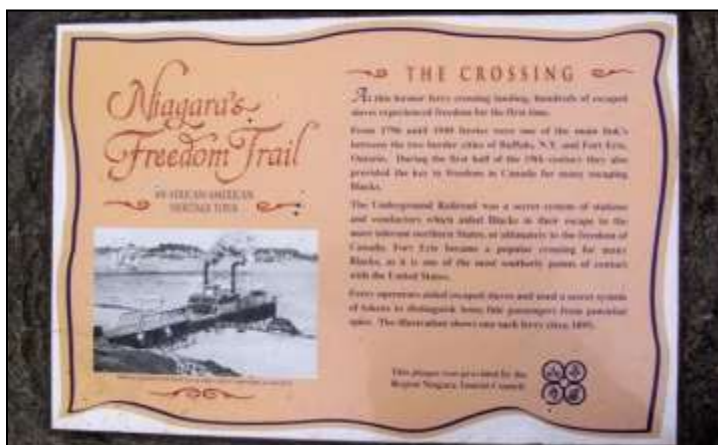
Fort Erie is a small town. Everybody knows everyone. And that’s one of the reasons this relationship at the border works so well; the workers on both sides of the shared wall also share life together: their kids go to the same schools, their families have the shared history of knowing the other. And, history has shown that this border has been a significant place of safe haven for a very long time.



Back when one could more easily cross a border, there were those in the city who were known as “bridge runners.” The Catholic nuns in Buffalo knew that they had allies in Fort Erie who would help those in need of safety. The nuns would call on the bridge runners day or night. And because the bridge runners opened up their homes and their hearts, the city blossomed into one of the most welcoming places in the entire country.

Fort Erie’s history goes all the way back to the 1700’s when ferries were the main link between the border cities of the United States and Canada. During the first half of the 19th century, the Fort Erie crossing was the key to freedom. At the site of the former crossing, a plaque mounted on a rock commemorates the place where hundreds of escaped slaves crossed over to Canada through the Underground Railroad and experienced freedom for the first time in their lives. Canadians welcomed when it was unpopular to welcome and Fort Erie hasn’t changed much in that respect.

As conflicts rage around the world, there is still need for refuge, for welcome, for humane treatment of desperate souls seeking a safe place to live. At the end of 2024, there were approximately 36.8 million refugees worldwide, part of a larger group of about 123 million people forcibly displaced. This includes refugees, internally displaced people, asylum-seekers, and others needing international protection. They seek a place



where they can stop running and maybe even eventually, call home.

Alisa Siegel's documentary *At The Bridge* details the story of the beginnings of this newcomer welcome centre and of the bridge runners and the welcomers themselves. No other border crossing in the country has a Peace Bridge Newcomers Centre and the Cross Border Services sharing space.

As a dual citizen of both Canada and the US, I've learned that the Nexus pass is my friend. In fact, it is an extreme privilege to have such ease and assurance. Yet, I get nervous when I'm questioned at the border. The Nexus Lane between Canadian and US borders is designed for certain travellers to breeze across borders. I know people who described having a Nexus-shaped hole in their heart prior to receiving their Nexus pass, which changed their life. They're not wrong. And yet, as I toured the Newcomer Centre at Fort Erie and was led by a border patrol officer to the room where refugee claimants were questioned, I couldn't help but notice that right outside the windows, I could see the cars in the Nexus lane whisking through with ease, and with no notice of those looking out on them in desperation.



Above: Ferry service across the Niagara River dates back to 1796 when many settlers crossed into Canada from Buffalo via ferry.

Courtesy: Facebook.

Below: The Peace Bridge viewed from Fort Erie.

By Philcomanforterie. Available from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peace_Bridge

Roy is Fort Erie born and raised. He is the one who first greets those crossing the border. He works for the Newcomer Centre. Yet, Roy also understands how important the border patrol jobs are, and their responsibilities. When they enter the room, Roy knows to 'shut-up' as he puts it. He knows that the faster they can get through the immigration process, the faster everyone can move on out.

Many who have fled countries have given up everything they own in order to get to where they are. They've travelled through dangerous jungles and forests to arrive. Roy explains that the job of the border patrol is not to determine whether they will be staying in Canada, that's for the courts to decide. The border patrol's job is more about knowing who you are. Their job is to see if you're eligible to make a refugee claim in Canada. And if you've come with nothing—no birth papers, no passport, etc., then the questioning could take many hours.

Sitting through hearings with refugee claimants has taught me that an understanding of place and a culture are key in such decisions. It's not black and white. For example, anyone can use an app to translate just about any language into English. But the language interpreters from Fort Erie are not only known to the border patrols, they also know the lands from which their language comes. So, when they interpret—they also explain the whys and the deeper meanings of someone acting or responding in a particular way—based on the land they are from, the culture they have come from, and the ways of that ethnicity. They don't just interpret the language, they interpret the land and the culture. For many of these asylum seekers, crossing over to Canada is like entering the promised land.

