

ST. AUGUSTINE'S  
ANGLICAN CHURCH



# The Hippo Herald

WINTER 2025

LETHBRIDGE, ALBERTA

*Rev. Steve reflects on his sabbatical experience*

## On being a pilgrim

BY THE REV. STEVE BATEMAN

On a warm Monday in mid-May I arrived at the Calgary airport along with two friends. We flew from Calgary to Montreal and, after a significant layover, continued to Lisbon, Portugal. We arrived the next morning, bleary eyed. There was still one obstacle

between us and sleep – a train ride from Lisbon to Porto. There, our Albergue (hostel) awaited along with the fourth member of our party, a (hopefully) soft mattress, and a good night's rest

before beginning our first twenty plus kilometer day walking on the Camino de Santiago. While waiting for our luggage, I initialized the e-sim on my phone. I now

had a French phone number and loads of cellular data. Everything was going according to plan. We exited the Lisbon airport, found a taxi stand and asked to be taken to the train station. Upon arrival,

we went to buy our tickets to Porto using the electronic kiosk. It was only then, after several unsuccessful attempts to buy a fare, that we learned that the railway workers were all on strike and none of the trains were running. Now

what? I really didn't know.

And so, it was at the Lisbon train station the day before I started walking that I was introduced to every pilgrim's constant companion –



*We walked the Atlantic Coast for most of the first 10 days.*

**flexibility.** Standing in that train station, as tired as I was, I wasn't sure we would get along very well, but before long we became good friends.

I am a person who likes to be in control. I like to research and plan carefully and thereby avoid frustrating surprises. But the pilgrim must both acknowledge and embrace their lack of control. This was going to be a challenge. Over the next 24 days in Portugal and Spain I would gradually learn to open myself to experiences and conversations which I did not plan and might never have had the good sense to choose. By the end of those 24 days, I would

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come to believe that the best parts of life are unscripted – strung together by a power greater than mine. My very best moments as a pilgrim were the ones I hadn't planned.

even in such a simple task! We couldn't use a self-checkout or even properly weigh and price our produce. Even using a laundromat brought challenges. We were constantly needing help. But there is something truly liberating about accepting help from a stranger because it delivers us from the illusion that we are enough in and of ourselves.

**Connection** - For the first 7-10 days, I spoke with as few people as possible. I like people, but my work is very people intensive. By the time I got to Porto, I was ready to get to know myself again. And so, I walked in quietness, taking things in – praying, sometimes with words and sometimes without. Around the end of the first week, I began to feel receptive to others. My interactions with my fellow pilgrims started to go beyond a simple “bom caminho” in Portugal or “buen camino” in Spain.

While I am grateful for a warm house and a reliable car, they frequently cut me off from what is real. It is only when outside that I am inspired by the majesty and the intricacy and the sheer power of God's creation. While in Portu-

A wooden signpost stands in a field of tall grass and green plants. The signpost is light-colored wood with a dark brown arrow pointing right at the top. Below the arrow, the words "VARIANTE ESPIRITUAL" are carved in a serif font. Underneath the text is a stylized sunburst or fan-like logo. A small, colorful, rectangular sticker is attached to the signpost. In the foreground, a white calla lily flower with a yellow center is in bloom, its long green stem reaching up towards the signpost.

*One of many Calla Lillies that kept us company.  
This one had been placed at a way-marker by a  
fellow pilgrim named Karin.*



the same path toward the same goal tended to lower barriers of status or background. Even language barriers were broken down. One evening, I had an hour-long conversation with a pilgrim couple staying in our Albergue. The entire discussion took place via Google Translate because we couldn't speak each other's language. We took turns talking into my phone and letting it translate our questions and responses into our own languages.

It is easy to think of pilgrimage as a solitary endeavor, but ultimately, we share the path with many others. It turns out we are more alike than we are different. We have much in common. For me, pilgrimage inspired receptivity. Still, after returning home, there is a new openness to others and a greater willingness to share the road in relationship.

**Perseverance** - In all I walked about 400 km over 18 days. After km 300 I took two rest days. Though things went very well physically, every day brought a certain amount of dis-

## Another Way

Feeling the call of pilgrimage, but not in a position to trek outside of southern Alberta? Committing to read the Daily Office has been described as a sort of Lectio Divina pilgrimage – an opportunity to engage more deeply with God's Word.

