

Merry Christmas—Joyeux Noël !



ST. ANDREW'S TIMES

St. Andrews United Church, Chalk River - Newsletter

Christmas 2019

A message from Richard Bott: Moderator of The United Church of Canada

Christ's peace be with you!

I'm a pretty fair cook. I have a lot of fun opening up the fridge, seeing what I have inside, and coming up with combinations that, hopefully, go together. Most of the time, I don't do too badly.

But not so with baking. Baking is my downfall. It doesn't matter how close I stay to the recipe, how exact I am in setting the temperature of the oven, how fresh my ingredients are...my cookies never taste (or feel) quite like I think they should. They're just not like the ones Mom makes.

I'm starting to wonder, though, if that's a problem with my baking—or if it's a problem with my memory. There's no bottle labelled "nostalgia" in my spice rack. The "Ghost of Christmas Cookies Past" may be getting in the way of my Christmas Cookies Present.

There are some things in my faith life that may have the same issue. As we look towards the season of Christmas, it's often a time filled with patterns and habits and traditions and—sometimes—a sense that it's not quite...right. Not quite what it used to feel like. Not quite what we're expecting.

That feeling is part of the reason I appreciate the season we're about to enter—the season of Advent. We sometimes think of this season as a time of waiting or a time of preparation. I think it's also a season of unwrapping. Not necessarily the unwrapping of things new, but the unwrapping of things old. It's like getting the box of decorations out of the closet and remembering where each came from and what they mean now, as they're hung on the tree.

For me, Advent is a time to do that with my faith, as well—to pull out some of the things that are dear to me, to carefully shake off the dust, and to see them in the light of our life here and now.

For the past few years, the folks at General Council Office have put together practices they call [Advent Unwrapped](#). You can find more information about it through the link on The United Church of Canada website [www.united-church.ca/worship-theme/advent-unwrapped], or at the Advent Unwrapped Facebook page. This year, through writings and videos, and with two different Advent calendars—one for more contemplative prayer, the other focused on action—the faith question we are being invited to unwrap is, "Who is Jesus?" I know I'm planning on taking part. I hope you'll consider joining in.

This Advent, as we get ready for all that is to come, let's take some time to unwrap—and let's find what God has packaged up for us to find.

***"GO PLACIDLY** amid the noise and the haste, and remember what peace there may be in silence. As far as possible, without surrender, be on good terms with all persons."* ~

By Max Ehrmann © 1927

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Loss, Healing, and Hope:

A “Blue Christmas” Perspective

Christmas is a time of celebration and joy. For many, however, this is a difficult time of year. Some of us are carrying significant weights: grief, loss, depression, anxiety, financial stress, unemployment, uncertainty, aging parents, sick children, recent diagnoses, unknown illnesses. Sometimes, the public tone of the season does not resonate with our private experience.

A Blue Christmas perspective encourages us to gather in honesty about grief, hearing the consolation found in God’s presence and love, and cherishing the joy that comes from memory and a sense of shared peace.

Here are some coping strategies to help you get through this emotional time of year:

- Consider postponing one of your traditions for a year, especially if the pain is too new.
- Understand that you have control of the kind of holiday season you will have this year. Make choices that allow yourself the space and peace you need. Protect that broken heart of yours.
- Tell your family how you’re feeling so you don’t feel the additional weight of expectations.
- Hang a memory stocking: You and your family can write down cherished memories and place them in the stocking.
- Light a memory candle and remember a life well lived.
- Write them a letter: writing a letter is a wonderful way to remember your loved one.
- Make or buy a memorial ornament as a reminder of their beautiful spirit for the tree.
- If you have been having a hard time parting with your loved one’s clothing, use the holidays as an opportunity to donate some items to a shelter.
- Think of who else is grieving this loss. Walk with them. Perhaps you could gift some special item that belonged to your loved one, and attach a letter.
- Skip holiday events if you don’t feel up to it. If you do go, set the terms. Drive yourself so you can leave if you feel overwhelmed.
- Cry. Journal your feelings. Meditate. Nap. Pay attention to the cues your body is giving you.
- Go to a grief group. Talk to others who may be struggling.
- Ignore folks who tell you what you “should” do for the holiday. Do what works for you.
- Consume food and alcohol in moderation.
- Ask for help. There will be people who want to help. Take them up on their offers.
- Write things down. Grief makes it harder to focus and remember.
- Seek gratitude. Try to find daily gratitude throughout the holiday season.

The lights will be bright and your heart may be heavy. But you will get through this. You can get through this for as Susan says: “We are not alone”.

Advent 4
Sunday December 22
is focused on
LOVE



Visit [Advent Unwrapped](https://adventunwrapped.ca)



How are you getting ready for Christ(mas) this year?

If you are celebrating the Advent season as a family—or as an individual or an all-ages group of any kind—Advent Unwrapped offers an alternative to the advertisements, shopping lists, and hype that we are bombarded with at this time of year. Visit the [At Home](#) page for accessible, faith-based resources, scroll to the bottom to Connect with Us and sign up for frequent updates, and take part in social media with the hashtags #UCCan #AdventUnwrapped.