Witnessing this border crossing gave me new hope. Yet, I kept hearing the refrain "this cannot be replicated — it was organic in its beginnings."

How can we, as St. Andrew's Church, create a peace bridge joining us and our community? We hold the keys to what cannot be replicated—a savior who died that we all might have life and be saved by grace. Jesus is the reason we exist at the corner of King and Simcoe. And what comes from the Son of Man, Jesus Christ our Lord, is a peace that we must not keep locked up. Let's remove the barriers that keep others from knowing and be a peace-building bridge, that the city might notice and say, "here is something in Toronto that is like none other," and it's only possible through kingdom people living out their faith and loving others.

*Jaylynn Byassee,
Associate Minister*



“Heart of the City” Speaker Series

For over 10 years, the Heart of the City Speakers Series has been exploring big ideas that matter to people in the community and beyond.

The Series owes its success to St. Andrew's location in the heart of downtown Toronto and to the high calibre of the speakers and topics. The Fall 2025 program was no exception:



Our Fall 2025 program drew record audiences and inspired meaningful dialogue across our community.

engaged with thoughtful questions, and the evening concluded with book signings and warm conversation – a night to remember.

Andrew Coyne

On October 22, Andrew Coyne spoke about his book *The Crisis of Canadian Democracy*, sharing his thoughts on the challenges Canada's political system is facing and where it might be headed. He touched on issues like partisanship, regional divides,

and the decline of public trust in politics. He also emphasized how important it is for citizens to stay informed and engaged, and encouraged the audience to think about the role we all play in shaping the future of democracy in Canada.

Are you interested in attending an event? Please stay tuned for our upcoming winter program.

Jordan Cole



Andrew Coyne speaking on his recent book *The Crisis of Canadian Democracy*.

Brian Stewart

On September 24, we welcomed renowned journalist

Brian Stewart to St. Andrew's for an inspiring evening. Sharing stories from his new memoir *On the Ground*, Brian reflected on his experiences covering wars and world events — moments both moving and, at times, surprisingly hopeful. The audience



Brian Stewart with David Cameron in conversation about his memoir: *On the Ground*



Out of the Cold Community Breakfast, Dinner & Clothing Boutique

While our Out of the Cold Community Breakfast continues on Tuesday mornings at 7:30 am, the Out of the Cold Monday dinner program has also resumed, and Dinners will run through to April 13, 2026. Doors open at 4:00 pm and dinner is served from 5:00 to 7:00 pm.

With Winter fast approaching, the needs of our guests change and become even more urgent. We gratefully accept donations with an emphasis on the following: socks, gloves, toiletries and Winter clothing/boots, are always top of the list at this time of year. In addition,



backpacks and tote bags are always much appreciated. Donations can be dropped off at the church Monday through Friday between 9:00 am and 4:00 pm or Sundays during worship.

The popular boutique is open weekly on Monday evenings during dinner hours. A detailed list of current needs is available on the website at standrewstoronto.org

If you would like to join our team, please begin by completing the online registration form at standrewstoronto.org

Insightful Summer Holiday in Winnipeg

Sometimes we think that it is only those in the third world who live below the poverty line and forget that there are those in our vast country that are marginalised through lack of resources – those without clean water, reliable food sources, shelter, medical services and elevating education. Presbyterians Sharing reminds us that there are missions in Canada, and we should consider supporting those less fortunate, in addition to the needs of our own churches.

In addition, the General Assembly has asked us to continue our Truth and Reconciliation efforts by not only becoming better informed on the history of our relationship with our First Nations, Inuit and Métis brothers and sisters, but understanding how we might continue on our journey of reconciliation.



Evander Two Heart sharing his hoop dancing in the commemorative outdoor garden of the Winnipeg Inner City Missions.

I've read books, taken courses, participated in a Blanket Exercise and I feel fairly well informed on how our relationship between the settler and First Nations communities has evolved.

However, I am desperate for some hope, some good news, some evidence of the progress we are making and some ideas on how to move forward.

So, with all of this in mind and having a free week at the end of July, I decided to embark on this journey of discovery.

Presbyterians Sharing supports eight Indigenous ministries in Western Canada, three of which are in the eastern Manitoba area. Manitoba has the largest percentage of Indigenous people south of the 60th parallel. The province was founded by Louis Riel and the Métis community at the end of the 1800's, and there is still a large Métis community across the Red River from Winnipeg in St. Boniface. I had received an invitation to visit Winnipeg from an elder I'd met at the General Assembly and, despite the wildfires and poor air quality, decided to go.

I wanted to not only visit the three ministries and hear first-hand about the work they are doing, but also to see the various projects led by the Indigenous community. I had grown up in communities with few positive views on our Indigenous neighbours. My generous guide was an Indigenous man who only recently was able to share his ancestry; ours was a shared journey of discovery, seeing much progress and much hope, but recognizing there is still much to be done.

