



St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church Spring

A Time to Sow and a Time to Reap

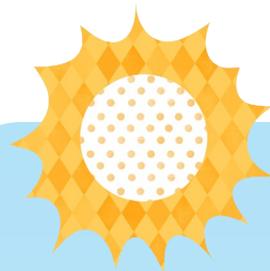
Dear Friends,

I hope you are enjoying your early spring. The flower bulbs are starting to push through the lawn at home, with many blossoms already expressing their colours.

This past Sunday, we focused on David's Psalm 126, and how our hard toils turn to a joyful harvest. The Israelites were asking the Lord to prosper them again; that rain might come to the dry riverbed. One important feature of the Psalm is in remembering how God had blessed His people, and how we can be that blessing again. David went on to say that the toil of scattering seeds is rewarded in the bounty of the harvest. The scattering of seeds in our case is the sharing of God's Word; the Good News of Jesus Christ. Jesus declared that the world is a field. We are like the farmer who sows the seeds, allowing God's Holy Spirit to work on their germination; that the harvest would see Christ's Church grow. You can think of it this way; sowing God's seed is the investment and sacrifice that precedes the reward of the harvest.

Here at St. Andrew's, there are many opportunities we are considering, and I'm glad to share some of these with you. You will recall that we established two main goals at our recent Annual General Meeting. Both goals are to grow Christ's Church in Newmarket. The first goal is to better engage with folks who are already part of our church family, encouraging them back to active worship and service in the church.

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Holy Week Services

April 10th 10am Palm Sunday Worship

April 14th 7pm Maundy Thursday Worship & Communion

April 15th 10 am Good Friday Worship

April 17th 10 am Easter Worship

Upcoming dates

May 14th Spring Yard, Flower, & Bake Sale from 10am-2pm.

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The second goal, like the first, is to better engage folks who are not-yet-friends within our greater community of Newmarket East Gwillimbury, even perhaps introducing them to God and His Son for the very first time.

There are many ways we can achieve these two goals. Sharing God's Word is not an exclusive event. It is something we can do *as* we live, work, and play. You can call it, 'Sow as you go'. This Saturday, the elders are getting together for a morning of fun, fellowship, and conversation. This is not a session meeting per se, however it is a get-together with a purpose. Of our many conversation topics, we will be considering:

1. *Who God is calling us to be now*

2. *How we share who we are called to be in an understandable and relevant way*

Also, Saturday, May 7th is the first day of the 2022 Farmer's Market, and we have permission from Brad Jones to once again set-up the *Chat & Prayer Table* in front of his Dojo on Main Street. I will be there Saturdays from 10am – 2pm, and am thankful that some of you have already offered to join me.

An additional theme that came out of the AGM is to create opportunities for fundraisers. As such, I am inviting each of you to put on your creative hats to come up with a logo for a t-shirt, golf shirt, and/or baseball cap that we might wear as we go about our everyday lives in the public realm. Here's the creative part. The logo is not to promote the St. Andrew's Church building, but rather to promote who we are as God's Children and Followers of Jesus Christ. For example, will you wear something that says *23rd Psalm?* Or will you wear something that says *John 3:16?* Do you have other ideas? Give this some prayerful thought as I would like us wearing something by summer. I will follow-up with you to chat about your ideas.

Dash and Dixie and I are having an awesome time now that spring is here. I hope you have a blessed Easter, and hope to see you at church soon.

Yours serving Christ,

Robert

Where have you seen God? Where have you heard God speaking to you?

Where have you encountered God; in days past, in this time when we are still hoping for the world to be more “normal”, in the dailyness of life?

Are there places where you feel close to God? Are there phrases, pieces of music, or items that call your attention to God speaking, or calling to you? Are there ordinary “things” that invite you to see, or consider how God is working in your life and/or the world around you?

Jill Duffield says that God works through the ordinary. Ordinary people, everyday objects, things we bump up against moment by moment. From burning bushes to talking donkeys to a booming voice from heaven, God goes to great lengths to communicate with people, sending Jesus Christ, God’s only Son, to unmistakably tell human beings about salvation, grace, and reconciliation.

