

ST. ANDREW'S-WESLEY UNITED CHURCH

Dec 1, 2025

"In his name the nations will put their hope." (Matthew 12:21)

Greetings,

As progressive Christians, we might sometimes shyly admit that our hope rests in Jesus. Yet in times such as these, it feels even more critical to deeply listen to God guiding us to loving action in a suffering world. As we prepare to celebrate the birth of Jesus with Christians around the world, we remember that Jesus came from a poor family living in a time of oppression, war and chaos. Starting with Mary's song for justice, he then became a force for good that captures our hearts these thousands of years later. Who would think a working-class peasant from a small religious community could have such a powerful effect on so many? Hope is often more surprising and unlikely than we could ever imagine.

As we live into times of uncertainty, climate crisis, political instability and frayed social connections, we are reminded that Jesus invites us to live into something different even now: love, tolerance, faith and hope. We are not powerless when we follow these teachings, and make God's presence felt in the world through our actions and our caring. This is hope in action, sustained by God and maintained by us.

We have seen signs of this hope in our congregation in 2025! We welcomed 13 people in baptism and 18 new members this year, created a welcoming community for children and caregivers at our weekly Parent and Tot program, grew our five choirs, started a community meal program, and over 150 people have supported the church with their time and talents in programs and services offered by St Andrew's Wesley. Other highlights include watching our jazz service grow and supporting up and coming jazz artists, a Queer prom that focused on accessibility, inclusion and joy, poetry workshops from Tim Scorer and Brandon Wint, and popular sermon series that made us think deeply with themes such as 7 ways to transform the world, the Oscar sermon series and meaningful guests such as Palestinian father and advocate Nasser Najjar, Sufi Camyar Chaichian, and writer and activist Rueben George of the Tsleil-Waututh nation.

As we prepare for Christmas, we hope you might consider a Christmas gift to support one of these three ministry areas of the church so we can continue to spread hope where it is most needed:

- 1) **The Benevolent Fund:** This year the need for groceries, cell phone plans, rental support, and counseling went up by 700%. Please consider donating to this fund so we can continue

to deal with emergencies and immediate needs from folks in the congregation and the community.

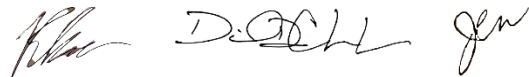
- 2) **The Music and Public Arts Program:** Help us grow our choirs and make them accessible to all, provide space for concerts, help young musicians get their start and provide accessible public art through installations, workshops and more.
- 3) **LGBTQ Ministries:** We start each service with the saying “No matter who you are, no matter who you love, all of you is welcome here.” Help us to support queer folks to attend an annual spiritual retreat, a queer families camp, and to provide speakers, supplies and economic support to queer folks in our community so they can thrive.
- 4) **First United:** Operating from a harm reduction perspective and serving the DTES for over 140 years, First United provides essential services such as food, shelter, clothing, and support to those in need, as well as saves lives by reversing overdoses and providing harm reduction supplies.

To support these priorities, you can donate online at <https://pushpay.com/g/standrewswesley> and in the memo line put “**Christmas donation**”. Help make a tangible difference in the life of your neighbour.

Thank you for being part of the St Andrew’s Wesley community this Christmas. May God bless us all and help us to bring healing to the suffering, near and far.

Merry Christmas,

Rev Rhian Walker, Rev Dan Chambers, Rev Jen Cunnings and the StAW team



St. Andrew's Wesley United Church

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