We visited an Indigenous-run hotel, where we enjoyed bison stew served in the restaurant by Indigenous staff. The hotel was full (as was my hotel), with evacuees from the wildfires in northern Manitoba. Red Cross volunteers were busy at work providing food, clothing and other support services. Two Indigenous projects underway are the redevelopment of the former Hudson Bay Store and the development of the former National Defence air force base as urban Indigenous communities.

Presbyterians Sharing supports the Winnipeg Inner City Mission (WICM) through salaries for the administrative office staff. The Mission provides after school programs with an Indigenous focus for elementary school children in north Winnipeg. It provides space for a community of Indigenous artists and, in addition, housing for





Birch bark panel by Pat Bruderer created through the delicate biting and folding of birch bark, a practice preserving a special tradition of Indigenous art.

individuals transitioning from life on the street. I met three women – an artist, a chef and an elder – who spent the day sharing the stories of their lives, their challenges and their frustrations, as well as the work they are doing to help others in north Winnipeg. One woman works tirelessly on the campaign to find missing Indigenous boys and men. Sometimes we forget that the men can be as much at risk as the women, just perhaps in different ways.

I learned about the art of Birch Bark Biting from Pat, whose work is showcased also at halfmoonwomen.ca, and Evander Two Heart shared his hoop dancing in their commemorative outdoor garden. Their willingness to share their talents and their stories was heart-warming.

Rev. Margaret Mullin's church, Place of Hope, has recently outgrown the space at WICM and has moved to the church hall at St. John's Presbyterian in North Winnipeg. She has a growing Sunday school of upwards of 50 children and youth offering Christian fellowship in an Indigenous context. One of her youths – a Young Adult Representative at General Assembly this year – is studying film with the plan to tell aboriginal stories.

One of their challenges is finding enough money to cover school supplies.

The last place I visited, the Kenora Fellowship Centre in Kenora, Ontario, was the most heart rending. The last Presbyterian church in Kenora has closed so there is no local church support. The Executive Director oversees the drop-in centre, providing food, clothing and a place to gather for community. My guide and I served coffee the morning we visited and had lunch with some of the visitors. Major issues of unemployment, addiction, homelessness and a lack of medical care, not to mention arranging frequent funerals, are what the Director focuses on and of course, there never is enough money to support the increasing needs of the centre.

The indigenous community in Manitoba is driving a lot of the initiatives and reconnecting with their culture through education and the arts. So, lots of hope and good news with still lots of opportunity.

Maybe the way forward is to seek out and support Indigenous-led projects in our own community.

Candy Grant



We hope you can join us on December 4 for an evening of holiday music.

SingTO is a community choir that meets each Thursday evening in the Great Hall. More than just a choir, we aim to build community and to support others with compassion.

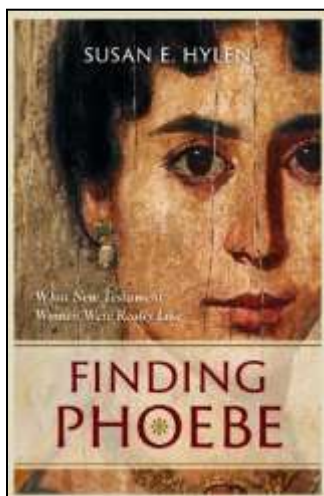
For more information, please contact us: singto@standrewstoronto.org



Book Review. *Finding Phoebe: What New Testament Women Were Really Like*

Susan E. Hylen's *Finding Phoebe: What New Testament Women Were Really Like* challenges modern readers to look again at women in the early church. She invites us to see the social norms of the Greco-Roman world: status, wealth, modesty and silence, which shaped what women could do and how they were perceived. Hylen reminds us that women's leadership was never one-dimensional. There was no single rule about women speaking or remaining silent. Instead, as in any community, there were unique gifts, needs, and circumstances that shaped how each woman served.

The world was patriarchal; however, both men and women in the early church lived in tension with their culture.



Sometimes women prophesied, sometimes they hosted or funded ministry and sometimes they acted quietly behind the scenes. Hylen uses evidence from letters and inscriptions to show that women managed property, made purchases, and negotiated business. They worked and advocated for their families and communities – acts that were considered honourable. From there, Hylen helps us see that these same values could carry into the church: if advocating for one's household was virtuous,

why not advocating for the family of believers?

A central example in the book is Phoebe, mentioned in Romans 16:1–2. Most scholars agree she delivered Paul's letter to Rome. Hylen explores what it meant for a woman to hold the titles "sister," "deacon," and "benefactor." Hylen argues that Roman Christians would have received her as a respected partner in Paul's ministry, using her social and financial standing for the sake of the gospel. Through Phoebe, Hylen invites us to hear women's voices again, carrying messages of faith, courage and leadership.

Each chapter of *Finding Phoebe* blends history with scripture. Hylen pairs New Testament passages with real examples from first-century life, asking questions that prompt reflection and slow the reader down. The author encourages writing answers by hand, which helps us notice details we might overlook. This practice made me see New Testament women more clearly as real disciples making costly, faithful choices. The book becomes a guide not only for understanding ancient women but also for shaping how we read scripture today.