The question for us becomes, reflects Duffield, do we have the eyes to see God’s near presence? Do we have ears to hear the word of the Lord, spoken in a multitude of ways and languages? Will we open ourselves to the holy not only in heaven but on earth and right in front of us? Can everyday objects remind us to stay awake and pay attention?

Through the season of Lent, we have been reading Jill Duffield’s book, “In Plain Sight” for our Bible Study. She shares reflections on ten items that we encounter in the Bible and in ordinary life. The book begins with an invitation to consider dust, then bread, the Cross, coins, shoes, and oil. Each week in our study, we read a Biblical passage and consider how we “bump up” against these items in our lives. We wonder what these items have meant to us and what they might mean going forward. Where were they found, how were they used? Did the meaning grow as we talk and reflect and pray? Are there layers of meaning?

During Holy Week, in our study, we are invited to consider coats, towels, thorns and stones. Again, these are items that we encounter in our daily lives, or do not have to stretch our imagination to remember a time that we have encountered them.

Duffield invites us to notice, to pause and to wonder. She invites us to look at the world around us with an openness to remember God’s story that is written and has been shared and consider the story that is unfolding all around us still.

As we begin our journey through Holy Week towards the mystery of Easter, I wonder where we will see God. I wonder if there are everyday items that we “bump up against” that will invite us to pause, to remember God’s story, written and unfolding. I wonder if we will be open to the presence of God working around us. I wonder if we will be able to see the extra-ordinary and holy in what once seemed ordinary.

As we journey towards Easter, may we have eyes to see and ears to hear God working in the world and calling to us. May there be moments when we pause in wonder and awe as we encounter God.

Peace and blessings, Laura

The Season of The Resurrection by Traci Smith

When the women went to the tomb to find Jesus, the angel had a message for them: “He is not here...he has risen.” The truth and the miracle of resurrection is that it is not a day or a singular event. It’s a season. We practice and understand resurrection as the old becomes new, as death becomes life. Though we will celebrate the miracle of Jesus’ resurrection this year on April 17, we can practice the truth of resurrection always. The days between Easter and Pentecost are a season for celebrating this truth of resurrection. Here are three resurrection practices to get you thinking. I encourage you to give one a try in this season between Easter and Pentecost.

Composting — When we compost, we turn our smelly, discarded waste into fertile soil where good and green things grow. What does it mean to compost the things we wish had gone differently rather than throw them away? Try com-

posting this season.

Notice Beauty Through Your Camera Lens — Is the light streaming in a particular window in a particular way? Is there a bird sitting quietly on a branch? Did someone make you smile? Try and snap a photo and give thanks to God for the moment. There is beauty all around.

Notice Moments of Quiet and Darkness — Author Barbara Brown Taylor points out that resurrection happened quietly, and in the dark. This is resurrection. If you’re in a process of transformation right now, take comfort in the fact that it will unfold as it needs to, bit by bit.

Happy Easter and *season* of resurrection, my friends!



Ukrainian Pysanka eggs made by our Fearless Friends on Friday, just in time for Easter

News from Finance

Ways to Give to the Church (Updated):

As announced previously, we have expanded the ways, in order of preference below, that you can give your offerings to the Church to make it as convenient as possible. Donations made through any of these options are recorded and tax receipts are issued by the Church.

PAR (preferred method): This method will initiate the transfer of your givings to the Church account directly on the 20th day of each month. Through PAR, there is only a 50-cent administrative cost to the Church per donation per month. The PAR method is preferable and helps the F&S committee to forecast donations and budget expenses most effectively. You can contact the Church office to arrange Pre-Authorized Remittance (PAR), send a note to donate@standrewsnewmarket.org or visit the Church's website (www.standrewsnewmarket.org) for the enrolment instructions. The enrolment form can be accessed and printed directly from the Church website.

PAR Contribution Changes: If you already participate in the PAR program and you wish to change your monthly donation amount, please send an email to donate@standrewsnewmarket.org.