Beginning on Advent 1, November 30, all are invited to join a virtual journey through Advent following the St. Augustine's online reflections calendar. Every day features a new meditation, written by a fellow parishioner, accompanied by beautiful images and music:

<https://staugustinesadventcalendar2025.blogspot.com>

Perhaps you have been thinking of reading scripture more regularly – even following the Advent season. November 30 also marks the Church New Year and the beginning of Year A in the Daily Office three-year cycle. If you would like to connect virtually with others who are interested in reading the lectionary daily into 2026 and beyond, please leave a message with the Church Office and a fellow pilgrim will contact you. *Ultreia!*



*Arriving at the Cathedral with two of my fellow pilgrims, Ian and Ryan.*

comfort. Sore feet, aching muscles and blisters began to form on about day 12 (thankfully they never became serious). I struggled with a slight cold (caught in an Albergue sharing a room in which one of our bunk-mates was obviously quite sick). There were occasional lonely stretches where no bars, restaurants or cafés could be found, and a few occasions when I forgot to fill my water bottle and ran out. I learned that it is probably not possible to be a pilgrim without some discomfort. On the other hand, I found that I was more capable than I thought. I learned that temporary discomfort made me more appreciative of almost everything. It is only when one is hungry that a good cup of coffee and a fresh pastry can be fully appreciated.

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*This season's big question*

# Do Anglicans pray to the Saints?



presence among believers creates a true and real connection between them, a *fellowship* (*koinonia* is the Greek word) between all those who are now “in Christ” by faith, (1 Cor. 10:16, 2 Cor 13:13, Phil 1:5, 2:1, 3:10, 1 Jn 1). This includes those of us believers who are in time and upon the earth (the Church Militant) and those believers who have already come into God’s presence after completing their earthly pilgrimage (the Church Triumphant). In essence, the *communion of the saints* is the Body of Christ connected across time and eternity, both on earth and in heaven.

BY THE REV. BROTHER JASON CARROLL

One of the long-standing confusions about us Anglicans is that we pray to the saints. As “reformed catholics,” while embracing many elements of Reformation theology, we also remain catholic and retain that which was good and proper from the older traditions of the Church (i.e., liturgy and sacrament). This includes a continued appreciation for the saints.

The confusion, though, is understandable. Prior to the Reformation, the popular piety of the Church frequently crossed from proper veneration into misguided adulation, even worship, of the saints. During the Middle Ages, especially, the collection and veneration of relics, as well as the abuse of images of the saints had become common.

Christians would frequent holy sites or offer prayers to the saints to find healing or intervention in worldly affairs. Actually, the Church has always challenged and censured such activity, but it would take the Reformation to finally wrestle popular devotion back into proper bounds.

So why did Anglicans retain a deep appreciation for the saints? Because, while we could see how the veneration of the saints could descend into idolatry, we also recognized that there is something important and true in the practice – the idea of *the communion of the saints*. According to the New Testament, with the coming of the Holy Spirit, His

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As a real and living fellowship, then, Anglicans retain two important elements of the tradition regarding the saints. First, we continue to venerate (not worship) them as the heroes of the faith, the “great cloud of witnesses” of which Hebrews speaks (Heb. 12:1). As we worship Christ through the liturgical year, remembering all his saving works at Christmas, Good Friday, Easter and Pentecost, we *also* remember the saints who have fought the good fight, run the race and kept the faith on earth, and now have received their reward in heaven. Communion with them makes our pilgrimage easier as we follow their lead and sense their presence among us, cheering us on to join them in their reward.

And second, since we exist in a Spiritual fellowship with them across time and space, just as we might ask one another to pray for us on earth, we are free to ask the

saints to intercede for us in heaven. For the sake of unity between “high” and “low” church expressions within the Anglican communion, our public liturgies do not generally plead for the intercession of particular saints. But in our personal devotions, the Anglican tradition has left room for us to beg for their prayers in heaven, so long as our petitions do not cross into revering them as the Deity.

So, do Anglicans pray to the saints? No. It would be more proper to say that we Anglicans pray *with and for* the saints, and continue to look to them as examples to follow in our earthly pilgrimage. [Ω](#)



*What's happening this season?*

## Wonderful worship throughout December

BY THE REV. DR. GILLIAN BRECKENRIDGE

As we head into the Advent and Christmas seasons, I wanted to take a chance to let you know about some of our unique Advent and Christmas services that will be coming up this year.