To follow Christ, Hylen reminds us, is to imitate Him through humility and service. Paul modelled this by giving up his privileges for the church. Women, too, made sacrifices. Sometimes offering up their resources, reputation or social standing. Historical records show that women could own property and use it to support others. This does not mean the culture favoured gender equality; however, it helps explain how some women, like Phoebe, acted as patrons or leaders, by practicing discipleship through generosity.

Hylen also highlights the Greco-Roman idea of patronage where someone of influence used their position to help others. Both men and women served as patrons. A wealthy woman might advocate for her city or community. Christians of Paul's time would have recognized this pattern of leadership. Hylen gives examples like Junia Theodora of Corinth, honoured for supporting her fellow citizens during political turmoil. Such stories show that leadership through advocacy and giving was a familiar and respected practice.

Finally, Hylen re-examines what silence and modesty meant. In that culture, silence could signal wisdom, restraint and moral strength. Both men and women were expected to control their speech and appearance. A quiet person was seen as someone acting for the greater good, not for personal gain. Hylen suggests Phoebe could have been viewed in this way—a woman of virtue and self-control who spoke when necessary, on behalf of Christ and Paul. "I commend to you our sister, Phoebe," Paul writes. Through her, we glimpse a model of faithful discipleship that transcends gender.

In moments of quiet prayer and reflection, I realized we do not have to look far to "find Phoebe". She is still among us, in every woman who leads, serves, and speaks the gospel with courage and grace.

Hylen's book is timely and practical. It does not offer easy answers about women's roles but opens a thoughtful conversation with its short chapters and reflection questions, inviting both reflection and discussion about how we live as disciples today.

Lori Ann Comeau

Susan E. Hylen. *Finding Phoebe. What New Testament Women Were Really Like*; Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans; 2023.

Please stop by St. Andrew's library to browse the shelves and discover a new book that inspires reflection, deepens faith, and fosters grace in our shared journey of growth and understanding. It is open every Sunday after church, or by appointment. For more information, visit: standrewstoronto.org





Better English Café

On September 9th, the Better English Café began its 11th year with 80 participants and 24 volunteers in attendance. Each Tuesday evening, the numbers have increased: on October 14th we had 98 participants. And we are pleased to report that most, if not all, of the volunteers have returned for the Fall session.

It is worth taking a moment to reflect on the success of the program, which emanates from a collective effort, from the leadership of Oliver Shen to the dedicated



volunteers who are in attendance every week.

Every Saturday, Oliver sends out a report of the previous week's program and the subject to be introduced for the coming week, along with ideas and questions on how best to present the new topic. His leadership contributes greatly to the success of the program. That the activities on offer at Better English Café are appealing is evident in the diversity of our attendees: Last year we had participants from 27 different countries representing many different cultures and religions.

The Better English Café has long encouraged other churches to start similar programs, so we were pleased to welcome representatives from Trinity Presbyterian Church. They hope to launch their own program soon, and we trust others will do the same. Their new minister, Brett Main—formerly a St. Andrew's member and Café volunteer—already knows how needed and appreciated this ministry is.

Allan Lever



2025 Toronto Waterfront Marathon 5K Walk

On Saturday, October 18th, St. Andrew's team gathered in the early morning hours to walk in the TCS Toronto Waterfront 5 K Walk/Marathon. The 5K walk brings thousands of Torontonians out to support their favourite charity. For this year's event, the St. Andrew's team numbered 19 participants of all ages: including fathers, mothers, children and grandchildren, which made it a really Presbyterian family event. The walk is a fun experience and brings a real sense of solidarity and accomplishment to all who participate.

We are very grateful for your generous donations. This year's walk generated over \$16,000 dollars in support of St. Andrew's outreach programs.

We also want to acknowledge the continued support from Maggie McGregor in the Church office. Maggie provided all the administrative support, which went a long way to making this year such a success.

*Allan Lever
Growth and Innovation*



Nineteen participants of all ages — fathers, mothers, children and grandchildren made this year's walk/run a really Presbyterian family event. Not to mention that their efforts raised over \$16,000!

Seeing from Within. A Film Essay on Blindness

Don't be afraid. The darkness you're in is no greater than the darkness inside your own body, they are two darknesses separated by a skin.—José Saramago, *Blindness*

In the study of three films from different eras and different genres, we discuss how, despite their vulnerabilities, blind characters can play a central role in the narrative, given their unique way of sensing their environment and the hidden presences of others in their vicinity. We show how the atypical characters in each film narrative learn to cope and co-exist with others that have caused them grief, how they carry on with their lives despite financial disadvantages, and bravely fend off hostility from threatening presences seeking to gain an unfair advantage through trickery and violence.

In *Year Zero* (1), Eddy, a blind massage therapist, loses his loyal guide dog Maxim. On the fateful night, Reuven, a real estate broker, recklessly hits the dog while speeding;



and opts to leave the scene, figuring that Eddy would be unable to identify him given his blindness. Eddy is much angered that the mysterious hit-and-run driver has eluded detection and all the more unsuspecting when, now guilt-stricken, Reuven approaches him and manages to gain his confidence. Realizing that he can now fool Eddy and even manipulate him, despite having struck Maxim that night, Reuven takes advantage of Eddy a second time in an attempt to atone for his sin.

