

News @ Knox

December 2022



A Welcome from the Knox Newsletter Team

Advent is upon us! As anyone who has been in the Church Office, the Labyrinth or the Sanctuary recently will know, Knox is bustling. The garlands are hung. The trees are decked. The concert season is in full swing.

Advent is a time of waiting, the countdown to our celebration of Christ's birth (and, as everyone with an advent calendar knows, of marking each day with a celebratory chocolate). Here at Knox, though, we definitely have a sense that much of our own waiting is over.

We go into Advent with a new minister. You can read our interview with Reverend Sheena Trotter-Dennis inside. Our Stewardship campaign, so ably led by Jo-Anne Wilment, has already generated over two hundred thousand dollars of expected income for 2023. Stephen and Roman have joined the Church staff (You can learn a little bit more about them inside). We have begun to offer our guests hospitality at our snack bar again. The book club continues to explore "Speaking Christian". The first members of the Congregational Governing Council were approved at the Congregational meeting of November 27th. The Vision & Mission Working Group presented a draft of key precepts at that same meeting. The Finance Work Group will now start to prepare the budget for 2023... The list could go on.

What a turnaround! And, as we journey through Advent together, we know that this is only the start of our rebirth, only the prelude of the new songs Knox will sing in 2023 and beyond. We each look forward to exploring what God has in store for us as a community, as we discern our new directions and new ministries, and/or reignite former practices and service. Advent reminds us that every day we can step forward towards Christ, like the Magi following the star. Your newsletter team is very grateful to be on this journey in fellowship at Knox. The "Knox way" is a

unique and precious alchemy for personal growth and community development. In 2023, we will continue to look inward, into our own hearts and toward strengthening our Knox family bonds. And we will find the strength and purpose to reaffirm our engagement with our neighbours. The bustling, joyful, open Advent season now in full swing, building towards the Incarnation at the heart of our Faith, gives us momentum for both. Advent is an annual opportunity for renewal that we have already seized and will not let go!

Your next newsletter will be February 2023. There will be no newsletter in January due to the holidays. You can continue to keep up to date with Knox in our absence through the weekly bulletins, the website and our vibrant social media feeds.

It remains only for us to wish you Peace and Joy in this season, a very Merry and fulfilling Christmas and a blessed start to the New Year!



KNOX FAMILY NEWS



MEET REVEREND SHEENA TROTTER-DENNIS

Reverend Sheena Trotter-Dennis was unanimously recommended for appointment as our interim minister at the Congregational Town Hall on Sunday, October 30th. Her appointment was ratified at the Congregational Meeting on Sunday, November 27th. She is a very welcome addition to the Knox family. Reverend Sheena will be with us (with the possibility of re-appointment) until July 2023.

This month, your newsletter team (NT) sat down for a coffee with Reverend Sheena to learn a little more about her.

NT: Reverend Sheena, thank you for making time to talk to us.

Rev Sheena: Of course! Thank you for asking me. It's been fun to begin to get to know some of the congregation and hear bits and pieces of people's stories. I love to hear about the ways you came to Knox and the reasons why the Knox community is so important to you.

NT: To start with, can you share a little about your call to ministry and the type of work you have done with other congregations?

Rev Sheena: I was born into, nurtured and raised in the United Methodist tradition. Throughout my life, I felt nudges leading me to respond to a call to ordained ministry. I felt particularly called to the United Methodist Church and to the Wesleyan theology of grace, the emphasis of social justice and piety, and the Quadrilateral (scripture, reason, tradition, experience) as a way to order our lives. I felt called to be a voice for inclusivity and a preacher of God's unending and unwavering love for all. I was ordained in 2010 and served two congregations prior to my ordination. I've served 4 different-size congregations – all urban churches. In most churches I have served, I served as part of a ministerial team, but I also served as a solo minister in a church just before moving to Calgary

In the summer following my ordination, my husband's job was transferred to Calgary, and, we found ourselves unexpectedly in Canada. In this move I felt I was given the chance to live out John's Wesley's proclamation that all the "world is my parish."

I began attending a United church – I was immediately inspired by clergy who were able to articulate and frame scripture and liturgy in a deeply relevant and applicable way. Over the next 8 years I worked in that United Church – after accepting an invitation (or was it a nudge?) by the lead minister. In these years I was shaped by the people, liturgy and the expression of the United Church of Canada. I found theological kinship with the "New Creed" (1968). I was invited to broaden my own ways of knowing and experiencing the divine. I was moved by the inclusive theology in the hymns and the openness in spiritual expressions. Similarly, I found freedom in the flexibility of worship – the creative expressions of faith and the willingness to expand ways of worshipping. It was refreshing to serve in a denomination that values its LGBTQ+ members, works on reconciliation, and strives to be anti-racist, while also recognizing there is still work to be done in all of these areas. These experiences helped me be more reconciling, more anti-racist and more aware of the ways I might yet live into.

