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# The Hippo Herald

SUMMER 2023

LETHBRIDGE, ALBERTA

## Introducing our sponsored family

BY BRIAN BLACK

On March 3, 2023, the family we are sponsoring arrived in Canada. There are four members of the family, Andrew, his wife Elizabeth and Elizabeth's parents Manizheh and Joseph. As Christian converts, they fled from Iran to Turkey due to religious persecution in 2015. In Turkey, they worked for a church where they helped set up a program for other refugees from Afghanistan, Syria, Iraq and Iran. There they conducted craft and language classes and outings for adults and children and sang in the services, some of which Andrew also led. In the last few months before they came here, they were under constant threat from Iranian agents in Turkey. It is a great relief that they are now here and out of danger.



The family members are all wonderful individuals – kind, generous and very talented. Andrew wants to become an Anglican minister. He has already gained much experience

in pastoral care through his refugee work in Turkey. He is also talented musically, having studied voice at the Tehran Conservatory, and is now singing in Saint Augustine's church choir.

Elizabeth, his wife, is a very talented artist who works in wood tableaus and is now pursuing her art at CASA, Lethbridge's

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*Elizabeth, Andrew, Joseph and Manizheh at their welcome reception in the Crypt.*



*"The photographs remind us of our connection to and affection for each other. They stir our memories and then attach them to a time and a place — to a real shared experience. The pictures remind us that we are family."*

## *From the Rector's Desk*

# What does family look like?

*It is right for me to feel this way about all of you, since I have you in my heart and ... all of you share in God's grace with me. God can testify how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus.*

ST. PAUL - PHILIPPIANS 1:7-8

When families gather, they take photographs. It is inevitable! Often these photos are relatively informal. In our family they happen spontaneously at any family gathering where a larger than usual number are present. Usually, they are taken around the table as we sit down to dinner, or shortly after we are finished.

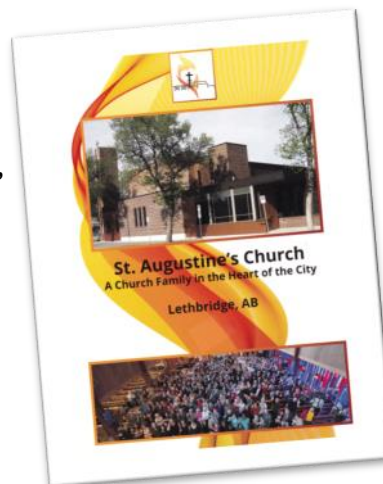
Someone will pull out a camera and start giving instructions as to who should move closer to whom. From time to time, if enough years have gone by, they are more formal. We book a sitting with a professional photographer. Emails are exchanged about which colours we should wear, and which ones should be avoided. It is never convenient. We are all busy. But we all make the time. And we are all interested in the photos. First, we will pay attention to how we look. "Did they get my good side?" Then, we will pay special attention to how the family has changed since the last time we took pictures. Who looks older? Is there

anyone who is no longer with us? Who looks just the same? Who are the new members of the family whether through birth, adoption, or marriage?

We pay attention because we care. The photographs remind us of our connection to and affection for each other. They stir our memories and then attach them to a time and a place — to a real shared experience. The pictures remind us that we are family.

It has been our tradition here at St. Augustine's to take such church family photographs every six years or so. But coming out of the Covid-19 pandemic we were unsure of the appetite for a formal all-church photo directory. We were very pleasantly surprised at the widespread enthusiasm for the project. We are so appreciative of all who participated by getting their photographs taken. We understand that this took time and effort. We

are also very thankful to Deputy Warden-Communications Pat Hammond, and his coordinators, Terry Noss and Denise Zonta for giving leadership to these efforts. There were many others who offered help and support along the way, signing people in, phoning, helping in many other ways. Now we wait for



the directories themselves to be laid out, printed and distributed – a process that we know will take several months.

When they finally come, I suspect that we will behave just like families do. We will look at our own picture. “Did they get my good side?” More importantly, these books will show us both what is constant and what is different within our family. We will mourn those we have lost. We will celebrate the many new family members who have

joined us since the last time we took pictures.