Advent is the season which stretches over the four Sundays that precede Christmas each year. It is the start of the church year and it is a season of waiting, where we both acknowledge the darkness of the world and of our lives, and yet look ahead in

hopeful anticipation for the coming of the Son of God into creation. In Advent,

we look ahead both to the coming of the Son of God in Jesus at his birth (the incarnation), and also the

coming of the Son of God at the end of time –

you will hear both of these themes re-

flected in the lectionary

readings, hymns, and liturgy of Advent.

Did you know that for Anglicans (and for other liturgical denominations), Christmas is not just a day, but a season? Remember that song, the Twelve Days of Christmas? Christmas in the Anglican world is the 12 days between Christmas Eve and the Feast of the Epiphany on January 6. It is a time of celebration when we embrace the coming of God, the light of the world, into our hearts, our communities, and our world.

St. Augustine's holds some unique services in the Advent and Christmas seasons:

### COMPLINE WITH TAIZÉ

A contemplative service of Night Prayer is held in the chapel at 9 pm on the first three Sundays in Advent (November 30, December 7, and December 14). In the midst of our busy lives, this service invites us to be shaped by the hopeful anticipation of the start of our church year, as we wait for the coming of the light in the darkness. This is a service of prayer, by candlelight, supported by Taizé music.

### CHRISTMAS PLAY

The Christmas Play is a big deal at St. Augustine's. Join us at the 10 am service on December 14 to celebrate the Christmas story (with an Augustinian twist!). Under the expert direction of Judith and Rachel Robinson, many children, youth, and adults will be preparing for this production for weeks. It is always a great time and a great service to invite friends to.

### LESSONS AND CAROLS

Join us for a traditional service of Lessons and Carols on Sunday, December 21, at 3 pm. This service of scripture reading and music leads us from creation and the fall, through the promise of the coming messiah, to the birth of Jesus. This is one of the most well-loved services of the Anglican tradition.

### SERVICE OF THE LONGEST NIGHT

Sunday, December 21 is the longest night of the year. On this night, we hold a more contemplative Christmas service for anyone who needs to find some space for more challenging feelings in the Christmas season. Maybe you are on the journey of loss or grief, perhaps



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THE  
STUDENTS'  
JOURNEY  
DOESN'T  
STOP AT  
SCRIPTURE.

## *Focus on Youth Ministry*

# Faith & fellowship among the young

BY STEPH COLLINS,  
CHILDREN AND FAMILY MINISTRIES

Our Middle and High School kids have been hard at work on their lessons this fall. They have been working through [Sparkhouse's Connect](#) curriculum on Genesis, leading them through the foundational biblical narratives that shape our faith. They have spent time studying key stories like Creation, Adam & Eve, Noah and the Flood, and the Tower of Babel.

The teens have been able to dig deeper into stories they know very well. The students' journey doesn't stop at scripture. In a proud reflection of our parish's heritage, they have also been dedicating substantial time to learning about St. Augustine's writings on Genesis, exploring his profound theological insights into these very stories. Furthermore, their curiosity has extended to his interesting life story, drawing lessons from our great patron saint. This study connects their present faith with the historical foundations of the church.

Our older students have also stepped into roles of service. They have been helping out in

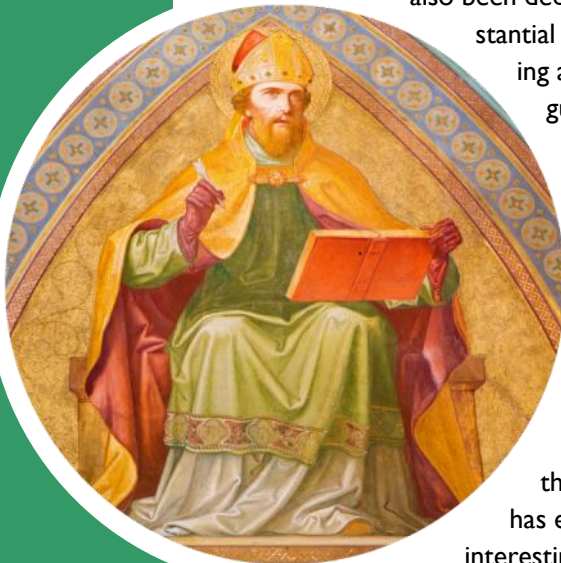


the elementary Sunday School classes, serving as mentors and role models for our younger children. Our Middle/High School youth group fostered community through various fun and engaging activities. Highlights include a dynamic tag night, a spirited Halloween Party & Murder Mystery, a fun-filled Video Game Night, and a Wii Sports Bowling Tournament.

