

ST. AUGUSTINE'S  
ANGLICAN CHURCH



# The Hippo Herald

WINTER 2022

LETHBRIDGE, ALBERTA

## Answering the call

*A long obedience in the same direction*

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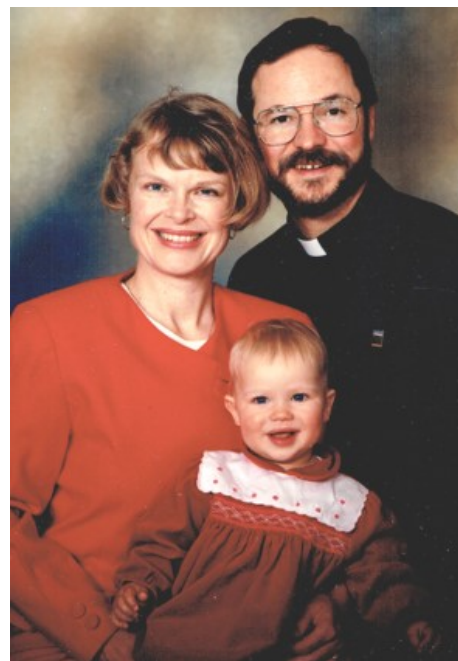
"We just dug the last of our potatoes," Judith tells me as she and James arrange themselves in front of their laptop's camera for our Zoom call. It is All Saints Day, November 1, and snow is beginning to fall lightly. With her usual self-deprecating humour, Judith points to her hat and says, with a reference to Dr. Seuss, "Rachel says I have Cindy Lou Who hair."

Fifteen minutes before this I had called to confirm our interview. Judith has been shuttling back and forth from Calgary, staying with her mother in palliative care, so it is uncertain whether we will be able to connect. The voice that answers is calm and belongs to Rachel. How mature she sounds. As she runs to get her parents, I consider all that Rachel has witnessed di-

rectly and indirectly throughout the ministries of her parents.

When James and Judith were married in 1990, James had just begun his ministry in Mountainview Parish, a two-point parish in Olds and Sundre. Before this he had served as a curate at St. Peter's, Calgary, for four years. On his first Sunday in Olds as the new rector, James announced his engagement to Judith: "If you'd like to meet my fiancé, come back next week."

Born and raised in Calgary, Judith had never lived in a rural place and was understandably apprehensive about the move. The expectation was to stay there a maximum of four years. Upon joining the



*Judith, James and Rachel in 1994*

parish, Judith was able to play piano as accompanist for the choir with which both she and James sang. Two years later Rachel was born and, in the meantime, James and Judith fell in love with their community.

"It takes seven years to figure out where the light switches are," James says. "I've been influenced by Biblical scholar Pastor Eugene Peterson, who encourages ministers to in-

CONTINUED PAGE 2 >



## Robinsons, continued...

vest their lives in one place, i.e., don't just spend your time on a career track. Instead, he advises us to cultivate 'a long obedience in the same direction'." During their seven years in this parish, it is likely James and Judith learned something beyond how to turn on the lights.

Throughout their years in Olds, though, James would talk about Lethbridge. This was his birthplace and where he had lived from grades 9-12 and earned an undergraduate degree at the University of Lethbridge. James sang in the St. Au-

Judith's family also has roots in the area: her great grandparents, who were farmers, are buried in Lethbridge and lived in what has become a local landmark, "The Ideal Farmhouse."

**"IN OLDS, I FOUND IT  
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DO ONE FUNERAL."**

Even so, a move to Southern Alberta would not be without its difficulties.

The family had cultivated strong connections within Olds, Judith had established herself as an actor

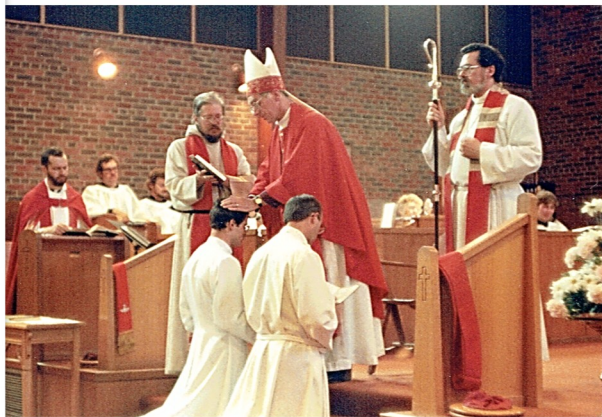
in Calgary and she was teaching in the drama program at Rosebud. A move to Lethbridge would add an hour or more to her commute – no small thing with a young child to care for. In a leap of faith, though, they responded to the call and began a

new life in Lethbridge.

