



St. Andrew's
G U E L P H

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March 15th, 2015

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ,

2015 has already begun with **exciting possibilities** for our congregation and its future story in the City of Guelph. It feels like the Easter message of **new life, new hope, and new opportunity** has already blossomed over the past two months. We have taken a bold step by deciding to support a potential affordable housing initiative in our backyard and we will wait with “Holy Week”-like anticipation to see if God will bring all things together to make that dream come to life.

As we continue our journey through the **Season of Lent**, we are mindful of the dark and uncertain times that we often find ourselves in. We don't always know which way to turn and we aren't sure if what we decide today is the best choice for our future. Throughout these days, we are comforted by **God's promises** that remind us that even in the darkest places – God is with us and God's light will guide our steps through the darkness. The rollercoaster ride from Palm Sunday to Easter is a helpful reminder that the human experience can take us to the highest of highs and lowest of lows in what seems like a heartbeat. But the hope of Easter's good news is that no matter what has happened before – God writes the final chapter! Suffering never has the last word. Death isn't the end. God in Christ is a God of life – abundant life! **And God's love always wins.**

I hope you will **consider joining us for worship** in the coming weeks. We have many special services planned to mark and celebrate Holy Week and Easter. You will find the list of special services attached to this letter. Consider passing this information along to your family and friends – in fact, why not **invite them** to worship so that they may personally experience this most meaningful season of the Church Year. I'm certain that they will find a welcome within our community and it will be a **joy to gather for worship together.**

Following Easter Sunday this year, our Presbytery has organized a **pulpit exchange** for Sunday April 12th. The Rev. Bill Bynum of Knox Presbyterian Church, Preston will be coming

to St. Andrew's Guelph and I will be travelling to Knox's Presbyterian Church, Galt. On the **evening of Sunday April 19th**, we have a very exciting event planned – **Canada's Singing Priest**, The Rev. Mark Curtis will be with us for an evening of Gospel song and word! We hope you will join us for this special evening – while there is no admission fee, there will be a free will offering as a part of the service. The idea to invite 'The Singing Priest' came through the late Sandra Wilkinson who had seen him several times over the years and was deeply moved by his presentation. I was glad to be able to share with Sandra last year that he had agreed to come to St. Andrew's. It should be a delightful way to **continue our Easter celebrations**.

We will be celebrating our **187th Anniversary** on Sunday April 26th and again this year, another of our former student ministers will be with us, The Rev. Jacqui Foxall from Knox, Oakville. The Women's Missionary Society and Mission and Outreach Coordinating Committee will be hosting our annual **Mission Awareness Sunday** on May 3rd. And finally, I've been commissioned to attend the General Assembly of The Presbyterian Church in Canada in early June this year. It is being held in Vancouver and should prove to be a very interesting gathering considering the agenda that will be much written about in the Presbyterian Record. Let us pray that our denomination will debate the issues well and **strive to maintain relationships** in spite of the different sides that people may find themselves standing on.

I'm excited to see where God will take us this year. We certainly look forward to the new things that may emerge as a result of our Action Group's report and recommendations for future sustainability and **FUN** – emphasising **FUN!** May you keep **a Holy Lent** and celebrate a **Happy Easter** with those you love and who love you.

Have fun,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'John Borthwick', with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

The Rev. John Borthwick