In Chaplin's classic, pre-talkie film *City Lights* (2), a tramp meets an attractive blind girl selling flowers at a crowded intersection in a bustling American metropolis. Unable to perceive the tramp's lower social status, she mistakes him for a wealthy man in a fancy car and gives him a flower before he goes on his way. Treasuring the flower that the blind girl has given him on that familiar street corner, the

impoverished tramp soon finds himself stumbling upon a wealthy millionaire; the man, in despair after his marriage breakdown, is attempting to jump off a bridge. Intervening to save the man from drowning, the tramp is invited by the impulsive socialite to join him in his world of wealth and luxury. After meeting the blind girl again, the tramp continues to pretend that he is a wealthy man, using the millionaire's cash handout to buy the entire bouquet of flowers that she was to sell on the street that day. Soon, the tramp learns that he cannot rely solely on the wealth and excesses of his fickle millionaire friend, who seems to forget who he is when he is sober. Meanwhile, the blind girl, struggling to pay her rent, finds herself at risk of being evicted and longs for the help of her mysterious wealthy benefactor. Determined to come up with a payment for her landlord and for a special medical procedure to cure her blindness, the tramp continues to venture into risky situations, like taking on a dangerous prizefighter in the boxing ring and returning to the same shifty millionaire's mansion.

In *Wait Until Dark* (3), based on a popular 1960s play by Frederick Knott, blind woman Suzy feels stranded in her Manhattan apartment when her travelling photographer husband Sam ventures abroad. Soon, a trio of dangerous criminals converge on her private space, seeking a doll that they believe to be in her, or her husband's, possession that is stuffed with narcotics. Vulnerable in a world where others can take advantage of her lack of visual feedback, Suzy uses her other heightened senses and the help of Sam's young daughter Gloria to foil the plans of the deceptive trio: Mike, his associate Carlino, and the ruthless gang boss Rote who would not hesitate to take out anyone who is witness to their slew of murders and transcontinental drug smuggling.

While blind characters are first noted for their vulnerability navigating a daunting invisible spatial realm usually uncovered through a keen set of eyes, they often develop skills to act autonomously by perceiving adequate feedback of their surroundings to ensure their survival. While first described as 'disabled' in a world where eyes and sight are often taken for granted, blind characters learn to take on situations, adapting in ways that allow them to interpret the precarious darkness or fog around them by their heightened instincts and inner courage.

Toshio Ushiroguchi-Pigott

1. *Year Zero* (2004). Dir. Joseph Pitchhadze. United King Films Ltd. Israel. 131 min.

2. *City Lights* (1931). Dir. Charlie Chaplin. United Artists. USA. 87 min.

3. *Wait Until Dark* (1967). Dir. Terence Young. Warner Bros. USA. 108 min.



Can We Prove God Is Real?

What if I were tell you there are ways to prove God is real? Would you believe me? Mark 9:24 says: "I do believe; help my unbelief!" There are many skeptics who want proof God is real. Some use the excuse of *Why would a God allow such suffering and evil in this world?* The answer: He gives us the gift of choice to determine our actions. Choice is one aspect that proves God is real.

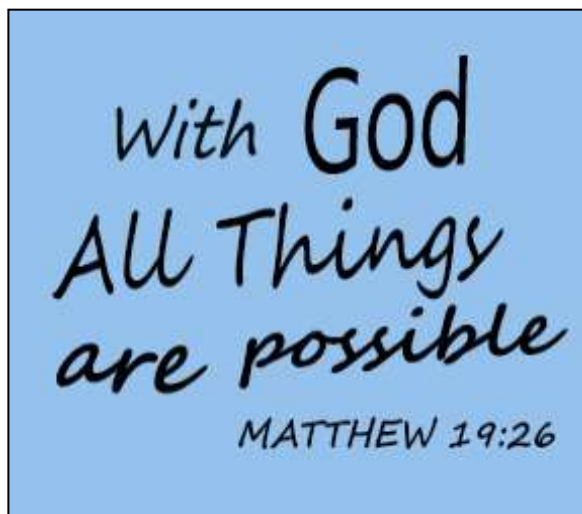
God often changes our hearts for the better when we accept Jesus as our Lord and Savior. Ask a non-believer if they have ever experienced a person who has drastically changed for the better? This could include giving up drugs or alcohol, having compassion towards the homeless, being a just and fair person in business matters, or, perhaps, giving up sexual immorality. Chances are, this is God's handy work while revealing His existence to the world.

The purpose of baptism is to make a public, outward declaration of a believer's identification with Jesus Christ through His death, burial, and resurrection, symbolizing the washing away of sins, the death of the old self, and the new life in Christ. When we accept Jesus, He lives in our hearts. For those who eagerly seek out God, His presence can often be felt. We feel His presence when spending time with Him reading the

Word. Psalm 34:18 says, "The Lord is near to the brokenhearted." I know that many times when I have felt sad, I often feel God draw closer to me.