It is our hope that these booklets will help us to know each other more deeply by putting names to faces. We hope that they will become prayer reminders gently encouraging us to remember each other before the God and Father who brought us all together in Christ Jesus and as St. Paul says in Philippians 1:9 “...that our love may abound more and more.”

Your Rector,  
Steve

## Financial Update

BY CATHY GILLESPIE  
TREASURER

A summary of the church operating fund up to the end of May is provided below. I am pleased to be able to report that total income, mostly made up of parishioner givings, is very close to the budget target for the first five months of the year. Parishioner givings are currently tracking higher than the last three years, not as high as the pre-pandemic (2019) level but encouragingly closer.

On the expenses side, most categories are within budget so far, although we are experiencing higher than expected cost pressures in a few areas such as insurance and utilities. In total, expenses are slightly below the five-month budget target. There is a fairly large net deficit at this point, however that is to be expected because income tends to increase in the latter part of the year



versus expenses which are fairly consistent month to month.

Looking to the future, we continue to anticipate increasing costs in some budget areas and work towards discontinuing the practice of planning (budgeting) for a year-end deficit, so there is still a way to go. However, I am cautiously optimistic that the financial results so far this year reflect that we are on a good path in that regard.

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 (May 31 2023)	Last year to-date (May 31 2022)	2023 Budget
Parishioner givings	\$ 178,140	\$ 162,380	\$ 471,850
Other income	8,736	3,253	53,650
Total income	<u>186,876</u>	<u>165,633</u>	<u>525,500</u>
Staffing expenses	\$ 136,301	\$ 132,625	\$ 331,200
Administration & apportionment	47,966	46,160	118,100
Facility expenses	38,384	33,110	77,650
Christian education & outreach	4,651	5,190	18,550
Total expenses	<u>227,302</u>	<u>217,085</u>	<u>545,500</u>
Net deficit	\$ <u>(40,426)</u>	\$ <u>(51,452)</u>	\$ <u>(20,000)</u>

## *The work of the Diocese*

# Ministry and metaphysics

BY RACHEL ROBINSON

For an institution founded on the hope of something better than the seemingly meaningless suffering of our day-to-day life, the church requires an astounding amount of bureaucracy. Parish council and wardens at St. Augustine's handle much of the paperwork at the parish level; the office of the Diocese of Calgary, a geographical area of affiliated Anglican churches under the jurisdiction of a single bishop, in turn manages the administrative needs of the diocese, and supports the churches under its care.



*The Rev. Brother Jason Carroll*

This is, in part, why the diocesan office held a Town Hall at St. Augustine's on May 10. Although open to everyone, it was particularly aimed toward wardens and parish councils, discussing ways that the office could help them navigate the administration of their roles. Two other Town Halls were held in Red Deer and

Okotoks, to enable as many people as possible across the diocese to attend.

Of course, just like church paperwork does, these Town Halls served a larger purpose. "The whole point of the diocesan office... is to equip [parishioners] and make ministry across the diocese work," says Brother Jason Carroll, beloved member of the St. Augustine's community, and Diocesan Ministry Developer for the Diocese of Calgary.

This is a difficult time for such a task. Churches across North America are experiencing falling attendance, aging congregations and a lack of full-time clergy. As those who attended his recent Lenten course will know, Jason identifies the cause of these challenges as nothing less than the philosophical basis of our era: postmodernism. While people generally used to believe that "there is a transcendent reality to which we are responsible," now, "the philosophy is that humanity, either as a collective or the individual, is the basis of reality." Subsequently, many today dismiss and avoid the church. (While many criticisms of the church are warranted, this situation has less to do with what the church has done than with what the church – at its best – points toward.)

Jason's role contests this philosophy. "My job is to say, 'Remember who you are.' Which is that you are created by



God, in His image. That's your identity. And your vocation, your job as the image bearers, is to worship Him and obey Him and make sure that His sovereignty exists in this reality." In practice, he does so by

working with the Rev. Elizabeth Short, the Parish Health Facilitator, to help parishes discern what kind of ministry God is calling them to. They then find resources and experts to grow this ministry,

often referring people to the Calgary School of Discipleship. Their goal is not to drastically improve church attendance, but to build disciples: "Christians who are strong and resilient in their faith, and are loving, genuine, Christ-like people."

