

ST. AUGUSTINE'S  
ANGLICAN CHURCH



# The Hippo Herald

SPRING 2023

LETHBRIDGE, ALBERTA

*Moments from the McCuaigs' half century of service in Alberta*

## Jump in !

**Whatever you do, work at it with all  
your heart, as working for the Lord.**

COLOSSIANS 3:23

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

From the  
Rector's desk 3

Coldest Night  
fundraising  
results 4

Financial  
update 5

Bible study  
explores  
Epiphany 6

Focus on  
Missions 7

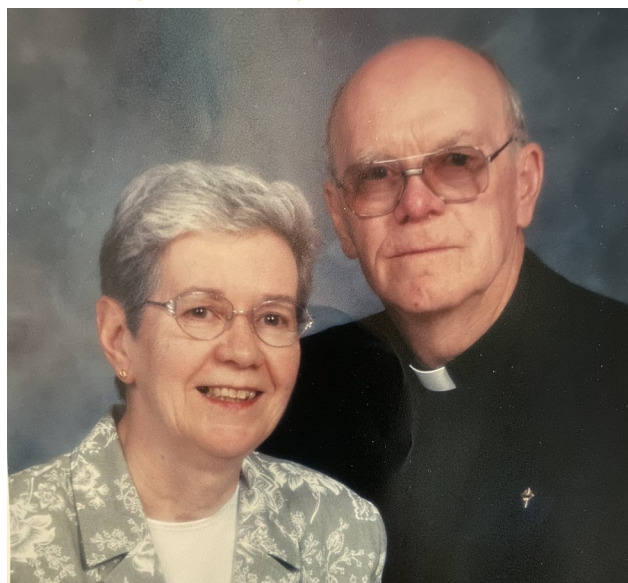
Goodbye  
Wendy 8

The ministry  
of house  
painting 9

**"T**here were six kids in Sunday school, three were mine. They were just roaring around the church hall and so I organized the Sunday school." It was 1976 and Allan and Muriel had recently moved to High River. This is emblematic of the McCuaigs' service throughout their ministry. Whether it was to help out with the local hockey team, practice as a mid-wife, serve as chaplain to the Legion or start up a vacation Bible school program.

"If you see something that needs to be done and no one is doing it, that's the Lord saying, 'Jump in!'"

Canon Allan McCuaig, ordained deacon in 1967 and



*Muriel and Allan McCuaig*

priest in 1968, has served parishes throughout Alberta for over half a century. The couple has made deep connections within every community they've served.

During their time in High River they served a three-point parish that included St. Benedict's, St. Aidan's in Pesisko, and St. Thomas in Dinton. During winter months, when driving conditions were dicey, services were held afternoons in the homes of parishioners.

Muriel marks this as the

time she began to develop an interest in Christian symbolism. Her interest flourished into a passion evident in the 200+ banners she has sewn for St. Augustine's.

"When I am working on one, it is a special time with the Lord," Muriel relates, describing banner-making as a part of her own spiritual journey. "I've learned so much through making them. It is a private, special journey with the Lord, a private part of a spiritual journey."

CONTINUED PAGE 2 >



## McCuaigs, continued...

Muriel also led the Sunday school, travelling Sundays with Allan among the three parishes, all as the wife of a rector, and mother of three young children. She also ran an after-school program centred on teaching children about all aspects of belonging to a liturgically-based church. In addition to conducting services and providing pastoral care to the three parishes, Allan was a board member for the local hospital.

Before this, Allan spent nearly a decade serving on the Blood Indian Reserve, while Muriel worked at the hospital. Allan arrived as a deacon in November 1967, just before Muriel.

Born and raised in London, Muriel had been a ward sister at the Central Middlesex hospital in the United Kingdom.

"I knew I needed a change," she relates, "On the way home from shift one day I looked up at one of the buildings. It was Canada House. By the time I left the building, I had a job in Hamilton ON, a date to leave and tickets for my flight out," Muriel chuckles. "Then I had to go tell Mum."

"I decided I was going to work my way across Canada, the United States and then on to Australia."

After Hamilton, Muriel spent eight months with the Peguis Band in Manitoba, before moving to the Blood (*Kainai*) Indian Reserve (Blood 148) in 1967. "Midwifery was legal on reserves. I delivered a lot of babies on both reserves, more so than during my training. It was a wonderful experience – always such a joy."

Muriel recounts fondly the many people who have approached her saying, "Do you remember you delivered this baby?"

