

ST. AUGUSTINE'S
ANGLICAN CHURCH



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The Hippo Herald

FALL 2023

LETHBRIDGE, ALBERTA

A parishioner's story ~ from Ile-Ife to Lethbridge

Whose power working in us

BY ALISON GOODWIN

St. Augustine's has many parishioners who came to Lethbridge from far away, and many have powerful stories to tell of God's grace and guidance. Representative of this group is Dr. Ayodele Aramide who shares his experience of coming to Canada from Nigeria, where he has raised a family with his wife Ade, and joined the church family of St. Augustine's.

"At every step of my life there is always a miracle," observed Ayo during a Zoom call in August. He was describing to me his path from his birthplace of Ile-Ife, Nigeria to Lethbridge, Canada. As a medical student at Obafemi Awolowo University, Ayo found that many of the textbooks and studies he read were authored by medical professionals based in Canada. "I decided I wanted to go there."

In the early 2000s, after



"From the very first day I felt 'this is my church'"
Dr. Ayodele Aramide

completing his medical studies in Lagos, Ayo applied to participate in an international conference hosted by the University of Toronto. He wasn't hopeful.

"To my surprise I was given a visa, sponsored by U of T and invited to attend. The conference went well and I thought, there is an opportunity here."

Ayo began studying and writing exams through KAPLAN and the Advanced Medical Academy to qualify to work in Canada. Through that

school, he was able to change his immigration status from visitor to student.

"As God would have it, I had the opportunity to bring my spouse with me on the student visa." It happens that he and Ade had been married in Nigeria the day before Ayo left for Toronto.

A former member of St. Augustine's Parish Council, Ade works as a Registered Nurse in Fort Macleod. Ayo shared that Ade had always wanted to be a nurse. Her family, though, placed a high value

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"When I got wind I was going to Lethbridge, the first thing I checked was whether there was an Anglican church. I found this church on YouTube – I saw some Christmas carols being sung, a handbell choir for the first time. From that point, even though I was coming to Lethbridge, I had St. Augustine's in my head."

AYO ARAMIDE

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on going to university and, because in Nigeria at that time nursing was not a degree program, Ade was encouraged to study law.

Upon arriving in Canada, though, Ade pursued her dream by enrolling in nursing at York University. They are now a family of five, with their oldest, Emmanuel, preparing for university, and David and Ayoola studying at high school. In 2006-2007 the Aramides went through the process of becoming citizens, which, Ayo says, among other things, has made travel much easier for their family.

During Ayo and Ade's time in Toronto, Ayo would fill in as an organist at different churches from time to time.

"When I went to fill in one time, there was a visitor to the church from Cold Lake – a Nigerian who happened to be living in Alberta. He put me in touch with a doctor working in Lethbridge. It was kind of a miracle how God connected us."

Seeing no professional opportunities at that time, however, Ayo went back to Nigeria to complete his residency in family medicine. He stayed in touch with his Alberta friends for a while, but then lost contact. Social media outlets opened up, though, and through these, Ayo found he was able to reconnect with the doctor in Lethbridge. This is when Ayo learned that Alberta was offering a program to recruit family physicians. His friend asked Ayo if he had all his qualifications – Ayo did, so he applied.

"As fate would have it, it went through. In Toronto I only went to that church – St. Matthews Anglican Church, Oriole – to be a



Emmanuel, Ayoola and David Aramide

supply organist. Something great came out of that. That is how I got here."

Ayo started his practice at the Lethbridge Medical Clinic, then moved to Campbell Clinic in mid-2020. He had undergone professional assessments from December 2017 until he began working as a fully fledged physician the following April.

Ayo and Ade lead a life of service, working as a physician and nurse in the Alberta health care system, and volunteering, among other roles, as a supply organist and pianist, and on the audio-visual committee. It is hard to imagine that this has been an easy path for them. Yet during our call, I found Ayo always focused on the positive. When I asked him, then, what challenges faced him on moving and living here, he responded, "I don't know if I should call it a challenge.

"The first shock I had was when I got to Toronto. In Nigeria, if you are going to a cold country, you wear a suit. I got out of the plane, and it was still OK, but the first breeze outside was minus 22. Thankfully the person I stayed with brought a jacket. Everyone was wearing gloves or mittens, and I thought,

what a city, what a place. But the interest in being there superseded this.”