"St. Augustine's had been beautifully served by Allan and Muriel McCuaig," James said, reflecting on his family's arrival at St. Augustine's in 1997. During their first year in Lethbridge, James

presided at approximately 50 funerals – nearly one per week. "In Olds, I found it took a week's worth of energy to do one funeral."

"Why did we move?" It was four-year old Rachel who voiced the question (over and over again) with which the family grappled



*James at his ordination as Deacon*

gustine's choir (with his brother Len), his mother worked as part of the altar guild and his father served as a warden. Here James had been baptized just as the parish was transitioning into the new building in 1956. As James put it, "that's where it all began for me."

# Advent Thoughts on waiting

BY PAM UKRAINITZ

## **What other time or season can or will the church ever have but that of Advent?**

(Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*)

For better or worse the last two years have shaped us into a people familiar with waiting. Waiting for the first wave of Covid to come to an end, and then the second, third and fourth waves; waiting for reports of vaccine efficacy; waiting for access to the vaccine; waiting for strict mandates to be lifted, waiting for truckers to depart Ottawa; waiting for a more peaceful political climate; waiting for war to end; waiting for the mound of sorrow shoved under the global rug to be smoothed.

In all of this waiting we had to grow and flex muscles of patience, gratitude, contentment, long-suffering, mercy and forgiveness. This waiting was hard. We saw moments of great human resiliency and also great human failure.

I have long loved Advent, but the experience of the last few years has fanned that love into a bonfire of longing this year. I feel the heat of a heart cry that says – I want more. The Advent season is an invitation to say: I'm waiting for more, expecting more, longing for more. And the More is declared Holy because it is the very presence of God that we ask for. In the same way that our liturgy reminds us weekly that we are bold to say "Our Father," Advent invites us to boldly say, Come Lord Jesus! As we stand on the cusp of a new liturgical year, I find myself saying God come and see the state of this world! And God replies to me, I have and I will!

He reminds me that Hagar named him aptly as the



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God who sees. Our moments and days have not slipped through His fingers, He sees. He reminds me that Mary named His son Immanuel, the God who comes. And because these things are true of the God-Man I can throw all of my unfettered longing at him knowing he receives it as belief in and love of Him.

Fleming Rutledge says it beautifully: "At the heart of the Advent season is the proclamation that God did not remain where he was, high above the misery of his creation, but came down, incognito, into the midst of it. Nor did he come down merely to sympathize. Even incognito, Jesus of Nazareth had power to heal every disease and drive out every demon... To each and all we bring this announcement: God will come and his justice will prevail and he will destroy evil and pain and all of its forms once and forever. To be a Christian is to live in expectation of that fulfillment."

So friends, we wait and we are bold to say: Come Lord Jesus, come! Ω



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**ADVENT CALENDAR 2022**

now until December 25

NEW READINGS EVERY DAY

<https://staugadvent2022.blogspot.com/>



# Financial Update

BY CATHY GILLESPIE,  
TREASURER

## STEWARDSHIP 2023

With the end of our fiscal year approaching, Finance Committee is focused on reviewing this year's financial outcomes, conducting the Stewardship 2023 campaign and drafting an operating fund budget for 2023. We are grateful for all who prayerfully consider how much they will be giving to the church next year in support of operating expenses, including clergy and staff salaries, building costs, church and administrative supplies and services. Please respond to the Stewardship 2023 campaign by returning your response card at your earliest convenience if you have not already done so. If you prefer, instead of returning the actual card, feel free to email your response information to [givings@staug.org](mailto:givings@staug.org). The response information, used collectively, provides a key indication of what total church givings will be in 2023, assisting with development of next year's operating budget and future planning.