"St. Paul's Anglican Church, where Allan worked, was right beside the Indian hospital. It turned out this was the end of my world tour."

Allan recounts: "There was a whole bunch of nurses at the hospital. The local men – RCMP officers, ranchers and cowboys – were looking for wives among them. As the minister I was a bit of an outcast." Soon though, Allan met Muriel.

"Allan was also involved in the hockey team. Our first date was at a game of the Kainai Chiefs," Muriel recalls: "it was a very frigid experience – no heating!"



Allan describes himself as a "cradle Anglican," born the sixth child in his family of seven boys and five girls.

"My mother was a strong Anglican, my father Presbyterian." Allan was baptised and confirmed at St. Laurence Church in Monitor. Before his theological studies, he had worked with the Royal Bank and then Gulf Canada Resources out of Stettler, AB.

"I went to St. Luke's in Red Deer when I was working the Gilby gas field," Allan says, recounting times that he played golf with the Rector. He had always had an interest in the Church. The two developed a friendship and enjoyed long, wide-ranging conversations. One day the minister arranged for Allan to meet Bishop Calvert of Calgary.

"The bishop grilled me with questions, then said, 'OK boy, get down on your knees!' He

## *From the Rector's Desk* New friends among us

*Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?*

*No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

ROMANS 8:35; 37-39

For many, many months we have been praying for a very special family. This family were victims of religious persecution, which included the imminent threat of imprisonment, or worse. Things got bad enough that they were forced to flee from their home to another country. They lived in a sort of exile for seven long years, practicing their faith and seeking ministry wherever they could find it, and trying to get by. Even in that far-away place, the threats to their safety did not stop. Still, they sought to be faithful, and they searched for ways to change their situation for the better.

One of those ways involved the possibility of coming to Canada – enter St. Augustine's, Lethbridge. Through a series of events, a member of our St. Augustine's Refugee Task Force (START) committee was made aware of their situation. He brought their story to the attention of the Diocese of Calgary, then our Parish Corporation and Parish Council. After much prayer, research, and consideration, it was decided that we should seek to sponsor them to come to Canada.

Fundraising began, and over several months, with the help of the Parish of St. Leonard on the Hill in Red Deer, we were able to meet our initial goals. After many

additional months of waiting, we received news that their flights were finally booked. In early March 2023 they travelled to Toronto and then to Calgary by air and finally arrived in Lethbridge by car. After such a long wait, it was a deeply joyful experience to welcome Andy, Elizabeth, Joseph and Manizheh to our 10 a.m. Service of Holy Eucharist on Sunday, March 5.

Since then, we have been able to have a more formal welcome during our Sunday morning Coffee Hour. We are blessed and humbled to have them in our city and our parish.

Can I ask you to please pray for this family as they transition to life in Canada? Many challenges remain. Crossing cultures can be extraordinarily difficult. Can I also ask you also to extend both hands and hearts to these new friends as they learn to navigate their lives here?

We count ourselves blessed to be a part of their story and we are humbled to have them with us.

Thanks be to God!

Your Rector,  
**Steve**



AFTER SUCH A LONG  
WAIT, IT WAS A DEEPLY  
JOYFUL EXPERIENCE  
TO WELCOME ANDY,  
ELIZABETH, JOSEPH  
AND MANIZHEH TO  
OUR 10 A.M. SERVICE  
OF HOLY EUCHARIST  
ON SUNDAY, MARCH 5.





## Coldest Night of the Year 2023

# We walked, we talked, we won the buns

BY MARY LEE VOORT,  
ORGANIST

On February 25, 2023, eleven intrepid walkers from St. Augustine's took part in the Coldest Night of the Year, a Canada-wide event that raises money for charities in communities across the country to help the hungry, homeless, and hurting. In Lethbridge, Streets Alive and Woods' Homes are the two charities that participated in CNOY. This is the fifth year that St Augustine's has taken part, and I'm thrilled to say that our team took home the coveted "Frosted Buns" award as the top fund-raising team, collecting \$7,361! We could not have done it without your gracious, generous, and faithful support – thank you so very, very much.