This fall our elementary children have been following lectionary lessons, made available also through Sparkhouse, steadily building their knowledge of the Church year and scripture. This way the kids and adults are learning from the same readings every week.

Sunday School would not be possible without the generous hearts and hours given by our amazing volunteers. A huge THANK YOU to the folks who show up every week to teach, lead, and care for all the kids. They set up the classrooms, they read the Bible stories, they plan crafts, and lead the games.

We especially thank Judith and Rachel Robinson for writing and directing the fantastic Christmas play this year. This year's production is exciting as it is a one-of-a-kind play that revolves around our very own St. Augustine. Since November, the entire children's ministry has pivoted toward this singular, unified focus. This combined effort between the younger and older students, as well as our loving adult volunteers, will culminate in a wonderful performance on December 14. [Ω](#)



*Giving thanks and looking ahead*

# Financial Update

BY CATHY GILLESPIE,  
TREASURER

Preparation of the operating fund budget for 2026 is now well under way. Using the givings trends being experienced through 2025 as well as indications from the stewardship campaign, we attempt to predict the amount of total parishioner givings that can be expected in 2026.

**Please consider responding to the stewardship campaign.** Considered collectively, the resulting information provides key input into the development of next year’s budget as well as financial planning further into the future. Budget development also involves a thorough review of this year’s expenses to try to determine how much will be needed to continue funding our programs and ministries at their current level. We need to consider that many expense categories are subject to yearly inflation increases and, in some cases, additional increases due to growth. I look forward to presenting the resulting budget proposal at the Annual Meeting of Parishioners on February 9, 2026.



The chart below is a summary of the church operating fund financial report up to the end of October. It compares this year to last year at the same time, as well as to the budget for the full year.

Total parishioner givings are about \$3,000 higher than at this time last year, however as the budget anticipated an increase of 2.6%, the figure is less than the budget target for this period by about \$7,000. Thankfully, other income is higher than budget which serves to offset the shortfall in parishioner givings so far this year. On the expenses side, costs have increased in many areas as was anticipated when the budget was developed. However, for various reasons, cost savings are being experienced in some categories. The net result of this is that total expenses are virtually the same as last year at this time and less than the budget target.

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

	Year to-date (October 31 2025)	Year to-date (October 31 2024)	2025 Budget
Parishioner givings	\$ 398,108	\$ 395,033	\$ 531,800
Other income	<u>27,959</u>	<u>19,046</u>	<u>60,100</u>
Total income	<u>426,067</u>	<u>414,079</u>	<u>591,900</u>
Staffing expenses	\$ 286,278	\$ 287,984	\$ 353,400
Administration & apportionment	97,105	98,450	124,800
Facility expenses	66,991	66,000	94,600
Christian education & outreach	<u>11,706</u>	<u>9,630</u>	<u>19,100</u>
Total expenses	<u>462,080</u>	<u>462,064</u>	<u>591,900</u>
Net deficit	\$ <u>(36,013)</u>	\$ <u>(47,985)</u>	\$ <u>0</u>



Save this date > December 14

# The day of the Christmas play

BY RACHEL ROBINSON

As I write this it is the middle of November 2025. In approximately 24 hours from now, my mother Judith and I will meet for one last time before it occurs – the day we have spent a year planning for, writing emails for, and making Google Drives that may not be entirely necessary for. And then, in approximately 36 hours from now, it will happen. The moment will arrive. We will introduce this year's Christmas play to the entire Sunday school.



Longtime members of St. Augustine's may remember this play: Judith wrote it and directed it for the first time in 2005, making this its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary. This is the third time we will perform it. But every version has been different, because our church family always brings different gifts to the story.

Cases in point: this year we get to work with fabulous adult actors making their Christmas play debut, with young adult

volunteers who are pageant alumni, and with our first-ever stage manager. A talented musician from our parish is creating a beat for the rap. Listen to it closely and you may hear traces of choral music from elsewhere in the play. I will not name many names here for fear of leaving people out, so check your bulletin on December 14 for the names of these wonderful people and many others.