What does God's presence feel like? Speaking from personal experience, it is a warm loving feeling in our heart. Or, His presence can sometimes be felt around the head; as if God is gently touching us, giving us a pat on the head to comfort us, or to simply remind us of his presence. Many times, the seriously ill are told how many weeks or months they can expect to live, only to be magically healed from their disease or health ailment. These are not magic acts, but instead, proof that God is real and that he loves everyone.

God often knows what we want before we ask for it through prayer. I don't often ask God for signs, however, in May 2025 I asked God for a sign: Should I purchase a digital camera that I could not afford? I did not ask God to provide it, only to give me a sign of what to do next. The next day I attended the service at St. Andrew's church, led by Rev. Dr. Will Ingram. The start of the service seemed a bit different. A large easel was set up close to the pulpit; it held a beautiful panorama photograph that Will had taken. When it came time for the sermon, Will spoke of the Book of Revelation and his recent camping experience. He had been at the end of his trip and was canoeing rough waters when he found himself entering calm waters. Will saw the natural beauty God provides us on a daily basis and took the photograph.



A non-believer might conclude it was pure coincidence that Will brought a photograph to Sunday service. It's possible, but I think it unlikely. I took that experience as a sign from God to purchase the camera on my credit card. Then, lo and behold, a few days later, the camera was generously given to me without my ever asking.

Lewis Carroll famously wrote *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking Glass*. In the latter story,

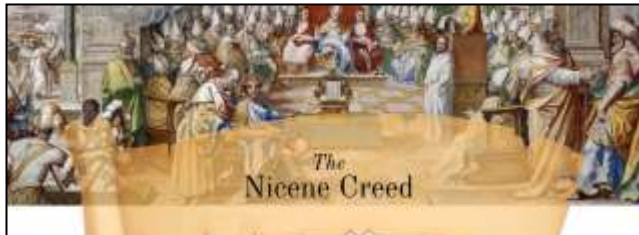
there is a scene where Alice encounters a unicorn. When Alice speaks to the Unicorn, she is astonished. Alice explains that in school she was taught unicorns were not real. The unicorn replied, "If you believe in me, I'll believe in you."

This analogy can be applied when considering our belief in God. I have come up with a variation on the unicorn's reply for non-believers who want proof: "You may not believe in God, but God believes in you."

Henry Kestler

This year's theme, "O Come, All Ye Faithful," invites us to reflect on an old confession of faith that still speaks to us today. Because this year marks the 1700th anniversary of the Nicene Creed, we're taking the opportunity to look again at the conversations and convictions that shaped it. The second verse of "O Come, All Ye Faithful" echoes the Creed's language about who Christ is, which makes the connection especially meaningful during Advent and Christmas.

As we gather, we'll think together about what it means to be a creedal community—both within our own traditions and across cultures and denominations. We'll also consider how these ancient words might deepen our understanding of the Christmas story, and how they can continue to guide us and strengthen our life of faith today.



ST. ANDREW'S CHURCH
KING & SIMCOE | TORONTO

MIDWEEK ADVENT SERIES AT ST. ANDREW'S

O Come, All Ye Faithful

The Rev. Dr. Kristen Deede Johnson
DEC 3

The Rev. Dr. Sarah Travis
DEC 10

The Very Rev. Dr. Carmen Lansdowne
DEC 17

Join Us Wednesdays in December

An Evening of Music for the Soul

ON THIS SHINING NIGHT

FRIDAY DECEMBER 12 | 7:30 PM

ST. ANDREW'S GALLERY CHOIR

DAN BICKLE
PIANO/ORGAN

JORDAN KLAPMAN
PIANO

TICKETS: \$25
EVENTBRITE
AT THE DOOR

Classical Music

MUSIC AT ST. ANDREW'S

ST. ANDREW'S CHURCH
KING & SIMCOE | TORONTO

CANDLELIGHT CHRISTMAS EVE

Dear Friends: Celebrate the season of peace, joy, hope and love with us at historic St. Andrew's Church.

7PM SERVICE OF LESSONS AND CAROLS

11PM SERVICE OF HOLY COMMUNION

JOIN US DECEMBER 24 ALL ARE WELCOME

St. Andrew's Church, King & Simcoe St. www.standrewstoronto.org

What Can Housing Do for Seniors? Meet Doris!

Seniors are one of the fastest growing demographics of people that are becoming unhoused. More than half of



the guests who visit our drop-in program at Evangel Hall Ministries (EHM) are now seniors.

In response, we have been distributing incontinence supplies; and, recently, we renovated the showers and washrooms so that guests can use the facilities with mobility devices.

Currently, over half of the tenants who call EHM home are seniors. In three years, we expect that two-thirds of people living at EHM will be facing some of the devastating effects of aging – arthritis, dementia, chronic pain, and loneliness. Because of this, EHM has been exploring

how to adapt services to help seniors age in their homes with dignity.