On adventunwrapped.ca, you'll find:

- An Advent calendar you can put up on your fridge. Light a candle each Sunday, and use a magnet to prayerfully count down the days.
- A new 16-page colouring storybook to actively explore the story of Christmas. Great for young artists of any age!
- Family Prayers and Blessings: Some well-loved prayers and creative blessings you can learn as a family to support your Advent journey.
- Watching and Waiting: For the week before Christmas, a simple daily ritual of praying the "O Antiphons," which are familiar from the carol "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel."

Coming soon: A charming new video series that explores the characters of the Christmas story, each of whom is assured by an angel, "Don't be afraid."

January 18, 2020
Week of Prayer
for
Christian Unity



Pulpit Supply Schedule - 2019/2020*



December 15—Communion	Larry Wiegand
December 22	Harriette Davies
December 24—Xmas eve	Harriette Davies & The Team
December 29	Doug Tennant
January 5	Doug Tennant
January 12	Doug Tennant
January 19	Doug Tennant
January 26	Harriette Davies
February 2	Doug Tennant
February 9	Doug Tennant
February 16	Harriette Davies
February 23	Paul Reynolds
February 26—Ash Wed	Larry Wiegand
March 1	Doug Tennant
March 8	Doug Tennant
March 15	Doug Tennant

* Subject to change

**Our hearts are filled with joyful anticipation, awaiting Jesus:
God is with Us.**

**As St. Andrew's family we worship and praise and look for the
One who is coming: God is with Us.**

**We hear the word of our still speaking God proclaiming:
God is with Us.**

**We celebrate knowing that no matter who we are or where we
are on life's journey:
God is with us!**



There is no Silent Night

There is no Silent Night,
when a little one is ripped
from their parent's arms.

The keepers of the sheep will not hear the angels'
"Glory to God in the Highest,"
over the guns of war.

The Wise Ones
will not be able to see the star,
when the skies are filled
with the LED signs,
proclaiming, "more, More, MORE!"

The Christ-child is born,
in bus shelter,
in prison cell,
at border fence,
in shelled-out hovel.

The Christ-child is born,
again, and again, and again.
The Christ-child is born.

Are we willing to meet the Child;
and, in meeting,
change our world?

Are we willing to change the world,
and, in changing,
meet the Child?

—By the Right Rev. Richard Bott. Originally posted on Facebook.

Church & Community Events

Sunday Worship Services 10:30—11:30

Fellowship over coffee & tea after the service

Community Soup & Sandwich

Cancelled for the rest of 2019

Resumes on January 8, 2020

Wednesdays 11:30 -12:30 \$5.00/person



Christmas caroling on the streets

Wednesday December 18 6:00 pm

Meet at the church—dress warmly

Christmas Services

Christmas Eve, December 24 7:00 pm

Sunday Services on Dec. 22 & 29 10:30 am

Community Café - Lions Hall

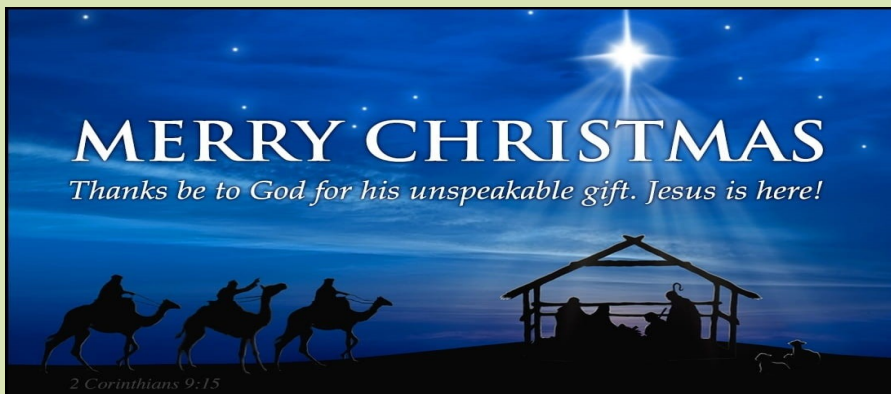
Mon to Sat 08:00—10:30 am

Coffee/tea/hot chocolate \$2.00 (refills 1.00)

Fellowship and potluck snacks

Pastoral Care Visits

If you desire to have a pastoral care visit, for whatever reason, please contact Gayle Barks (613.401.1465) who will arrange for one of the lay worship team members to call you and set up a visit. All aspects of a pastoral care visit are held in confidence and are between you and the pastoral care provider only.



St. Andrew's United Church—serving North Renfrew from Petawawa through to Deux Rivieres.

Our services are held at 10:30 on Sunday mornings at 40 Joseph Street in Chalk River ON

Our contact number is 613.589.2312

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Check out our website at <http://standrewschalk.ca/>

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Merry Christmas—Joyeux Noël !