“I don’t really miss Toronto,” Ayo responded when I asked if he missed the international feel of Canada’s largest city. “The only thing is the rate I come across musicians: in Toronto it was every five days, here, it is every month.

“I prefer life here – there is less distraction. It would take me almost an hour to go anywhere in Toronto. I prefer the weather here, too. Minus 30 here is not as cold as minus 22 in Toronto. Weatherwise, I prefer here, and its the lifestyle here I prefer.

“By my nature I can live anywhere, regardless. Whatever I focus on, that is what I continue to do: music – church music, photography, medicine. I have friends from these sectors of life,” something Ayo considers key to feeling part of a community.

“Many of my photography friends think I am a photographer. Friends I play music with think I am a professional musician. I identify with people of common interests.”

Ayo says that he would love to see a photography team, in addition to videography, at the church to document special events and post the photos in the entry way of the church,

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Financial Update

BY CATHY GILLESPIE
TREASURER

This end of August update on the church operating fund is similar to the update provided in the last newsletter. Income received during the summer months was pretty close to budget so total income to-date continues to be at the budget target level. Total parishioner givings are higher than the last three years, not as high as the pre-pandemic (2019) level but getting closer.

On the expenses side, most categories are within budget so far, and in total, are slightly below the eight-month budget target. Having a large net deficit at this point in the year as we do is usually not cause for concern. Income tends to increase in the latter part of the year whereas expenses are fairly consistent month to month.

It is hard to believe that Fall is upon us, which in the cycle of



church financial administration means that we will soon be launching this year’s stewardship campaign and developing a budget for 2024. Please stay tuned for information on the stewardship campaign in November. Finance Committee, Corporation and Parish Council will be working on the budget which will ultimately be presented at the Annual Meeting of Parishioners in February.

Your financial giving in support of the operations of the church is greatly appreciated. If you have any questions about options for giving or the church’s financial situation, please feel free to contact me via a message left at the church office. Ω

	Year to-date (August 31 2023)	Last year to-date (August 31 2022)	2023 Budget
Parishioner givings	\$ 275,958	\$ 259,563	\$ 471,850
Other income	14,984	5,891	53,650
Federal wage subsidy	0	4,906	0
Total income	290,942	270,360	525,500
Staffing expenses	\$ 219,294	\$ 212,447	\$ 331,200
Administration & apportionment	76,799	73,093	118,100
Facility expenses	52,477	47,908	77,650
Christian education & outreach	8,879	8,633	18,550
Total expenses	357,449	342,081	545,500
Net deficit	\$ (66,507)	\$ (71,721)	\$ (20,000)

Caring Ministry

Don't hesitate to reach out for help

Stephen Ministry is found in congregations from more than 190 Christian denominations in Canada, the United States and 30 other countries. This poem was written by Marie, a Stephen Minister in Michigan.

My Solemn Promise

I'll do my best to listen
Should you want to bare your soul,
While you sort through all your feelings;
Yes, I'll gladly play this role.

I'll be a friend to count on,
And I'll try to understand.
You are a sacred trust to me
While you're placed within my hand.

And should you need reminding,
Just to set your heart at ease,
Your words are very safe with me -
You can say whate'er you please.

Don't feel you are a burden,
For I want to share your load,
And together in the valley
We'll search for a better road.

I give my solemn promise
That I'll hold you up in prayer;
I'll lift you to the throne of God.
Always know I truly care.



STEPHEN MINISTRY

St. Augustine's is an enrolled Stephen Ministry congregation. To find out more, or if you know of someone that needs a Stephen Minister, please contact one of the clergy, or speak to one of our Stephen Leaders, Pam Mundell (403-328-4884) or Nadia Lehbauer (403-381-1259).

Around the Parish

The Welcome Back Picnic on Sept. 17 was blessed with a beautiful day, a ton of people and a wide variety of delicious food on which to feast. From the smiles on the faces you can see it was a fun time and a big success.



Ayo, continued from page 3

for instance. He pointed to the example of a Confirmation service held earlier this year that was photographed from different angles.