The exception is Stef Collins, our indefatigable guru of Children and Family Ministries. In addition to helping us with endless logistical tasks, Stef



CHRISTMAS PLAYS PAST: *Christmas with St. Augustine*, 2005 (L-R) Gayle Coward, costume designer, Rev. Andrew Horn as Ambrose, Rev. James Robinson as Augustine, and a multitude of monks

This occasion is only slightly less dramatic than I am making it sound. This year, we are putting on *Christmas with St. Augustine*, a play about our patron saint's life as well as the Christmas story. It includes rappers, opinionated innkeepers, pears, and the entire Sunday school dressed as Augustinian monks.

Oh, and we're performing it in five weeks.



CHRISTMAS PLAYS PAST: *Bethlehem Stories*, 2024 (L-R) Judith Robinson, director, and Charis Legg as Ruth





*CHRISTMAS PLAYS PAST: **Christmas in Coalbanks**, 2006  
(L-R) Rachel Robinson, Ethan Paddon, and Stef Collins*

keeps the Sunday school running during Sunday morning rehearsals, which can be unpredictable. Scenes and songs are nominally divided by grade, but the numbers of the Sunday school fluctuate. We may not have enough grade 4/5s to do the Nativity. We may have a gigantic grade 2/3 class who all want lines. We will not know until this Sunday. But even after we sort this out, attendance will be different the next Sunday. Rehearsals require, well, everything a life of faith does; flexibility, trust, a great sense of humour and constant prayer.

And at the centre of this whirlwind are the children and youth of our parish. Judith and I want to give them fun story to tell. We hope their imaginations might be caught by the story of one man, and how it was folded into God's bigger story. We hope to learn from their approaches to and insights about this play. And we hope to learn their names.

So introducing this play to the Sunday school isn't a big deal, in some ways. But in other ways, it's a doorway to celebrating the gifts of our church family, forging inter-generational friendships and telling a little story that is an echo of the great Story we are all part of. We are excited to share it with the Sunday school approximately 36 hours from now, as I write this. And we are excited to soon share it with you, too.

*Christmas with St. Augustine will be performed as part of the 10 am Sunday morning service on December 14. Thank you to EVERYONE involved in putting on this year's play. [Ω](#)*

## What's coming up?

In addition to our regular services, we invite you to attend the following special events during the Advent and Christmas seasons:

### Dates to Note

Advent I – November 30 – Taizé Compline, 9 pm

Advent II – December 7 – Taizé Compline, 9 pm

Advent III – December 14 – Christmas Play, 10 am; Taizé Compline, 9 pm

Wednesday, December 17 – Reception of Holy Orders, 7 pm

Advent IV – December 21 – Service of Lessons and Carols, 3 pm;  
Longest Night joint service, 7 pm at Southminster United Church

Christmas Eve – Wednesday, December 24 – Family Service with Communion, 7 pm; Candlelight Holy Communion, 10 pm

Christmas Day – Thursday, December 25 – Holy Communion, 11 am

New Year's Eve – Wednesday, December 31 – Holy Communion

### A Look Ahead into 2026

Epiphany – January 6

Camino Presentation by Rev. Steve – January 11

Candlemas – February 2

Annual Meeting of Parishioners – February 9

Shrove Tuesday – February 17

Ash Wednesday – February 18

Streets Alive: Coldest Night of the Year – February 28

Palm Sunday – March 29

Maundy Thursday – April 2

Good Friday – April 3

Easter Sunday – April 5



## Rev. Steve, continued from page 3

I gave myself four days on my own in Santiago after my three fellow pilgrims left to fly home. As the Rev. Andrew Horne wisely advised me – sometimes it takes a while to stop.

During that time I went to a lot of museums, attended a lot of Masses, and read the same small book several times over. It is called *Living the Camino Back Home* by Brendan McManus SJ and Katherine O'Flynn FCJ. They reminded



*The end of our second Camino. Finisterre.*

me that all of life is pilgrimage, and that returning home is not the end, but the beginning. They say:

*Inevitably, it is the essence of the spiritual life: radical simplicity, solidarity and deep humanity, which results in joy and a great sense of connection. This life is always available to us, not just in Spain, though it is more difficult in a secular, materialistic cultural context.*

I am working to stay close to these good companions; flexibility, wonder, humility, connection, and perseverance now that I am home. I highly recommend their friendship.