A small but humorous disclaimer: Every year, Mark D. and his team from Evangelical Free Church have walloped the competition, collecting thousands and thousands of dollars. This year, Mark decided to take a year off, giving the other churches a chance. We were neck and neck with the Walkers 'n

Talkers from the Mennonite community, and surpassed them by a mere \$25 by the start of the walk, the cut-off time. They then passed us by \$30 an hour later! The Good Shepherd Lutherans had the largest team with 17 members, and St. Andrew's Presbyterian had a large and enthusiastic team as well, led by their new minister, Rev. Daniel Surya, and his wife and son.

I mention these little facts not to boast, but to share the camaraderie and spirit of the friendly ecumenical competition and fellowship we experienced together as 25 teams and 165 walkers joined together to support those who are helping people who are dealing with homelessness, addictions, and mental health issues. We received a sombre reminder of the desperation of those on the streets as we walked by the ice-festooned remains of the Lethbridge

Hotel, destroyed by a fire reportedly started by squatters trying to stay warm in -40 degree temperatures a few days before. There is no quick and easy fix to these problems, so I personally am thankful to have an opportunity to help in a small way through fund-raising.

This year's walk had a specially poignant and important meaning to me. This past year, I was asked (by his parents) to visit a former student in the hospital. Let's call him X. I hadn't seen X in more than 30 years, but knew he had been struggling with addictions and mental health issues for a long time, and he had been on the streets for some time as well. I admit,

I was nervous – would I even recognize him? All that fell away (as did the years) when I saw him, and I was able to visit and glimpse the young man I used to know. We discovered a love of similar books and authors, and were able to chat freely and share a few laughs about some of the books we had both read. He was optimistic about his chances of recovery,

looking forward to moving into a new place and starting afresh. Sadly, this was not to be, as a few short months later X lost his battle and passed away. X had been a frequent visitor to Streets Alive – they watched out for him, tried to keep him safe as much as he would allow, and provided support for him and for his parents. I have always thought that it is only by the grace of God that I have the luxuries of a warm house, warm clothes, plentiful food, and a loving family and community around me. I could easily be that person experiencing homelessness or addiction if not for that. I thank God for giving me the chance to reconnect with X and to see the real person – a son, brother, and friend – behind the label. I hope you can, too. That's why I walk for CNOY. Ω



# Financial Update

BY CATHY GILLESPIE,  
TREASURER

## 2022 FINANCIAL RESULTS

The 2022 Financial Statements were presented and accepted at the Annual Meeting of Parishioners on February 28. A brief summary of the Statement of Operating Revenue and Expenditures is provided in the first two columns of the chart. The year ended with a deficit of \$12,681 and, although a deficit is never ideal, it was a better result than was expected. The budget for 2022 anticipated a deficit of \$25,000 and, based on total income and expenses at the end of November, a deficit of at least that much was projected. Thankfully, parishioner givings were higher than anticipated in the month of December, which closed the gap somewhat between budget and actual. Total income (\$508,136) ended up being remarkably close to budget (\$509,200). Total expenses were under budget due to spending less than antici-



pated in a number of budget categories, some of which continued to be impacted by pandemic restrictions during the first part of the year. Further details on these Operating Fund results, as well as the Statement of Financial Position and Statement of Fund Activity, can be found in the Annual Report for 2022.

## 2023 BUDGET

The Operating Fund budget for 2023 was also presented and adopted at the Annual Meeting of Parishioners. The third column of the chart is a condensed version of it. The budget anticipates an increase in total parishioner givings of approximately 3%. The next largest income item is \$35,000 from the Endowment Fund (included in Other income), the same as in 2022. Expenses are budgeted at amounts intended to support the current level of staffing, programming, maintaining the Church buildings and administration. The budget 'bottom line' is a \$20,000 deficit, which would be funded from the accumulated Operating Fund Reserve. More detail on the 2023 Budget is also available in the Annual Report for 2022. [Ω](#)

*Thank you  
for your  
generosity  
in 2022.*

	<u>2022 Budget</u>	<u>2022 Actual</u>	<u>2023 Budget</u>
Parishioner givings	\$ 465,500	\$ 456,928	\$ 471,850
Other income	43,700	46,302	53,650
Federal wage subsidy	0	4,906	0
Total income	<u>509,200</u>	<u>508,136</u>	<u>525,500</u>
Staffing expenses	\$ 325,500	\$ 319,191	\$ 331,200
Administration & apportionment	118,000	112,941	118,100
Facility expenses	71,600	72,799	77,650
Christian education & outreach	19,100	15,886	18,550
Total expenses	<u>534,200</u>	<u>520,817</u>	<u>545,500</u>
Net deficit	\$ <u>(25,000)</u>	\$ <u>(12,681)</u>	\$ <u>(20,000)</u>



## Epiphany Bible Study Come and see !

BY THE REV. DR. GILLIAN BRECKENRIDGE

*Then Jesus turned, and seeing them following, said to them, "What do you seek?" They said to Him, "Rabbi, where are You staying?" He said to them, "Come and see."*

JOHN 1:38-39a

For five weeks in the season of Epiphany, around 15-20 parishioners and I met weekly for a lunchtime bible study down in the Crypt. Together, we studied the gospel texts assigned for the Sundays between Epiphany Sunday and the Transfiguration.