“Those pictures speak. They tell you about the event, without writing a word.” We moved on to speak a little bit about Ade, her hobbies and interests.

“Ade loves cooking. She caters.” Ayo shares this as he recalls how they met. “I knew her from the first day as a caterer at the school; she catered while she was doing her law degree to pay for her tuition. She wouldn’t mind having a restaurant here over time.”



Ayo and Ade Aramide

About his experience coming to worship at St. Augustine’s: Ayo has many positive things to say: “When I got wind I was going to Lethbridge, the first thing I checked was whether there was an Anglican church. I found this church on YouTube – I saw some Christmas carols being sung, a handbell choir for the first time. From that point, even though I was coming to Lethbridge, I had St. Augustine’s in my head.

“At that time I was living at sixth and sixth and had no idea where the church was,” Ayo recounts, “so I put it into Google maps and started walking. It was cold, it was winter. I had the phone in my hand following directions, asking people so I wouldn’t get lost.

“That day was very symbolic. Coincidentally, it was the day of a Confirmation service. Two bishops came: from one from Calgary and one from England. On my first day there was a full blast of great music. It was everything I wanted. The music was fantastic. Everything just sounded right.” Ayo approached Joanne and Mary Lee that day and introduced himself.

“They were happy to see me and asked if I would like to play. That very day I joined the choir.” Ayo sang with the choir until the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. At this point his demanding work schedule made it difficult for him to make evening practices. This is when he joined the

live-streaming team.

“That lovely environment, that supportive environment that the church provides, that music ministry that the church provides, is excellent.” Ayo reflects, “The support we received from the church is enormous. We were welcomed with open arms. That is not common – that is great. We really appreciate that.”

Ayo recounts being supported by St. Augustine’s show of love and prayers when, in 2019, he had a stroke.

“I was in Chinook Hospital for one month. Canon Robinson would come to my bedside almost every other day and Rev. Bateman also visited me, as well as Jackie and the choristers. The support was great. Even after I was discharged, Greg Young would come, spend time with me. We would go to the park together.”

“To the glory of God, it was a miracle,” Ayo remarks as he describes regaining 100 per cent of his health and ability to function. “When I look at that time, it would have been much more difficult if it had just been my family on its own.

“People ask me how am I doing. I appreciate that care expressed by the church, that atmosphere, that prayerful, loving atmosphere should not be taken for granted. It is where I would want to give my best. I just feel good to be a member of that church.” Ω



Welcome South Sudanese congregation St. Augustine's has new roommates

BY PAT HAMMOND

Sunday afternoons at St. Augustine's, normally quiet, is now a bustling time of day.

Beginning early September, a congregation of Dinka-speaking Anglicans has been meeting in the church. Their worship is really beautiful, says the Rev. Steve Batemen, with the liturgy led "mostly in Dinka with occasional English, and lots of singing and percussive music."



"I THINK THIS IS AN OPPORTUNITY AS FELLOW CONGREGATIONS TO LEARN FROM EACH OTHER. ... THIS SHOWS THAT THE BODY OF CHRIST CUTS ACROSS CULTURAL LINES AND WE CAN EXPERIENCE THE WORSHIP OF CHRIST IN MANY WAYS ACROSS THE WORLD."

According to Rev. Steve, a small congregation of about 30 had been worshipping in Lethbridge at a smaller location. In the spring of 2022, Steve was approached by members of this group, including the Rev. John Mac Ayuen, about holding services at St. Augustine's. Parishioners may recall seeing Rev. John at our services and during coffee hour. As one of the leaders

in a Dinka congregation in the Diocese of Edmonton, Rev. John brings experience to ministry life in Canada, says Steve, and he is well-known to the Dinka-speaking leaders in Calgary.

At St. Augustine's, the idea of a hosted congregation was received favourably by Corporation, which led to a meeting between Archbishop Greg Kerr-Wilson, Rev. Steve and Rev. John.

After further research and consultation with the Archbishop, Rev. John was issued a letter of permission to conduct ministry under the supervision of the Diocese of Calgary. In June the concept was approved by Parish Council and details of a rental agreement have been

ratified since that time. The agreement includes provision for the use of the Crypt for the congregation's children's program and the kitchen for their fellowship time, as well as use of the Parish Hall if the church is busy for some reason.