Such work requires everyone involved to strike a fine balance between changing what parishes need to

change to produce such disciples, while preserving their integrity. Succeeding "has to do with a kind of humility that we would understand as faith, where... we have to accept that we don't define what is real."

Instead, "our Creator defines what is real."

Ultimately, this faithful humility is what animates the ministry of all Christians, clergy and laypeople alike. Despite the challenges that the church is facing, there is quiet

hope in the reality of the Creator in everyone who preaches, teaches or files forms to the glory of God. "We've been relying on the Holy Spirit for all of this," says Jason. "Every parish I go to, and every day that I'm working in this, I repeat that prayer: Come, Holy Spirit." Ω

**"YOUR JOB AS THE IMAGE BEARERS IS TO WORSHIP HIM AND OBEY HIM AND MAKE SURE THAT HIS SOVEREIGNTY EXISTS IN THIS REALITY."**

## Greening of the grounds

Spring came early this year, taking many Lethbridge gardeners by surprise. Tina Huckabay pulled together a team of green thumbs from the congregation which transformed the courtyard area of the church. This is an example of ad hoc groups that come into being as needed, augmenting the many ministries and standing committees at St. Augustine's.

*Photos by Mary Lee Voort*



## Youth Confirmation

# Students explore faith foundations

BY GREG YOUNG

Our youth confirmation class started meeting in January. We were blessed to have seven fine young people participate. Yes, you count right – there are only six in the first photo below because one had another commitment that day.



*Learning about chasubles*

Each week the confirmands went back to look at the baptismal covenant made when they were baptized, four as infants and three more recently. Each week we would

start with a snack – and no, not fruit bread. At the table we had a chance to get to know each of them. Throughout the confirmation study period we reviewed the Apostle's Creed and what it meant to them. Discussions were always interesting, and the confirmands had a chance to express their faith which was refreshing for us as leaders in the group. We explored God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

As we studied the sacraments, we discussed how God meets us in a particular time and place, which can

and does happen in many ways in our lives. During our study of Ordination into Holy Orders, the confirmands tried on the chasubles that a priest wears (pictured here). It was a good review of liturgical colours in the church. One of the things that was most poignant to the leaders was the confirmands' desire to know the Lord in a way personal to each of them. For the confirmands, one of the most moving experiences was working and serving at the Lethbridge Soup Kitchen. For our last class, we met to make bread and have a fire in the backyard sharing Holy Ghost stories. When the parents arrived, they had a chance to sample the fresh-made bread. Our thanks to the parents for their support in getting the young people to the classes.

I would like to thank Rev. Gillian for leading, along with Stef Collins and Rev. Steve for walking beside these young people on their journey to love and serve the Lord. Ω



*Confirmation with Archbishop Greg on May 28*



# START, continued from page 1

Community Art Centre. She also has a strong interest in the Anglican ministry. Manizheh, her mother, is an excellent cook and knows the traditional craft of Iranian carpet weaving. She is widely read in works by the great Persian poet Rumi, Shakespeare and Tolstoy. Joseph, her husband, is an experienced tailor and truck driver. He loves dogs. The family now lives in a condo close to Saint Augustine's. They are adjusting well to their new surroundings, attend church regularly and are working hard at mastering English.

A very special aspect of our resettlement project was that our newcomers were able to move into a fully furnished condominium. This also presents a chal-

lenge for St. Augustine's Refugee Taskforce (START) as we will therefore also need to assemble an adequate collection of furnishings for our family as they move out onto their own. This is an activity that normally occurs at the front end of the resettlement process.

It is very likely that our family of four now living together will be living as two separate couples when the sponsorship period concludes.

Starting in July 2023 we will be collecting and storing furnishings as

we prepare for the end of February 2024 when our commitment to house our new family comes to an end. If you have some gently used furnishings or other housewares that you would like to donate, please contact Barry Adams at 403-394-5899 (bwadams1@telus.net). We will register your donation and arrange for collection once a storage location has been established.