ALREADY, GOD IS TRESPASSING OUR  
HUMAN-MADE BOUNDARIES AND EX-  
PECTATIONS ABOUT HOW HE WILL  
COME TO US, AND ABOUT WHO HE  
WILL SHOW HIMSELF TO BE.

We typically think of Epiphany as the story of the Magi – the Wise Men – following a star to find the infant Jesus and worshipping at his feet (Matthew 2:1-12). This text is significant for us because in it we see the revealing (the epiphany, the manifestation) of Jesus as the Son of God not just to a certain people, in a certain time and place, from a certain religious background, but also to the whole world – represented to us in these travelers from far-away lands and foreign cultures. ‘Strangers’ – those who we do not expect to be at the centre of the story of this Jewish Messiah – enter the gospel of Matthew before we even have time to catch our breath: as the account of Jesus’ life is just getting started. Already,

God is trespassing our human-made boundaries and expectations about how he will come to us, and about who he will show himself to be.



In the early church, scholars think it is likely that the celebration of Epiphany, which is one of the oldest festivals in the church, included not just the story of the Magi, but also the account of Jesus’ birth, of his baptism by John, and the wedding at Cana, Jesus’ first miracle in the Gospel of John. All of these were significant moments in the life of Jesus in which his divinity was revealed. Once the Western church started celebrating the birth of Jesus on December 25, these different passages became associated with different days in the church calendar. The Eastern Orthodox church continues to celebrate the birth of Jesus on or near January 7; the Western church celebrates Epiphany, focusing on the story of the Magi, on January 6.

This history reminds us that the manifestation of Jesus as the Son of God – and Jesus’ manifestation to us of the nature of God – are complex mysteries that are presented to us not just through one story, but through multiple accounts from Jesus’ life. In our bible study over these five weeks, we considered what was being revealed to us about who Jesus was – and who God is – through the story of the journey of the Magi, and also through the account of Jesus’ baptism, the calling of Jesus’ first disciples (“Come and see!” - John 1:39a), through the proclamation of God’s kingdom in the Beatitudes, through the teachings of the Sermon on the Mount, and in the incredible and overwhelming glory seen in Jesus’ transfiguration on the mountain-top.

CONTINUED TOP NEXT PAGE >

It was a wonderful five weeks of prayer, fellowship, and discussion and I am grateful to each person who attended and who offered their thoughts and insights to the group. We decided that we would take a break during the busy season of Lent, and then begin again

with another five-week study in the weeks following Easter. Our next study will start on Wednesday, April 19, from noon to 1:00 p.m. in the Crypt with a new study theme. All are welcome. No background or preparation is required. [Ω](#)

## Small tastes of the Kingdom in our city

BY PAM UKRAINETZ

If you have gathered with us in person or online in recent months, you would have received the invitation to share your baked goods or to contribute new socks to an organization called Streets Alive. It speaks to a current of generosity and love of neighbour that runs through the life of our parish. An interview with Chris Burton, our Deputy Warden of Missional Outreach, revealed the stepping stones that created a path for the longing to express attention and care to those in the margins of our city.



Before Covid, an event called Lethbridge Connects solicited the skills of nurses, hairdressers, accountants and the like to assemble in one location for a day to offer supports to those who do not have the means or mobility to access these services regularly.

At this time, the donation of socks was chosen as an avenue of support we could offer because foot care for those on their feet in the streets all day is vital.

Covid ended gatherings of this sort and it was this development that turned Chris towards Streets Alive, an organization that has been serving and supporting our homeless neighbors since 1989. At Streets Alive, the socks would be used by the Foot Friday team to support the care clients receive during their foot

treatments. Chris set a target of 500 pairs of socks this winter season. St. Augustine's responded generously – she delivered 590 pairs of socks!