## PRE-AUTHORIZED DEBITS

If you are not one of the eighty or so parishioners who participate in the church's monthly pre-authorized debit program, please consider if it might be right for you. This program provides a convenient, consistent way of giving and is helpful from the church's perspective in streamlining monthly givings and reducing administra-

tion. After the parishioner completes the initial agreement form, a bank transfer is automatically processed every month from the parishioner's bank account to the church bank account. The transfer occurs on either the 1<sup>st</sup> or 15<sup>th</sup> of every month

(whichever is preferred) for the amount specified in the agreement. The pre-authorized monthly transfer agreement can easily be changed or cancelled by contacting the church office. Please contact the church office if you would like further information about this program and to request the pre-authorized debit form.



|                                | Year to-date<br>(October 31 2022) | Last year to-date<br>(October 31 2021) | 2022 Budget |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|-------------|
| Parishioner givings            | \$ 329,710                        | \$ 324,049                             | \$ 465,500  |
| Other income                   | 8,784                             | 6,804                                  | 43,700      |
| Federal wage subsidy           | 4,906                             | 18,481                                 | 0           |
| Total income                   | 343,400                           | 349,334                                | 509,200     |
| Staffing expenses              | \$ 266,070                        | \$ 239,721                             | \$ 325,500  |
| Administration & apportionment | 92,066                            | 87,756                                 | 118,000     |
| Facility expenses              | 60,295                            | 44,171                                 | 71,600      |
| Christian education & outreach | 10,681                            | 10,458                                 | 19,100      |
| Total expenses                 | 429,112                           | 382,106                                | 534,200     |
| Net deficit                    | \$ (85,712)                       | \$ (32,772)                            | \$ (25,000) |

## OPERATING FUND UPDATE

As of the end of October, parishioner givings are slightly (1.7%) higher than they were at this time last year, but unfortunately lagging behind the budget target because the 2022 givings budget is approximately 5% higher than 2021 givings. A small amount of federal subsidy was received earlier this year which narrowed the gap slightly, however we estimate that we are about \$15,000 behind the budget target for revenue at this time. It is anticipated that expenses will end up being slightly under budget for the year, but not nearly to the degree that they were in the years 2020 and 2021. Unless revenue in November and December is higher than anticipated, it is doubtful that the surplus in expenses will be enough to offset the deficit in revenue this year. [Ω](#)



# Wisdom in Christmas pudding

BY MICHAEL LARSEN,  
VERGER

*The following was read by Michael during the 10 a.m. service on November 20, the Sunday before the beginning of Advent.*



*Stir up, we beseech thee, O Lord, the wills of thy faithful people; that they plentifully bringing forth the fruit of good works, may of thee be plentifully rewarded; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

For many of you, you might not recognize this as being the Collect of the Day for the “Twenty-fifth Sunday after Trinity” or the “Sunday Next Before Advent”. However, some of you, particularly the 8:00 a.m. regulars and the Thursday faithful may recognize it as the Collect for the Sunday before Advent from the Book of Common Prayer (page 259) and said every year on Stir-up Sunday. You should know that the Collect as printed above was actually copied by me from a copy of a book “Common Prayer” belonging to F.W. Fleming, Oak Dene, Bromley St. Derby, England. While no date of publication exists, it was the book of common prayer used by my Great-

Grandfather in his home during the late 1870’s and likely into the 1930’s well after the family’s move to Canada in 1913.

Today we know “Stir-Up Sunday” as The Reign of Christ Sunday, and occasionally Stewardship Sunday. Both of these events are certainly something to be stirred

up about. Recognizing our Lord Jesus as a King who has dominion over us all, is a great achievement. As for Stewardship, we are all faithful and so we all should give plentifully to our church with our resources and talents so that we might be plentifully rewarded. This is indeed the message we need for a true and painless Stewardship.