"I think it's just a really beautiful way to contribute to the building of the kingdom of God in Lethbridge," says Steve. "Here is a space we can offer to like-minded believers as an encouragement to them."

That encouragement may have led to some growth in attendance, says Steve. "They were getting about 30 in their small old space. But by the second week here they had 45."

He points out that Rev. John has offered a standing invitation to any member of St. Augustine's to join in worship on any given Sunday afternoon.

"I think this is an opportunity as fellow congregations to learn from each other," says Steve. "We do expect that we will from time to time show up as clergy – sometimes Gillian or I will show up there, and sometimes John will come to ours."

"This shows that the body of Christ cuts across cultural lines and we can experience the worship of Christ in many ways across the world." Ω

Courtyard and garden get a facelift

BY GREG YOUNG,
VERGER

Since June of this year a team of individuals have endeavoured to refurbish our courtyard garden. Led by Tina and Gary Huckabay, and thanks to the guidance of David Banks and many volunteers' sweat hours, the garden has been transformed. With the help of Julie and Leonard Lorenz, Diane and Peter Starrenburg, Dru-silla Pearson, Bill and Pat Latimer, Susan Milne and Donna Marshall the garden is now a tranquil place to spend a bit of time.

Busy as worker ants, volunteers were weeding, watering, planting, pruning and digging up dirt, working together to restore God's creation in the garden.

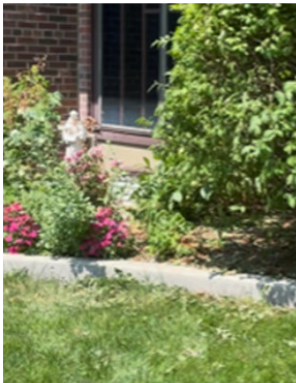
Watching them work reminded me of John 15:2: "Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it so that it may bear more fruit." May we be reminded of how we need to tend our own lives like a garden, adding nutrients (God's word), pruning parts of our lives to allow new growth and watering. "Come. And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who wishes take the water of life without cost." Revelations 22:17.



This ministry was a great way to build fellowship with others in our parish. As they worked together, they became more acquainted with people in our parish whom they didn't necessarily know. When I spoke to the gardeners, they were enjoying their labours having coffee and snacks in the courtyard. The first beneficiaries of the renovations were the children and adults at our summer VBS.

Volunteers collaborated on ideas as they worked, and discussed their vision for the use of the garden. An outdoor play space (joyfully heard during church services), a tranquil place to come for reflection and quiet, a space to enjoy year-round, a venue for weddings or special occasions, and a place for pollinators to enjoy.

*St. Anthony in the corner.
Photo by Gary Huckabay.*



*BACK ROW: Bill Latimer, Leonard Lorenz,
Gary Huckabay, David Banks. FRONT ROW:
Julie Lorenz, Tina Huckabay, Donna Mar-
shal. Photo by Margret Tremblay.*



The courtyard garden in all it's newly-tended glory. Photo by Margret Tremblay.

As volunteers talked to others in the community, a generous offer came from the Horticultural

Society for perennials when they are divided next spring. For the future, they envision drip irrigation for the plants as watering became a frequent task this past summer.

While cleaning out the back corner our gardeners found a statue of Saint Anthony (patron saint of lost things) which has been restored by Tina Huckabay. The statue was originally donated by Mary Duff who lived in the rectory when Bill Duff was priest here.

May we enjoy the fruit of the gardeners' labours and continue to watch it grow and be fruitful. Our thanks to those whose ministry will benefit us all. Ω

Introducing Stef & Esther

Children and youth are in good hands

BY THE REV. DOC. GILLIAN BRECKENRIDGE

At the start of the summer, we were thrilled to offer the position of Coordinator of Children and Family Ministries to **Stef Collins**. Stef is a long-time member of St. Augustine's and grew up attending many of our children and youth ministry programs. You can find Stef leading the Sunday School ministry team during our 10:00 a.m. service on Sundays. Stef also leads Middle School Youth group on Monday nights from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. and the monthly High School meet up on the last Sunday of the month from 5:00 - 8:30 p.m. Stef also leads our 10:00 a.m. Sunday service Children's Focus on a rotation with Rev. Steve and Rev. Gillian and is responsible for a number of other children and family focused ministry initiatives throughout the year. Please welcome Stef to her new role with the St. Augustine's team.

