

Hi St. Andrew's family!

Feeling like there was TOO MUCH information on Sunday? That's ok. Here is a Summary of "The Past and Present Presentation (parts 1 and 2) shared on Sunday, October 30th. We'll keep them here in the Loop for a few weeks. There will be copies posted around the church too

1) THE PAST

20 years ago, St. Andrew's United Church began a process of visioning. It focused on the building. St. Andrew's was asked "to develop a plan for possible renovation and expansion." (from the cover of "The St. Andrew's United Church Renovation Steering Committee Report, April 21, 2002).

On April 21, 2002 a congregational meeting took place to explain to the congregation what the steering committee/task group had accomplished in their discussions.

I highlighted six of the issues raised by the steering committee in 2002 during a game called "Then or Now". These were the issues with their answers. Congregants were invited to guess at whether the issues were raised "then" or "now."

- 1) "Reaching out, reaching in," as our mission statement. (THEN)
- 2) "Improved storage space for tables and chairs." (THEN but also now).
- 3) "Make all parts of the building accessible." (THEN but also now).
- 4) "Solar panels on the roof." (THEN)
- 5) "Help overcome the fear young people have of church." (THEN)
- 6) "Think flexibility: you can get more use if it is properly planned to be used by different groups at different times." (THEN, but also now.)

(If you'd like a copy of that 2002 report, please let me know.)

2) The Present (Part 1)

- a) In “Where are We Really” my goal was to show where St. Andrew’s United Church is contextually located. I thought was important for all of us to understand exactly where we are in any conversations we have about visioning (or anything else connected to our church). Using publicly available statistics from the United Church of Canada (The Yearbook, 2021 which has everything up to 2020’s figures), I took congregants through time. The following chart summarizes what I said.

<i>Comparable Information</i>	The United Church of Canada in 1955	The United Church of Canada in 2002	The United Church of Canada 2020	Horseshoe Falls Regional Council ONLY
<i>Number of Preaching Places</i>	6190	3640	2649	158 (6% of preaching places in our denomination are in our region)
<i>Number of Clergy</i>	3212	3874	1236	93
<i>Number of United Church Members</i>	912 939	625 096	365 838 (59.9% decline in 65 years) (42% decline in 18 yrs)	n/a
<i>Average Number of Members per congregation</i>	284	Not tracked this way	Not tracked this way	n/a
<i>Number of Non-members connected to the United Church of Canada</i>	91 673	Not tracked this way	Not tracked this way.	n/a
Average Sunday Attendance	Not tracked this way	70	39	n/a

I also shared excerpts from a letter penned by The Rev. Dr. Lillian Daniel. She is a minister in The United Church of Christ which means she is “in communion” with the United Church of Canada. *This means we can recognize each other’s credentials and congregational contexts.* What The Rev. Dr. explains in her context is the working assumption of United Church of Canada clergy in Hamilton. She is writing to encourage her readers and our churches. I am going to share a few more quotations than what I quoted on Sunday. Dr. Daniel writes:

“First, I don’t think there is anything weird or wrong with our churches. After preaching and worshiping over eleven Sundays at thirteen churches across the state, I am inspired by the creativity and courage I see. But the Church, like the rest of society, is still processing the trauma of the last two years of Covid and the growing realization that we cannot simply go back in time, institutionally. When we do come back to worship in person and see some empty seats, it’s only natural that we miss the people who have not returned. Even happy churches can get grumpy about “why everyone isn’t back yet,” and start to ask “who is to blame.”

*“Families with children, stressed to the max during Covid, are the slowest to return to church and both the mega church and the tiny church are feeling it. **If you are getting 30% of your previous in person attendance, that is normal. If you are getting 50%, I’d call that a victory.** And if your church is a little cranky, give yourself and each other some extra Christian kindness.*

Celebrate the people you see in person, rather than using the time to point out who is not there. Give thanks to God for the online participants we never had before Covid, and for the old friends we get to keep in touch with. Please do not shut down your worship videos or stop streaming! It would be the equivalent of locking your door on a Sunday morning.”

Pre-Covid Average Attendance

In our neighbouring congregations:

(According to the Yearbook 2019)

Marshall Memorial—120

Emmanuel-----75

New Vision----- 48

Ryerson Hamilton----100

Melrose-----60

St. Andrew’s-----120

On October 16, 2022, St. Andrew’s United had **81** in the seats and **13** on Livestream **94 “in attendance.”**

30% of 120 is 36

50% of 120 is 60

78% of 120 is 94

“I’d call that a victory.” Rev. Dr. Lillian Daniels

YOUTUBE SUBSCRIBERS by COMMUNITY of FAITH

Marshall Memorial-----128

Emmanuel-----8

New Vision-----n/a

Ryerson Hamilton-----58

Melrose-----50

St. Andrew’s United-----138