But we also have stories of hope! And to help us share what this hope looks like, we made a series of videos about EHM tenants to show just what clean, safe and caring housing can do! Meet Doris Sanchez – a tenant at EHM. She is more than a woman who lost her job and became homeless, she is more than a cancer survivor, and she is not letting aging get in the way of living some of her best years.

Doris' story is an uplifting and inspiring look at how faith, gratitude, and safe housing can give someone back their life and make their golden years...well, golden.

*Ainsley Chapman, Executive Director
Evangel Hall Mission*

Milestones

BAPTISMS

April	Rexford Nathaniel Barar
August	Stefan Amador Sumano-Otkydach
November	Auctavio Sum Akimoto Maxim Chapotchkine

ORDINATION OF ELDERS

October	David Cameron
	Reece Hodgson
	Darlene Treen

INDUCTION OF ASSOCIATE MINISTER

September	Jaylynn Byassee
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MARRIAGES

August	Reece Hodgson & Kimberly Noxon
October	Oliver Dennis & Claire Lemiski

DEATHS

July	Jim Ross
August	Judith Leahy
September	Charles Diltz
October	Kay Bruce-Robertson, Michael Upton

Stories in Glass and Light – The Adair Window

Many of the windows in the church contain intriguing and clever details that were included to reflect some important dimension of the life of the person in whose memory the window was installed. Believe it or not, this seemingly simple window actually contains a fascinating detail which honours the life of an incredibly dedicated servant of the congregation of St. Andrew's.

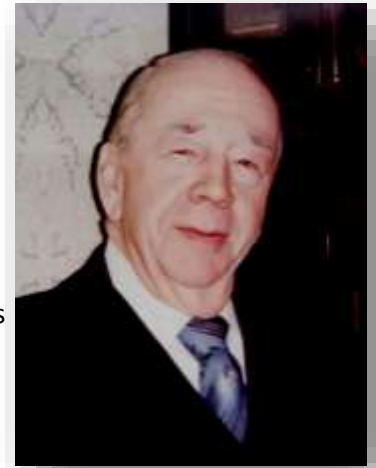


Andrew Adair came to Canada in 1911 and became a member of St. Andrew's in 1931, as the Great Depression was ravaging the world. In 1934, he was invited to become an elder and was – at the time – the youngest member of the Session of St. Andrew's Church. In the Presbyterian tradition, the Session is the name for the elders who are elected by the congregation to work with the minister in the oversight and care of the congregation. One of the elders is designated to serve as the "Clerk of Session." The Clerk of Session plays an important leadership role, helping to ensure that the elders perform their responsibilities effectively and well, and often serves in a special advisory role with the minister.

Andy Adair became the Clerk of Session at St. Andrew's in 1937 and continued to serve in that capacity until 1982! Which is remarkable — from the time of the

Great Depression, through the Second World War, and then through all of the cultural and technological changes of the 1940's, 1950's, 1960's, 1970's and into the 1980's; through the tenure of three different ministers – namely, the Rev. Dr. Stuart Parker, the Rev. Paul Stirling and the Rev. Douglas Stewart; not to mention serving through massive shifts and changes in the downtown part of Toronto where St. Andrew's is located.

And it certainly wasn't always easy. There were times, especially towards the end of the 1960s, when the congregation seriously considered closing due to the challenges of declining membership and finances. But they persisted through it all, and Andy Adair was at the forefront of that long, enduring, dedicated, persevering faithfulness.



In the June 1982 edition of the congregational newsletter "Catalyst," Rev. Dr. Douglas Stewart wrote,

"As we finalize the arrangements for the unveiling and dedication of a fine, stained-glass window in the sanctuary of St. Andrew's Church as a tribute to Andrew Adair, long time clerk of our Kirk Session, one has to observe that few men in the history of the Presbyterian Church in Canada have, in the midst of life, witnessed a similar act of recognition....But let this be said, few men by virtue of a life of steadfast devotion and long service to the church have merited more fully such recognition."

But the congregation was not the only community that Andy Adair served. A few blocks north of St. Andrew's, on the University of Toronto campus, stands Knox College, which is the Presbyterian Church in Canada's largest seminary. In the main rotunda of Knox College, there is a plaque honouring Andy Adair's service, over decades, on the Board of Knox College, including for many years as its chairperson. The wording on the plaque reads:

Continued on next page.

Stories in Glass and Light –The Adair Window

*In honour of Andrew W.R. Adair in recognition of his devoted services as the esteemed chairman of the Board of Knox College from 1954 – 1974 and worthy member of the Board from 1946–1976. This tablet is erected upon his retirement by a grateful college and as a tribute to this faithful servant, who has performed his duties wholeheartedly throughout the years.
Erected 1976*



Memorial plaque honouring Andy Adair's service on the Board of Knox College

Andy Adair's simultaneous service both to St. Andrew's Church and to Knox College – in addition to his work as an accountant in a department at the University of Toronto -- was so significant, in fact, that when the Session at St. Andrew's decided, in the early 1980s, to place this window in his honour in the church (not as a memorial since he was still alive!), they wanted to find a way to honour his service to Knox College as well as to the congregation. So how did they do this?