*Note: Rev. Steve will be hosting a presentation on his Sabbatical including a Q & A on a Sunday, January 11 at 12 pm. [Ω](#)*

## Rev. Gillian, continued from page 5

you are far from or estranged from those you love, perhaps you struggle with anxiety, depression, or loneliness, or perhaps it has been a particularly difficult year for you for other reasons. All are welcome at this service where we seek to create space in which hope can reside for all who gather together. The service is shared by the local Anglican, United, and Lutheran Churches. This year it will be held at Southminster United Church at 7 pm with the participation of clergy and volunteers from our parish.

### CHRISTMAS EVE

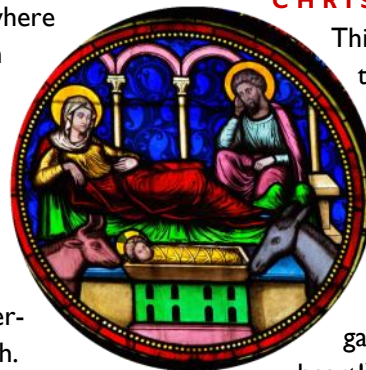
St. Augustine's offers two services on Christmas Eve, at 7 pm and 10 pm. Both are services of Holy Eucharist that include prayers, scripture readings, hymns, and the opportunity to receive the eucharist. The earlier service tends to draw more families; the later service has a more tradi-

tional feel. Both are beautiful ways to come together in worship as we celebrate the great hope and joy of the coming of Christ.

### CHRISTMAS DAY

This might be my favourite service of the season. At 11 am on Christmas Day, we come together for a simple service of Holy Eucharist. The altar is brought to the bottom of the chancel steps, and the readings, prayers and the homily are all offered on a level with the congregation. Children (and children-at-heart!) are encouraged to bring a present to show the congregation in this informal and joyful service.

You are warmly invited to join us for any or all of our services! We look forward to worshipping alongside you through these special seasons of our church year. [Ω](#)



## *A Church Family in the Heart of the City*

# The loving outreach of God to the world

BY SHEILA MATSON  
DEPUTY WARDEN FOR OUTREACH

Outreach is a ministry of sharing, through recognizing that in our world we are called to support the needs of others. St. Augustine's supports outreach initiatives on several levels – within the church, the local community, through supporting Streets Alive, for instance, and globally, especially through the initiatives of Alongside Hope (formerly called the Primates World Relief and Development Fund, or PWRDF).

The generosity of our church members is so gratefully received and passed on to those in need within and outside our parish. During this season, our Christmas Hamper cam-

paign connects people in a quiet way to resources that would otherwise be unavailable.

Delivering help, though, is only a part of the equation. Our parish becomes stronger through outreach when we make connections and strengthen relationships. As our parish grows and becomes more diverse, we ask for your continued support to nurture these relationships. On a local level, prayers are essential as we meet our promise to walk with the question of *What does it mean to be a church family in the heart of the city?*

We are hoping to grow our team. If you feel a call in this direction and would like to learn more please contact me through the church office. [Ω](#)



## *Around the church*

*Did you know we share our building with another congregation? Every Sunday afternoon Lethbridge's South Sudanese Anglicans and their pastor, The Rev. John Mac Ayuen, gather for worship. Members of St. Augustine's have a standing invitation to join them and experience the liturgy in the Dinka language with traditional East African music. Here the children and youth gather in preparation for Advent and Christmas as their teachers and elders look on proudly.*





# Bright smiles at the Seniors' Christmas Party



*It was a really cold day, but that didn't stop a large and merry crowd from descending upon the Crypt on November 29. Organizer Carol Young assembled an impressive group of volunteers who lavished St. Augustine's seniors with sandwiches, desserts and beverages. Entertainment was provided by event host Doug McLaughlin and*

*musicians Tim and Carolyn Scott. Generous door prizes rounded out the afternoon, leaving the impression that 65+ is definitely worth aspiring to at St. Augustine's. Big thanks go to all the young volunteers, and older ones too, who worked so hard to treat like gold those in their "golden 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](mailto:office@staug.org)

Website: [www.staug.org](http://www.staug.org)



*The Hippo Herald* is published triannually 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.