“No way,” would say my grandmother with her firm but kind manner. Stir-up Sunday was the day we stirred the ingredients of this year’s Christmas pudding or fruit cake. It would allow the flavours and alcohol of rum or brandy to fully permeate through the mixture of fruit, flour, suet and the like for a full dessert to eat and share. She insisted that the ministers and priests received divine guidance that would mandate the rules for cooking and baking as well various other rituals and rules associated with Christmas. For me this was as perfect as I truly believe Christmas must be prepared for and traditions observed including eating Christmas Pudding. [Ω](#)

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## *Sunday Nights @ St. Augustine's*

# Adventures in alternative worship

BY THE REV. DR. GILLIAN BRECKENRIDGE

Earlier this year, a group of twelve people – both clergy and interested parishioners – met in the crypt to pray together, and to seek God's guidance on whether we should begin a new service at St. Augustine's. We met over several months and were encouraged by the sense of God's Spirit with us as we discussed possible "alternative" services



that could offer a fresh expression of Anglican worship in our community. Some in the group were regulars at the Saturday evening services that ran for many years and some members of the group were relatively new to our congregation. There was a strong sense of the need for a place where people could come to worship in a setting that was less formal and structured; in a group that was smaller and more intimate; and for a community-within-the-community that could offer connection and care about one another's lives in a way that can be difficult in a larger worship context.

After much discussion and prayer, the group decided that the best next step in our discernment process was to try out some services in a way that was open to the whole community. In October, November, and December of this year, that is what we are doing, with three very distinct services offered, largely planned and put together by lay people in the parish, with support from clergy.

In October, we gathered together for a Table Eucharist. This service was held in the crypt and we gathered for a potluck together, with the Eucharist as part of the meal itself. Volunteers laid the tables with fall-coloured cloths and decorations, and the (homemade) bread and wine were placed at the centre. In the spirit of a potluck where everyone contributes something to the meal, we also had many people contributing to our worship together; writing and leading us in our collect, leading us in prayer, reading the scripture, serving the



that could offer a fresh expression of Anglican worship in our community. Some in the group were regulars at the Saturday evening services that ran for many years and some members of the



*Table Eucharist in the Crypt, October 30*



Eucharist and offering the dismissal. We had some musicians who led us in a few songs throughout the meal, and in place of the sermon, we were led in a form of lectio divina.

In November, we had a contemporary Eucharist service. This service was perhaps most like the Sunday/Saturday evening services that ran for many years at St. Augustine's. We had a worship band lead us in several songs, the Eucharist was celebrated at a table on the floor in front of the chancel steps, and we had a faith talk with clergy response in place of a sermon.

This service was informal and intimate. And despite the lack of running water in the building that day (!) we still managed to gather for coffee and Timbits in the narthex following the service.

Our final of these three services will be held on the fourth Sunday in Advent – December 18. This will be a service of Taize music and prayer. Taize music is named after the ecumenical Christian monastic community in Burgundy, France where people from across the world gather to pray. This music is beauti-

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ful, often comprised of short musical phrases that repeat over and over, with rich harmonies that are easy to pick up. This forms a kind of communal musical base over which instruments and choral cantors can soar. This service will be held by candlelight in the chancel: the choir and musical area directly in front of the high altar. Please do join us for this final service on Sunday, December 18 at 6 p.m.

We are keen to hear your feedback on which services you attended and whether you would be interested in any of them being offered on a more regular basis. The group will meet again once all three services have been offered and a decision will be made at

that point about whether, when, and how often to continue with any or all of these services.

It has been a true joy this year working with this group and sensing God's voice and call together. I am immensely encouraged by – and grateful to – all those in our parish who have been a part of this discernment group and who have put in a lot of work planning and leading these services. I am excited to see what the next step in this journey together will be and what God has for us in the New Year! [Ω](#)

## CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PROGRAM

Sunday, December 11, 10:00 AM

## CHRISTMAS EVE

Saturday, December 24

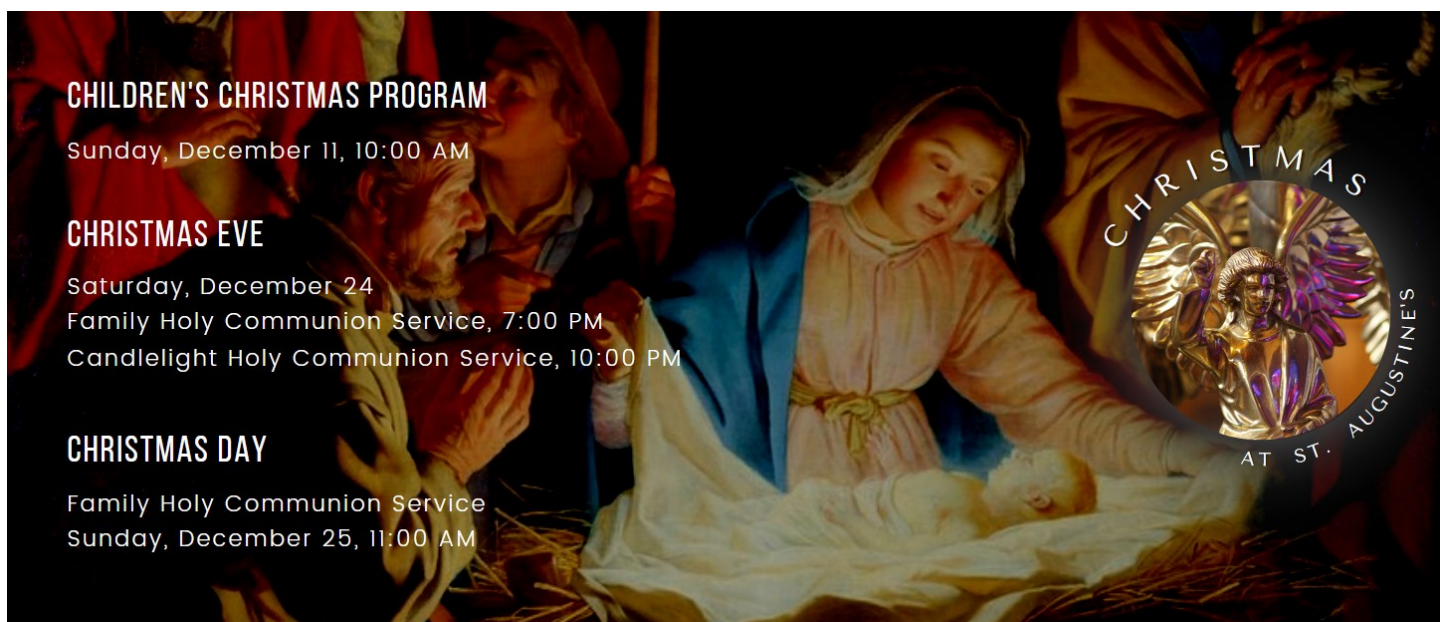
Family Holy Communion Service, 7:00 PM

Candlelight Holy Communion Service, 10:00 PM

## CHRISTMAS DAY

Family Holy Communion Service

Sunday, December 25, 11:00 AM





# Advent Stories

BY WENDY DOHERTY,  
CHILDREN & FAMILY MINISTRIES

Our Sunday School is doing a Book Drive throughout Advent. If your family has a treasured children's book you enjoy reading during the Advent season, please consider donating a copy to our Sunday School. All throughout Advent we will be reading these stories together to help us prepare our hearts for Christmas. (Side note: We would love to have a few special guest storytellers to come read with us during this time as well. Please let us know if you are interested in that.) Our wish list is shown here as well as on the Children's Ministry bulletin board in the church Narthex. Please add your book title to the list if it is not already listed (or email Miss Wendy at [wendy@staug.org](mailto:wendy@staug.org) to add it for you).




## HEARD IN SUNDAY SCHOOL

Little Boy: Teacher! Teacher! Have you had some birthdays since I last saw you?

Miss Wendy: Yes! I did! My birthday was just a couple of weeks ago.

Little Boy: Thought so. I sure can tell.

This will prevent us from getting multiple copies of the same book. If you would rather make a financial donation and have us purchase a book in your name, you can e-transfer the church at [givings@staug.org](mailto:givings@staug.org) noting the funds are for the book drive or you can drop off monies at the church office. Thank you and have a blessed Advent! 