**Important:** We are requesting types of items that address specific needs. See the list shown on this page. But for a more detailed list, contact Barry and he will email a copy. Ω

## LIVING ROOM

- ♦ couch or love seat
- ♦ wing chair or recliner
- ♦ coffee table,
- ♦ end tables
- ♦ lamps

## BEDROOM

- ♦ dressers
- ♦ wardrobe cabinets
- ♦ bedside tables
- ♦ lamps
- ♦ NO beds required

## KITCHEN

- ♦ table and chairs
- ♦ china cabinet
- ♦ kitchen dishes (glasses, cups, dishes, bowls) and utensils
- ♦ small appliances
- ♦ knife set

## LAUNDRY

- ♦ storage shelving
- ♦ garbage can

## BATHROOM

- ♦ shower curtain
- ♦ garbage can





## *Camino Postscript* People, places and poetry



BY ALISON GOODWIN

*She has to walk her Camino*, Duane counseled me, *and you have to walk yours*. In a day or two I would meet up with my very dear, very fit friend, Shanna. I was afraid I wouldn't be able to keep up.

*Talk to her about it.*

This was not Duane's first Camino. His advice echoed that of my St. Augustine's family, whose stories had informed an article I wrote on the Camino de Santiago de Compostela, and inspired me to walk it myself. They had answered my questions, supplied me with gear and sent me off with their blessings and encouragement.

Duane was the first member of my on-Camino family. He was known to me at the beginning as the light-grey backpack I followed on my first day from Astorga to Rabanal del Camino. We chatted while observing the storks that roosted in nearly every church steeple along the route. He was scheduled to meet up with his wife in Santiago on his 72<sup>nd</sup> birthday. I remain grateful to Duane,

whose wisdom and kindness helped me navigate my early days on the Camino Frances, before I went on ahead to meet Shanna in Triacastela.

Day Four had me arriving late and exhausted at Vega De Valcarce. I entered the low-ceilinged room where I would sleep in the one remaining bunk – top, back corner – amid 17 other pilgrims.

*I don't know if I can do this.*

There was a shower, though, and, as usual, the water was restorative. I settled into my bunk and experienced what had become a familiar bedtime sensation, when the body, mind and spirit are united in gratitude for rest. The next morning, when I woke, about half of the people were moving about, quietly getting ready



in the dark. Lying in the bunks were the curved forms of others still sleeping. I was struck by the tenderness of the scene: here we are, fellow humans.

From there was the remarkable climb to O'Cebreiro, the Celtic village atop the mountain that divides Ibierzo from Galicia, then onwards to meet Shanna. We took Duane's advice and decided that mornings we'd set off together and then rendezvous for dinner. Shanna and I would often cross paths throughout the day, sometimes to enjoy a glass of fresh orange juice or walk together for a stretch, and then return to the rhythm of our own caminos.

On the treelined stretch to Arzua I had a wonderful conversation with a couple from Victoria, BC. Before we said *so long*, it came up that I planned to write a short piece on the Camino for the parish newsletter back home.

*Which church are you at?*

*Because I have a sister in Lethbridge.*

The first piece I'd written for the *Hippo Herald* was a profile on parishioner and missionary Jo Wills. The lovely people I had been walking with, Candice and Laurie, turned out to be Jo's aunt and uncle.

*The Way*, as in poetry, is where mysteries, surprises, and paradoxes abound. It is a solitary experience, shared with thousands, where you cover a great dis-



*Alison in Arzua with Candice Digeso and Laurie Boyle*

tance, yet only a fraction of the Camino.

Shanna and I headed for the coast after making it to Santiago. We were awestruck by *Finisterre* – Land's End – that embodies both bewilderment and the power of naming it. Before walking to Finisterre we had taken a bus from Santiago to the coastal town of Muxía. As I looked out over the water, I thought about the beginning of this journey. I thought about being in the sanctuary of St. Augustine's among fellow pilgrims. How small I felt as I walked forward to have my boots blessed, how grateful in God's presence: to be insignificant and still, miraculously, to matter. Ω



*Muxia, near Finisterre, Spain  
PHOTO by Shanna Solla*



## Stephen Ministers: The After People

People often ask, “What exactly is a Stephen Minister?” One way to put it is that Stephen Ministers are the *After People*.