If you've been down to the Nursery during

our 10:00 a.m. Sunday services lately, you will find a warm welcome. We are so happy to welcome **Esther Oluwagbemi** to our Children and Family ministries team as our Coordinator of Nursery and Special Events. Esther is currently studying Child and Youth Care at Lethbridge College and comes to our St. Augustine's family with significant experience in child and youth ministry from her time with New Covenant Church in Ibadan, Nigeria. Our Nursery is staffed with two adult volunteers as well as teen helpers for the duration of the 10:00 a.m. Sunday service. Please give a warm welcome to Esther in her new role next time you see her. Ω



Stef



Esther



Vacation Bible School was simply - STELLAR!

4 days

75 kids

31 adult volunteers

16 teen volunteers

50 (!) snack bringers

**A LOT of prayer
and ONE BIG THANK YOU!**



We could not have pulled off this year's Vacation Bible School without your help!

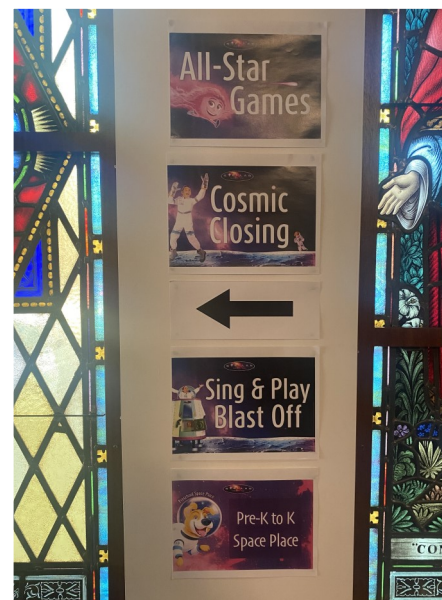
In August, around 75 kids joined us for a Vacation Bible School to remember! We were rocketed off to space as we learned about planets, comets, stars, and, of course, Jesus, the light of the world. Some of the children who joined us were from our own congregation, but many were

from other churches or from the neighbourhood. Teen group leaders led the kids between stations where they did Imagination Station space-themed crafts, experienced the bible story of the day in the Bible Adventure station, talked about real-life applications of the story at KidVid Cinema, and ran off their energy at the outdoor games station. Our Pre-K and Kindergarten-aged kids enjoyed their own exciting stations in the nursery school classrooms.

Two of our newest leaders in our Children and Family ministries helped to coordinate our VBS this year, Stef Collins and Esther Oluwagbemi, with the help of Eliza Wiederspick and Rev. Gillian. So many people worked hard to pull this year's VBS together and it was a huge success. The VBS team want to say a big THANK YOU to everyone who played a part – whether it was leading a station, bringing snacks, running reg-

istration, or praying for us. It truly takes a whole church to run a VBS and we are so grateful to be a part of a community that is so willing to take part.

God bless you all and don't forget to Watch for God in all places and to Shine Jesus' Light at all times! Ω



Loving things that say

BOO!

BY PAM UKRAINITZ

I grew up on a farm in Saskatchewan. My mother is a nurse (now retired) who worked profoundly hard to keep three kids, a husband and an immense garden afloat. My dad is a man who loves the land he inherited – an entrepreneur at heart and a soul who could strike up a conversation with anyone. (Us kids used to joke that my dad could talk the knob off the door.) This combination of my mother's compassion and ability to get stuff done, coupled with my dad's ability to show up for people again and again, is the petri dish that grew a love of God in my life. It was on that patch of prairie dirt that I witnessed the truth that loving God means loving and serving people.

My mom loved people with her garden and still does to this day. The harvest that is reaped from that soil has blessed not only her children and grandchildren but neighbours within a large radius of that yard. She still assumes that since her body is capable of the work of growing food that it's not just for her, but also for those who might not have access to fresh produce. So she gives it. Again and again and again. Recently she showed up at the thrift store with boxes of cucumbers and tomatoes to donate so people can go home with a few fresh vegetables when they come in for a pre-loved pair of jeans.