## SUNDAY SCHOOL ADVENT BOOK WISH LIST

- ♦ ***The Promise and the Light*** by Katy Morgan
- ♦ ***Silver Packages: An Appalachian Christmas Story*** by Cynthia Rylant
- ♦ ***The Carpenter's Gift*** by David Rubel
- ♦ ***Christmas Tapestry*** by Patricia Polacco
- ♦ ***The Little Shepherd*** by Elizabeth Jaeger
- ♦ ***A Cold Night: A Christmas Fable*** by Emanuele Bertossi
- ♦ ***The Worst Christmas Ever*** by Kathleen Long Bostrom
- ♦ ***Mary's Song*** by Lee Bennett Hopkins
- ♦ ***Home by Another Way: A Christmas Story*** by Barbara Brown Taylor
- ♦ ***Song of the Stars: A Christmas Story*** by Sally Lloyd Jones
- ♦ ***This is the Stable*** by Cynthia Cotton
- ♦ ***Room for a Little One: A Christmas Tale*** by Martin Waddell
- ♦ ***The Jolly Christmas Postman*** by Alan Ahlberg
- ♦ ***Who Built the Stable?: A Nativity Poem*** by Ashley Bryan
- ♦ ***I Got the Christmas Spirit*** by Connie Schofield-Morrison
- ♦ ***The Last Straw*** by Fredrick H. Thury
- ♦ ***Humphrey's First Christmas*** by Carol Heyer
- ♦ ***S is for Snowman: God's Wintertime Alphabet*** by Kathy-Jo Wargin



# God is in the Church Nursery

BY TONY KUMMER

*Tony Kummer is an author focused on ministry to children. This excerpt is shared with the permission of the author as stated on his website: <https://ministry-to-children.com/god-is-in-the-church-nursery/>*

Where is God on Sunday morning? Of course, God is everywhere. We know that God is enthroned in the praises of his people. (Psalm 22:3) When we gather to worship – God is with us.

We know that God is there when we pray. Jesus said, “For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them.” (Matthew 18:20) When we pray – God is with us.

We know that God is there when his Word is read, preached, loved and obeyed. The Lord says, “I am watching over my word to perform it.” (Jeremiah 1:12) When the Bible speaks – God is with us.

We know that God is everywhere. “Can a man hide himself in secret places so that I cannot see him? declares the Lord. Do I not fill heaven and earth? declares the Lord.” (Jeremiah 23:24) “The eyes of the Lord are in every place, keeping watch on the evil and the good.” (Proverbs 15:3) No matter where we go – God is with us.

But did you know that God is back in the church nursery? “And Jesus took a child and put him in the midst of them, and taking him in his arms, he said to them, “Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me, and whoever receives me, receives not me but him who sent me.” (Mark 9:36-37) When you welcome a child in the name of Jesus you welcome Jesus himself. When we minister to children – God is with us.

If you wonder why so many people are blessed by serving in the church nursery. Now you know – God is there.



*The youngest of all ...*

St. Augustine's is looking for a few more volunteers to fill in our nursery schedule. This ministry entails the following:

- Providing the office with a copy of your criminal record check (forms available from Miss Wendy or the office).
- Heading down to the nursery with the children following the Children's Focus and remaining there to supervise until Holy Communion (approx. 45 minutes). We do have a speaker system in the nursery to allow volunteers to listen in on the service upstairs.
- Leading the children in play (reading stories, puzzles and colouring are few favourites) and sometimes this is simply standing back and watching as they do their own thing!
- Using our pager system to notify parents if a child needs diapering, toileting or are inconsolable.
- Enjoying getting to know our youngest parishioners and their families.

Note: Currently, three toddlers utilize the nursery most Sundays – so two volunteers are able to manage quite nicely.



## Robinsons, continued ...

that first year. Judith related that they had assumed that Rachel, being four, would not be impacted as much. "But she was impacted! That was a difficult year."

It was the people at St. Augustine's, though, who helped Judith find her footing – a kind word or an empathetic question from "the saints" of the parish. The family also received support from another source: after having been away for two years, the McCuaigs approached Judith and



*James enjoys a glass of wine at the Harvest Dinner on Oct. 22 – a celebration of his ministry and career achievements.*

*At the Dinner, Mary Lee Voort won a spectacular fall flower arrangement donated by Flowers on 9th.*

James about returning to St. Augustine's.

"To have someone who was a previous rector

there to guide us was wonderful," says James.