### *Stephen Ministers are there:*

- ... *after* the phone call you hoped you’d never get.
- ... *after* the funeral, when everyone has left and the emotions you’ve held at bay come crashing in on you.
- ... *after* the relationship falls apart and the bottom falls out of your life.
- ... *after* the doctor says, “I’m sorry, but there’s nothing more we can do.”
- ... *after* the nursing home director shakes your hand and says, “Welcome to your new home.”
- ... *after* the last child honks the horn, waves, and drives away—and the house suddenly seems empty.
- ... *after* the gavel comes down, the handcuffs go on, and your loved one is led away.
- ... *after* the baby arrives, demanding more of you than you ever dreamed possible.
- ... *after* you find a pink slip with your final paycheck.
- ... *after* your family and friends have heard your story one too many times, but you still need to talk it out.

Stephen Ministers are the After People. They are ready to come alongside you—or your friends, neighbors, coworkers, or relatives—and provide comfort and support for as long *after* as needed.

[www.stephenministries.org](http://www.stephenministries.org)

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If you feel you would like to discuss the possibility of meeting with a Stephen Minister, please contact:

Phone – the clergy 403-327-3970

Email – [stephenminister@staug.org](mailto:stephenminister@staug.org)



## Missional Coaching

# Reaching out to proclaim God's love

BY MICHAEL LARSEN  
MISSIONAL COACH

In October of 2019 a group of about 25 parishioners and clergy from around the Diocese of Calgary were invited by our archbishop to attend a four-day conference and workshop focusing on mission.

A plan was put into place to develop a series of seven workshops or seminars which could be sent around the Diocese and presented to the churches and their councils. A plan was formulated, programs were developed, content was readied and a couple of churches had signed up and then Covid-19 happened. All ground to a screeching halt. Our large group of 25 slowly dropped to about 10 but, as a result, the remaining coaches became stronger. We were prepared and trained to facilitate all the workshops and redeveloped the ones that needed some tweaking. We were ready for the new reality of our post-Covid churches.

The seven workshops we developed are similar in titles to those developed within the Diocese of Toronto but are unique to our diocese and perhaps a bit "home grown" and thus unique to Southern Alberta. Fundamental in the development of each workshop was the Vision of the Diocese of Calgary; ***To be a church that is inwardly transformed by the Holy Spirit. A church that reflects the virtue and grace of Jesus. A church reaching out to proclaim God's love to a broken world.***

The seven workshops that we present include:

- ♦ Missional Foundations
- ♦ Communication



- ♦ Youth and Children
- ♦ Missional Small Groups
- ♦ Organizational Structures
  - ♦ Community Connections
  - ♦ Personal Sharing of Faith

In February of this year myself and my wife Karen, along with one or two other coaches, facilitated three workshops in this parish. They were:

- ♦ Missional Foundations
- ♦ Personal Sharing of Faith
- ♦ Missional Small Groups

In May we facilitated another workshop on community connections. There are still more workshops available so hopefully we will be invited to facilitate more workshops in the fall. Work started in the previous workshop will be continued in the fall.

We also travel in the diocese to present workshops.

This spring we have been in St. Luke's, Red Deer, Holy Trinity, Calgary and St. Michael's, Strathmore. Ω



*On June 11, more than 30 people attended a Newcomers' Lunch in the Parish Hall. Not in recent memory have so many attended an event like this at St. Augustine's. As such, it was a great encouragement to have so many gather to learn about our parish and consider making St. Augustine's their church home.*



# Beloved staff members move on to new challenges

After many years of outstanding service, Wendy Doherty (Children & Family Ministries) and Joanne Collier (Music Director) both chose this spring to retire from the staff of St. Augustine's. The reception after church on June 25 was very much a "thank you" event rather than a "goodbye" because both women will continue to worship at St. Augustine's, which is very good news.



*Wendy with two Sunday school students*



*Joanne conducts once again*

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*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 Communion, 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.