This is where it gets interesting. The Adair window, which can be found in the east wall of the sanctuary, underneath the gallery, was designed by the Robert McCausland Glass Company and installed June 20, 1982.

Memorial stained glass windows are often based on such design templates. This was the template design on which the window is based – the image of a dutiful scribe taking notes, as Andrew Adair so often did in his capacity as the Clerk of Session.

But a subtle yet important change was included in the final window. That is, you will notice that the window over the scribe's shoulder did not – originally – depict anything in the view out through the window. In the final window, however, the artist painted the image of the courtyard from



Knox College into the finished window to honour Andrew Adair's decades of service to our congregation and to the College.

It's a lovely – and I think quite clever and creative detail offered in tribute to a life of committed servanthood both to the congregation of St. Andrew's Church and the seminary community at Knox College.

So next time you're in the sanctuary, take a good look at the window, notice the picture of Knox College, and take a moment to give thanks for Andrew Adair's exemplary life of service; and remember that the members of this congregation wanted us to remember Adair's life. The Adair window was installed In the congregation's words as follows:

*To the Glory of God and in gratitude
for the 45 years of devoted service
rendered by Andrew W.R. Adair,
Clerk of Session, 1937-1982
A Workman that needeth not
to be ashamed – II Timothy 2: 15*

Welcome to St. Andrew's

St. Andrew's is more than a heritage building, and our members are more than Sunday church-goers. We are a living church. Our congregation mirrors the diversity of Toronto. The spirit of Presbyterianism at St. Andrew's crosses cultural, educational and social boundaries. Our congregation's activism is rooted in a common commitment to worship and to community service. We strive to offer inspiration, encouragement and supports to the community through programs such as AA meetings, the Better English Café, Out-of-the-Cold community breakfasts and suppers, and refugee sponsorship initiatives, to name a few. Volunteer opportunities are available for participation in these and other worthy programs. Our commitment is summed up in St. Andrew's mission statement "The people of St. Andrew's are called by God to serve in faith, hope and love in the heart of Toronto."

Events and Activities

We also reach out to the community in the form of cultural programming that includes music, culture and opinion, enhanced by the heritage ambience and downtown location of St. Andrew's Church. Music at St. Andrew's features top flight, affordably priced – as well as free – concerts and multimedia events. The "Heart of the City Speakers Series" provides a forum for exploring ideas that matter to the people who live and work in Toronto. We seek to engage our neighbours through meaningful discussions relating to community, ethics, morality and spirituality. Sing TO is St. Andrew's popular community choir, which offers members of the downtown Toronto area the opportunity to gather and sing together under the direction of an experienced and professional conductor – and all for a good cause!

Worship Services

The act of worship is more than a predictable ceremony that we attend weekly, monthly or seasonally. It is meant to shape our lives, to inspire us, to guide us and to remind us of who and whose we are. Join us Sunday for worship services at 10:30 a.m. or on Thursdays at 12:15 p.m. for a communion service in the chancel. We look forward to welcoming you and yours in person. Can't attend but want to make a connection? Online worship is currently available weekly via YouTube. Visit standrewstoronto.org to locate the link, which is posted Saturday evenings.

Leadership

Rev. Will Ingram and Rev. Jaylynn Byassee work with Ruling Elders on the Session to provide leadership and care in the life and mission of St. Andrew's Church and its wider community.

The Session: Elected elders of the congregation serve together on the Session, which is responsible for the oversight of all of the ministries of the congregation. To this end, our elders confer with the Board of Managers, whose input helps keep church activities and operations on a solid financial footing. Each of the six ministries are coordinated by a convener and an associate convener, who work with committees, taskforces, activity groups and individuals. The conveners report to the Session on their work, and seek to ensure an atmosphere of mutually supportive, effective and compassionate ministry. The ministries include: Worship, Fellowship and Pastoral Care, Faith Formation, Outreach, Personnel Relations, and Growth and Innovation.

More Ways to Connect and Learn

A good place to start is weekly Worship. Why not join us at church this Sunday at 10:30 am at the corner of King and Simcoe? You will find that the ministers' practice of briefly introducing the service will make it meaningful and easy to follow; and the choir and music director's accompaniment never fails to lift the spirits; finally, as we leave the church and go out into the city, the experience of worship fosters fellowship and builds resolve to make things better during the week to come and beyond.

Our Website: www.standrewstoronto.org

Visit www.standrewstoronto.org to learn more about our community. Our website offers links to programs and information on everything St. Andrew's: online worship services; glimpses into our history; profiles on members who are making a difference in the community; and information on our many programs and activities, including volunteer opportunities; plus, weekly email updates and other publications, which are available for download or for regular delivery to your inbox.

However you may choose to connect with St. Andrew's, you are welcome here!