Becoming a minister had not been an obvious path for James. For several years he had worked as a professional actor in Vancouver and England. James was involved in a few different parishes while in the UK, a time he describes as a faith-building period. Both in England and when he



returned to Vancouver, however, James says he was frustrated that he couldn't be as involved in his parish as he would like to, due to touring in various plays. Growing up in a family of committed Christians, James always felt he'd had an identity in the church, though he hadn't thought about entering the ministry. Meanwhile, in James' home library, he says, "amid the scripts and books about actors, books about theology began to predominate."

"I realized the only way to find out whether this would be a path for me was to go to a theological college." He came back from England, then, and applied to Wycliffe College at the University of Toronto. At the end of the program, three years later, James received an answer. Yes, *this is my calling*. "I love being a parish priest."

The many areas of overlap in Judith and James' lives became evident after they met. They had both pursued acting and



had spent time in Calgary and Vancouver. Both had felt the strain of pursuing a vocation in which they, as Christians, were a minority. When they did meet, it was through a mutual acquaintance, Ron Reed. Judith was in Vancouver working for Reed's Pacific Theatre Company, whose mandate was to tell stories informed by people's faith. James attended a play and was intrigued by Judith's bio in the program. Reed introduced them and, Judith notes, accompanied them on their first date.

Judith had also been raised in a Christian family. The church she grew up in, however, did not encourage acting or the theatre. Eventually, as her gifts in these areas became evident, Judith found she felt more at home in the Anglican Church, which embraced this large part of who she is.



"I began attending the Anglican Church while I was dating James, and I came to every service during Holy Week with my mother," Judith shared. "It felt good."

From the beginning James appre-

*James responds during the presentation that followed the Dinner.*

ciated Judith's fresh perspective: "Judith would see something that a 'cradle Anglican' might take for granted. There were times she would ask why we would do certain things and I would think, 'yeah, that's a good question.'"

James recounted a time when Judith glanced at St. Augustine's budget before the AGM: "Having come from a church with a strong missionary background,

Judith looked at the spreadsheet and asked, 'Where is the mission stuff?' It invited the question 'What are we doing outside of our walls?' And 'How is that commitment reflected in our spending?' I became sensitive to that issue. This kind of cross-pollination has had an impact over the years."

Their partnership is evident even when they speak. Where some couples complete each other's sentences, though, James and Judith often complete and complement each other's paragraphs.

"A big part of Judith's ministry at St. Augustine's has been the plays: writing and producing plays for 23 years," starts James. "It was a great way to get to know all the kids," continues Judith. "It was important to me that all the church would see the children's names in the leaflet."

Reflecting on major events at the church, James and Judith discuss the amalgamation of St. Mary's and St. Augustine's as a challenging period, but one marked by grace. Other milestones include the addition to the building and celebrations honouring the parish's 120th and 125th anniversaries.

In the 2000s James was on the executive committee of Synod, the governing body of the Anglican Church of Canada, for two consecutive three-year terms. For one term, Judith had also been elected as a diocesan representative to General Synod. It was a particularly

CONTINUED PAGE 12 >

*Parishioners and friends from near and far join in expressing their appreciation to James, Judith and Rachel.*





# Robinsons, continued...



contentious period for the Anglican Church and James felt gratitude that Judith was also attending.

“Going together was a gift.”

During his Synod tenure, James was asked to serve on the committee that considered nominations for the Anglican Award of Merit. It was at this point that he advocated for St. Augustine’s parishioner Eddy Nishida to receive the honour.

“Eddy is the only Albertan to have received that award,” which is granted once every three years at General Synod. “He used to share his experience of coming to the Christian faith when he was interned as a prisoner of war in the Kootenays. Eddy had contracted tuberculosis and while speaking of the time he spent in the TB ward said, ‘I heard a lot of people die. I noticed the Christians died differently.’”

As the interview draws to a close, Judith says she will be heading back up to Calgary the next day. James will remain in Lethbridge to preside over a funeral. Rachel plans to bring work along and keep her mother company in Calgary.

When asked if there was anything further they would like to share, James responds: “I’d just repeat that our partnership in the Gospel was essential to anything that was done. I’m so grateful to God for Judith, and that we could share in ministry the way we have.” [Ω](#)

*Editor’s note: Subsequent to the completion of this story, Judith’s mother, Anne Buchan, passed away on November 18 at the age of 88.*

## St. Augustine’s Church

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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 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.