On the heels of the sock project was an invitation from the Diocese of Calgary to dream about a project that would serve our parish's immediate community, one we had not put our hands to previously. Again, Chris reached out to Streets Alive wondering if there was a new way that St. Augustine's and Street's Alive could partner. The reply was quick: snacks. The Lethbridge Soup Kitchen is able to provide food during mealtimes but what would be helpful is access to a cookie or a small baked good to fill the hunger gap during the day. So,

after Christmas, the call went out to the parish to donate your leftover Christmas baking to Streets Alive. In January of this year we started providing baked goods and a tub of coffee, enough for a whole week! February was the same. Along with the baked goods, a card with a recipient is included. The team

prayer for the at Streets Alive shared that this is a small but deeply meaningful gesture for their clients. Someone, somewhere is praying, remembering that they exist.

I love food, but I love it even more when it's shared around a table. Elbows bumping, silverware clattering, laughter over spills and stories. In a recent sermon, American author and pastor John Mark Comer said he felt the church was birthed around a table. It makes me think of Jesus gathered with his

THE EXTENSION OF FELLOWSHIP TO ONE WHO OFTEN GOES UNSEEN, OR IF SEEN, AVOIDED – THESE ACTS JESUS RECEIVES AS HIS OWN, AS IF A COOKIE OR A COFFEE WERE PASSED INTO HIS VERY OWN HANDS.





# Miss Wendy's top five lessons learned as a children's minister

BY WENDY DOHERTY  
CHILDREN & FAMILY MINISTRIES

I was visiting my brother's lake cabin in Saskatchewan that August weekend in 2012, anxiously waiting to hear if I had gotten the position of "Coordinator of Children and Family Ministries," at Saint Augustine's. I felt that my interview had gone really well but didn't want to "count my chickens," as they say. I



I THANK GOD FOR PROVIDING OUR CHURCH WITH SUCH VASTLY GIFTED SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHERS, WITH WILLING HEARTS, WHO SERVE THE CHILDREN OF OUR PARISH BY SHOWING GOD'S LOVE IN THEIR OWN WAY EACH WEEK.

remember I was examining by brother's collection of antique telephones, in his office, as I got the call and Vaughn Atkinson offered me the position. I quickly accepted and he began outlining the job description, hours and start date details... to be honest I wasn't really listening. My mind was running a mile a minute. I was just thrilled to be taking a position that involved serving God and the children at a church I loved so much. For the record, I still do! Now that I am nearing the end of my time in that role, I have been reflecting on all that I have learned – and the lessons are many. I have managed to compile a bit of a list and I would like to share it with you, my dear church family.

**1 Kids are honest. Really, really honest. Don't ask if you don't want an honest answer!** I can't count the number of times I have had one of our little parishioners let me know how they felt about my Sunday School lesson or snack served. Once I put my pride aside, I realized what a wonderful blessing it is to have unfiltered feedback each week (and what hairstyles to steer clear of in the future).

**2 Eloquent, elaborate prayers aren't necessary.** Simple words often cut right to the heart of the matter, allowing us to clearly express how we are feeling with the One who knows every crevice of our heart and mind. It has been an honour to pray with little ones and to experience God's love and mercy as they talk with Him simply – no fuss or formality needed.

**3 Having a tough time connecting with a teen? They don't seem to want to open up? Food is the answer – make it, talk about it, eat it together.** One of my favourite memories is co-teaching Confirmation Class with Rev. Andrew Horne. Every week at the beginning of class, the kids would share the high and low points of their week. One young man's highlight, every single week, was a meal his mom cooked for him since we last met. It became a class joke, but I thought it was beautiful in so many ways. Our curriculum was great, but relationships were built and God's love was palpable in the kitchen, at snack time.



**4 We were made to need one another.** I found out very early on that I was going to need plenty of help in this ministry. The children in this church family are wonderfully unique and, bottom line, many times needed something I didn't have to offer. I thank God for providing our church with such vastly gifted Sunday School teachers, with willing hearts, who serve the children of our parish by showing God's love in their own way each week. Your ministry is such a gift and I could not have done my job without you!

**5 God equipped ME for this.** My predecessor, Cathy Moore, was a phenomenal Children and Family Minister. She was creative, musical, seemed so comfortable and always knew the exact right thing to say. Early on in my ministry, I tried so hard to mimic her in this role, but no matter how hard I tried, I just couldn't quite cap-

ture what she had going on. It wasn't until I realized God gave me my own gifts, which differed greatly from Cathy's, to share with our church family. Once I tapped into that, I felt like I had hit my stride and was much more able to fully express and share God's love that He so freely shares with me.

