

**Mission Focus by Memorial Gifts Committee**  
**St. Andrew's United Church – April 30, 2017**

**A CELEBRATION OF GIFTS**

Good Morning.

I am speaking today on behalf of the Memorial Gifts Committee whose members were listed on our title slide – Susan Darling, Kathy Brankley, Alison Warner-Smith, and our coordinator, Ralph McIntosh.

Much of what our Committee would like the congregation to know is in the yellow bulletin insert. It outlines our role and describes the funds and scholarships or bursaries we manage.

As you know, when each of us attends a funeral or a memorial service, there is usually an opportunity to make a donation in memory of the person who has passed away. Sometimes the family will suggest where they would like donations directed, perhaps a preferred charity or memorial fund, they may mention their church and other times they leave the choice open to us. Donations to St. Andrew's Church can either be directed to the general Memorial Gift Fund or to the individual funds listed in our insert. Truthfully each of us can donate to these funds at any time, however, the most common occasion is at the time of a funeral. Some funerals of St. Andrew's members are held in our own sanctuary in which case our volunteers accept donations and issue receipts. Our committee wishes to express appreciation on behalf of the church to the various volunteers who fulfill this important role.

Another major way that donations come in to Memorial Gifts is through a person's will, in other words, through a bequest.

Under the Memorial Gifts umbrella, there are two categories of funds. A Restricted Fund targets a specific purpose and must be spent according to the agreement between the donor and the Church. You will see that our church has ten Restricted Funds. Unrestricted Funds are flexible and can be spent according to the needs of the Church. Each donation to a Memorial Gifts Fund is acknowledged with a receipt and card of appreciation from the church – and we have a volunteer who does this on our behalf.

In the United Church of Canada, the wishes of the donor are of prime importance and we have reflected that premise in our church's Planned Giving Policy. Last year the Memorial Gifts Committee developed this comprehensive document and our committee considers it a significant accomplishment. This policy ensures that legal and ethical regulations and guidelines are followed, that donations further the mission of St. Andrew's United Church, and importantly, that the interests of donors have received appropriate consideration. We are very pleased that the church has such a policy in place.

All types of gifts are welcomed here at St. Andrew's – large, small, those with a targeted purpose or those that have no restrictions. It's important, too, to say that giving is not strictly about funds, that gifts can be non-monetary, gifts of property. An example this year of tangible gifts would be two separate donations from previous members of lovely pieces of stained glass from the original St. Andrew's United Church. The old church had a sizeable number of stained glass windows, as some of us remember, many of which were sold to congregants when the church was taken down. Now several pieces once owned by previous members of St. Andrew's, have been offered back to us and these have been rather meaningful gifts to St. Andrew's.

Our slideshow preceding the service today represented some of the ways Memorial Gift Funds support the work of the church – our music program, pastoral care, activities of our youth; the Out of the Cold program; the care & maintenance of our tapestry and of our Peace chapel; the audio-visual needs of our worship space; we have been able to spruce up our welcoming area in the narthex by buying some items for our planter – the Wright fund targets that purpose; and as just mentioned, the gift of stained glass windows which have historical significance, and some now hang in the third floor office area.

Finally, I'd like to highlight the other purpose of our MG committee besides overseeing funds & gifts, and that is to manage our scholarships.

The **Rev. Earl & Elizabeth Lautenslager Memorial Scholarship** is awarded to a Huntington University student of high academic achievement; other factors such as volunteerism and financial need are considered.

The **Lola McNaughton Bursary** is intended for one or more members of our church who are in a post-secondary program, entering second year. This year we had no one qualified for this award.

The **Pat Aitken Memorial Bursary** differs from the two other awards mentioned, as our church does not manage it, however, it's an award we feel very connected to. Pat was particularly active in our Church and this congregation helped establish the bursary at Laurentian University; the choir, where Pat was a member, was particularly involved in that effort. This bursary of \$450 is given to a student in the music program.

Our committee is hoping we have presented a sampling of the important activities and programs are supported as a result of donations to Memorial Gifts. Our purpose today is to commemorate the lives of those members of our church family who have passed away, as well as to celebrate the gifts we received in their memory.

I will now invite Rev. Somerville to light two candles, one "To honour those in whose memory we have received these gifts" and one "to thank those who have given memorial gifts."

*Presented by Kathy Brankley, Memorial Gifts Committee*