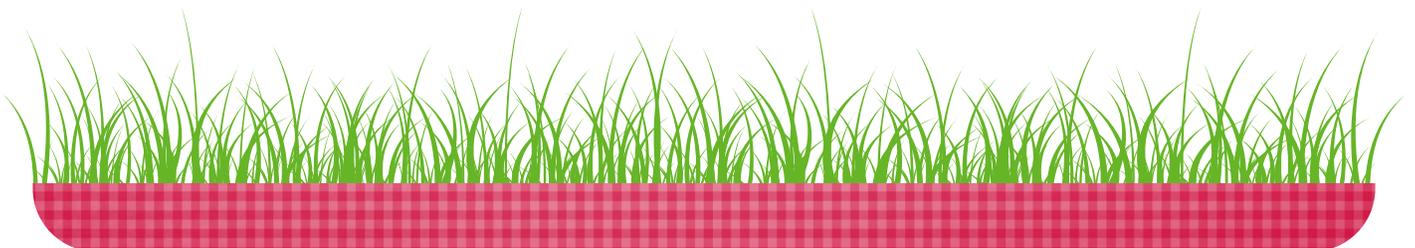
Interac E-Transfer: Transfer your givings directly from your bank account. Use our email address: donate@standrewsnewmarket.org. It is configured with auto-deposit, not requiring a security question. There is no cost to the Church for receiving donations through this method.

Church Envelope: If you are not attending Sunday worship in person, you can mail or drop-off your givings using your 2022 Church envelope (or a blank envelope with your name or envelope number written on the front). Please ensure to send a cheque, not cash, if you are mailing your envelope to the Church. The Church mailbox outside the Water Street entrance to the Church is secure and checked regularly. If necessary, you can contact your elder to pick up your envelope. The Church is not charged by the bank for depositing cheques or cash into its account.

PayPal: You can give your monthly donation directly through PayPal (or, click the Donate button on the Church website). PayPal charges the Church 1.6% plus \$0.30 per online transaction and your tax receipt will be generated by the Church.

2023 Offering Envelopes

It may seem early, but it's that time when we need to order the offering envelopes for next year. If you received offering envelopes for 2022 and you no longer wish to receive envelopes for 2023 (ie; you are making your donations online or through PAR), please send an email to donate@standrewsnewmarket.org or call the Church office by April 15 to let us know. If you advised us last year that you did not want to receive envelopes for 2022 or beyond, we've made a note and you do not need to let us know again.



Save the Date

Mark your calendars for May 14, when we are having our first Spring Flower, Yard & Bake Sale from 10-2pm.

Exciting news and how you can get involved will be shared soon!

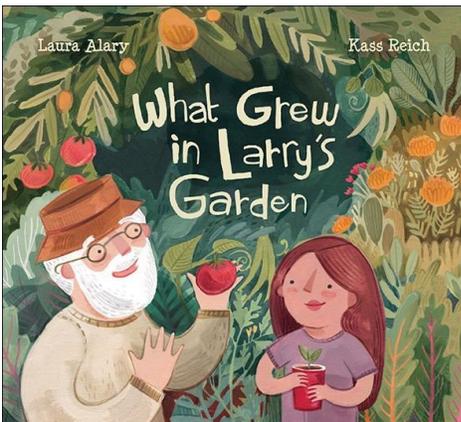


Story Journey

Come explore “What Grew in Larry’s Garden” by Laura Alary

Join us on a “Story Journey” May 14th at the “Flower, Bake & Trunk” Sale. Don’t know what a “Story Journey” is? Come find out!

Read and explore, as you move around the Church grounds.



Exciting news about what will be happening and how you can get involved will be shared soon.

ELDERS

We are electing new Elders this Spring!

More information will be shared in the announcements, after Easter.



The Old Sanctuary Update

Now that we have received your ideas about how we might re-purpose *The Old Sanctuary*, the Vision Committee is now reaching out to certain Community Leaders for their ideas. Once we have received their feedback, we will coordinate both sets of ideas to further our conversation with you.

New Communicants Class

Coming soon for those interested in becoming members of St. Andrew’s. More details to follow .