There are many more lessons learned but those are the biggies. Mostly, I just want to say "thank-you" for all the love, patience and help I have received as Children's Minister at St. Augustine's. I am so blessed to have such a loving church family! I look forward to the new chapter God has ahead for me – I know it will include growing in faith with you all. My cup runneth over.

Much love,  
**Miss Wendy**

### *Focus on Facilities*

## Painting problems and a surprising solution

BY RACHEL ROBINSON

Allan Besplug had a problem. He wanted to scrape and re-paint the exterior walls of the rental property owned by St. Augustine's (still fondly referred to as Eddy's house, in honour of beloved parishioner Eddy Nishida). The walls were peeling badly; this would be an enormous job for one person alone. But when he phoned his usual list of volunteers, only two men were available to help.

You see, it was summertime, and the Saturday Allan intended for the job was forecast to be perfect – windless, not too hot, with only a few fluffy clouds in the sky. Almost everyone was planning to be away somewhere outside.

Allan often encounters these kinds of situations, because he is St. Augustine's Deputy Warden of Facilities, the warden in charge of maintaining our church buildings and property. This can be a tricky job, as our church's buildings are relatively old. The rental house in question, for example, is over one hundred years



old. In addition, Allan has to balance this work with his day job at the University of Lethbridge. But he values his role. "It is my calling. We're each given our talents, as Jesus put it, and we are asked to use those talents that we've been given. And this is one of mine."

A few days later, Allan got a phone call. It was from the daughter of one of the men who had agreed to work on the house. She asked if she and her sister could come along to help. Allan agreed at once. "And," she went on, "would it be alright if some of our friends came too?"

Throughout the week, so many of these friends phoned Allan to sign up for house painting that Allan had to turn two of them down. Which is how, at eight in the morning on a beautiful summer Saturday, Allan found himself outside of Eddy's house with a few volunteers he had worked with before, and ten adolescent girls. "I didn't know a lot of these girls, because they were friends of the girls that went to our church that just said, 'Hey! We're painting a house!' And they got excited about it!"

CONTINUED PAGE 12 >



## McCuaigs, continued ...

put his heavy hands on my shoulders and said a prayer over me.”

Soon afterward, Allan enrolled in the two-year theological program at the Anglican College at the University of British Columbia. He then spent time in Foremost, Milk River, and at All Saints in Bow Island. In November 1967 he moved to St. Paul's on the Blood Reserve.



*Allan at his induction as honorary chief in 1995*

One of the first changes Allan recalls making was to turn the altar around so that he could conduct services facing the congregation. While parishioners were now “glad to see what was going on,” they felt they were not getting everything they needed from church. Allan could conduct services as a deacon, but he couldn't consecrate the gifts for mass. In a community that embraced tradition and ceremony, his parishioners valued sacrament.

“They felt they were not getting what they needed from this preacher who couldn't give them communion.” Allan

took this to the diocese, who then granted permission for him to conduct a weekly “Deacons Mass.” Every Thursday, then, Allan would drive to St. Mary's in Lethbridge to collect bread and wine consecrated by Canon Cowan for use at Sunday's services on the reserve.

It was at St. Paul's that Allan and Muriel were married in September, 1969. Muriel recalls “walking down the aisle and seeing a group of grey nuns from the community. They were friends who had come to see us being married. St. Paul's had a wonderful relationship with the Roman Catholic parish on the reserve.”

“We helped each other with funerals,” recalls Allan, “and would have communion with all their families. There were many inter-marriages between the parishes.”

They cooperated in many ways, including during one “Indian Days” festival, when the Roman Catholic and Anglican churches decided to join forces.

“Father Reignier and I got together one day and decided we would have a joint teepee and co-celebrate outdoors, based on an Australian rite. We had 300 people in the circle!” recalls Allan, while Muriel adds, “It was so healthy from a spiritual point of view.”

The McCuaigs describe having had a rich relationship with the community they served.

“Forty-five years after leaving, I still get calls from the reserve,” Allan recalls members of the Blood Tribe reaching out to him to conduct funerals for loved ones.

While there, Allan was inducted as an Honorary Chief of the Kainai Chieftdomship. During this time, they also enlarged their family by adopting their daughter and two sons. Each

child had a different background and came from different parts of the province.