My dad was and still is unhurried with people – even those he doesn't know. One harsh winter during a particularly fierce snow storm our yard created a shelter along the highway where we live. Visibility was zero except for where the trees created a wind break and cars lined up along the

highway waiting for the storm to pass. From the house, my dad saw the headlights on the road, so he bundled up, trudged out and invited them to come into the house out of the storm. Then he called my mom who was trapped at the hospital in town and asked her: "How do I cook a roast and potatoes?" He fed strangers because he could.

I share all of this because my parents loved people and they also loved God. But there were topics and seasons in our family life where sometimes the water got a little muddy. One of those seasons was Halloween.

There were Halloweens where, dressed in my grandma's square dancing skirt with a cardboard tiara pinned to my head, dad drove his "princess" from farm yard to farm yard to collect candy. Being a ghost was out of the question – that was just a little too "dark." Then there was the year my mom knocked my costume out of the park because I got to go as Sylvester the Cat! She spent hours sewing my costume along with a Tweety Bird outfit for my sister and we wore them at the costume parade at school. It was amazing! And then there was the year where there were no costumes and no trick-or-treating and we hunkered down with a few other families in our church basement to pray for those who were lost and unaware of the spiritual darkness they were participating in and to seek God's protection from evil in our community. AND THEN there was the year we converted our big ol' barn into a



There were Halloweens where, dressed in my grandma's square dancing skirt with a cardboard tiara pinned to my head, dad drove his "princess" from farm yard to farm yard to collect candy. Being a ghost was out of the question – that was just a little too "dark."

haunted house and invited neighbours and youth groups from far and wide. There were bowls of spaghetti to mimic intestines and peeled grapes for eyeballs – all of this in a dark, creaky and damp-smelling barn. Also, AMAZING!

I think all of this is close to the surface for me because Halloween is approaching, my parents are aging and I am asking myself: “How do I love others and love God?” I am realizing there is no formula for love, but there is often a cost. For example, taking children to a church basement to pray but also host a haunted house in the barn. Which one is the right way to love? I admit, I like to know what I am “paying” as I love unknown people with my time, my finances, my buffer from the sorrow of another, my perspective and certainty, my ambivalence and my boundaries. As I am reflecting on my parents mentality – “loving God means loving people, and if there’s a cost, you pay it” – I wonder if I am up to the task. Even more honestly, what is the

“LOVING GOD
MEANS LOVING
PEOPLE, AND IF
THERE’S A COST,
YOU PAY IT.”

expression of love that God is asking of me?

I wonder if that’s where the beauty of love lies. We all bear the image of God. The people around you are different than the people around me. Your people will need different expressions of love than my people. Perhaps my neighbours need me to roll up the garage door, crank up the heater, serve beer and hot chocolate and gobs of candy. Perhaps your people just need to be invited over for dinner so they don’t have to answer the door a dozen times on a night that demands they smile generously when they just can’t. These are the places where God intersects with people, in you and me because he loves people. God is unafraid of those spaces where we question what love looks like. He is already there, waiting for us to share in the delight of a prayer or a party.

Whatever Halloween holds for you this year, may you know the Lord is with you and waiting for you as you welcome the work of loving your neighbour. Ω



Around the Parish

Parents of the parish have been meeting regularly for mid-week activities. These organized "parent-tot meetups" are a great way for small kids to shake their sillies out. This outing took them to the Helen Schuler Nature Centre.



Last June the Senior Choir got together to wind up their season of song, and to celebrate Joanne Collier's outstanding work as Director over the years.

St. Augustine's Church

A Church Family in the Heart of the City

411-11 Street South
Lethbridge, Alberta
T1J 2N9

Phone: (403) 327-3970

Email: office@staug.org

Website: <http://www.staug.org>



The Hippo Herald is published quarterly by St. Augustine's Anglican Church, Lethbridge.

St. Augustine's is a warm and growing Christian community. We are part of the worldwide Anglican Church, although many of us come from a variety of Christian backgrounds or none. We are located near the centre of Lethbridge, Alberta but our congregation is spread all over the city and region. Wherever you are on your spiritual journey, you are welcome to join our church family as we learn to follow Jesus.