From the Blood Reserve the McCuaigs moved to the three-point parish in High River, where they ministered for nearly a decade. In November 1985 the family moved to St. Augustine's in Lethbridge. They found an active parish in need of healing and pastoral care.

"Just go and love them at St. Augustine's," Allan recalls a mentor counselling him before he arrived. "You can weather the storm."

There was a lot of pastoral work that needed to be done: going to hospitals, visiting shut-ins, caring for people during the week. Sometimes a congregation can expect more than the priest is able to do. And, sometimes when someone is dying you have to drop whatever you're doing and go.

"As a priest you can do 34-40 funerals per year. You try to work around parishioners' schedules."

While rector of St. Augustine's, Allan introduced *The Book of Alternative Services* and the practice of celebrating Holy Communion every Sunday. During his tenure the church installed the pipe organ that is still in use today. The decision to buy the organ was made before the McCuaigs arrived but its purchase was still very much a live topic in the parish.

"Turns out, pipe organs last longer!" Allan references another church in the neighbourhood that opted for an electric organ that has since needed replacing.

Allan retired from St. Augustine's in 1997 and James Robinson was appointed rector. At the time, it was usual for former ministers to move to a different parish to allow the incoming rector to make a home within the parish. The McCuaigs moved to Vernon, BC., where they continued to serve parishes in the area. Three years later they approached the Robinsons about coming back to St. Augustine's.

"They welcomed us with open arms; we were so grateful."

Once again the McCuaigs served the community with Allan supporting James where he could and Muriel working with others to re-establish a VBS program and



*St. Augustine's has many beautiful banners, thanks to Muriel*

re-organize the Newcomers Ministry.

"James asked me to help with welcoming new people to the church. Although I tend to be introverted, over time I became more comfortable talking to people," Muriel reflects. "I learned by observing others. It became easier. Who knew that I would be able to do these things?"

Allan observes: "I am the oldest surviving priest in the Diocese of Calgary." Since last Fall he has taken a step back from ministry, although his pastoral presence continues to be felt, especially in conversations with friends and fellow parishioners at church and during the week.

"*God sets the solitary in families*," Muriel quotes from Psalm 68. "Throughout our time in different parishes I have felt this, but it has really been here that this has crystalized for me. I feel surrounded and supported by my family at St. Augustine's."

Muriel has also retired, but ideas for new banners continue to present themselves.

"I've been thinking about all the names of God; *I am, Ancient of days. El Shaddi*: 'The god who is more than enough.' Isn't that wonderful? It consumes you, makes you think how tiny we are. How amazing and awesome that He could love us." Ω



## Kingdom, continued ...

friends around food, saying some of the most important words they would ever hear, drawing them into a fellowship that was truly divine. We offer a simple cup of coffee or a mere Christmas cookie, but it feels divine. The extension of fellowship to one who often goes unseen, or if seen, avoided – these acts Jesus receives as his own, as if a

## Painting, continued ...

They spent the morning scraping off the old paint with steel brushes and painted for the afternoon, finishing the job in that one day. When I ask Allan what his clearest memory of that day is, he says: “Those girls, giggling and laughing.”

Allan has never before or since worked with a team so heavily comprised of that demographic. But in his decades of work on the facilities team as both a team member and a warden, he has developed many ways of using his position to create new relationships outside coffee-hour conversation. For example, if he meets someone at the church he'd like to know better, he might invite them to join him in a small task at the church – weeding the area around the wheelchair ramp, for example – thus working



*Allan with a few of his cheerful volunteers.*

cookie or a coffee were passed into his very own hands. Today these words come to mind: “We will become bread for a hungry world. We will become drink for those who thirst. And the blessed will become the blessing, and everywhere will be the feast.”

Be encouraged friends and bring your cookies. You are bread & drink for the bodies of our neighbors. You are small tastes of the Kingdom in our city. Ω

to maintain the church as a building and the church as a people at the same time. Allan's work, and work of his team, answers the church's call to tend the world around us with the gifts we are given. Their care for these old buildings battered by Southern Alberta weather mirrors the optimism of care we are all called to. And sometimes this wonderful team is granted a gift in return: an echo of the miracle of the loaves and fishes drifting through the smell of paint and giggles of a gaggle of girls under a perfect summer sky. Ω

### 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](mailto:office@staug.org)

Website: [www.staug.org](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.