My experience of "call" has been a dynamic invitation that continues to stir me every day. It is the invitation of God to live in right relationship with creation and it is the specific invitation to ordained ministry. In this moment, I feel called to be in ministry in the UCC and to be open to the changes that will come with that invitation. As has been true my entire life, God continues to nudge and to invite me in new ways. I believe that God invites us to be in ministry in whatever setting and place we find ourselves. There is always an invitation. It is never complete – the call comes again and again. Never in my wildest imagination did I think I would ever be living in Canada. But, I have found that God invites us to be in ministry with people and in places we never imagine. And, in that process, we grow and serve and live out our call as faithfully as we can.

That was a very long answer to your question!

NT: Long? Not at all! How do you share such a big thing in just a few words? We look forward to learning more with time and thank you for sharing with us so fully today. So, you have been in Calgary a while. What brought you here and why did you stay?

Rev Sheena: We've been in Calgary for 12 years. Initially, we came to Calgary from Los Angeles with the understanding it would be a two-year temporary move for my husband's job. We were all game to live somewhere different for a couple of years. The "2 years" kept getting extended and we fell in love with Calgary and its people, and, ultimately chose to stay and get our Canadian citizenship. We find it a wonderful place to raise our two girls. We love the mountains and the outdoor lifestyle.

NT: Why did you decide to seek a ministry position at this time?

Rev Sheena: I've been on a leave of absence from the local church for the past three years and this past Spring felt a nudge to go back into local church ministry. I love being a part of a church community and living out my call in this way.

NT: We want to ask you "Why Knox?" Obviously, the simple answer is that we have an urgent need that you are meeting, but we are sure there is more to it than simple availability. Once you had met us, what was it that made you want to work and serve with us?

Rev Sheena: Pete and I came to Knox to worship one Sunday in September to get a sense of the place and the Knox community. We weren't sure what to expect but were surprised by the energy and hope that was present. We could tell there was commitment in the congregation to the community. Also, the music drew us in – there is such deep musical talent and expertise in this place. I also liked the openness of the congregation to "sing a new song" and to imagine what could be in this place. It's a hopeful place and I'm excited about how the spirit might lead this congregation forward.

NT: We already know that your husband has an excellent singing voice and that he has already been roped into Choir Duty. What else would you like to tell us about him?

Rev Sheena: Well – Pete does like to sing and is enjoying being back in a choir. Pete is an excellent partner in ministry and is equally committed to whatever congregation we are a part of. During the day he works as a crude oil trader downtown, but would really rather be in the mountains on most days.

NT: And, a little bird told us that your daughters sing alto? You are clearly meant to be at Knox, helping us sing our new songs!

Rev Sheena: That’s the great part about singing – there’s always room for more people to join in.

NT: Now, a really tough question: In the few weeks of your acquaintance with Knox, have you had time to formulate any thoughts or ideas about your priorities as our minister for the next few months?

Rev Sheena: With the Commission working on rebuilding the Knox administrative structure, I get the joy of serving this community by listening, encouraging, asking questions, inviting the community to love one another and our neighbours, studying together, building community and preaching. All the good stuff J

NT: Thank you, we know that your ideas will continue to develop as we work and worship together, but it’s nice to get an early snapshot of what you already feel is important. We are going to finish off with the quick-fire round:

NT Question	Rev Sheena Answer
	You will find that I’m not a very black and white kind of person – much more gray in most things!
Cat person or Dog person?	I’m currently a dog person. We have a 4-year-old Labradoodle, Oliver, who is a beloved and spoiled member of our family. I love cats also, but my family doesn’t share this love.
Morning Lark or Night Owl?	I like the idea of being a morning lark but I am much more of a night owl and go to bed way too late.
Coffee or Tea?	I actually prefer water on most days. But, in the winter months I like a hot beverage on most days!
Summer or Winter?	I am definitely a summer person but I’ve learned to like winter after spending 11 winters in Calgary – I just wish winter didn’t last so long!
Sunrise or Sunset?	Both – the winter sunrises are spectacular and it’s a bonus they are later in the morning so I can see them!
Chocolate or Vanilla?	Dark chocolate.
Texting or Talking?	I’m old enough that I prefer to call someone rather than texting.
Cake or Pie?	Pie for Thanksgiving (strawberry rhubarb), cake for everything else.
Jump from a plane or climb a mountain?	Climb a mountain – much better to savour the view.
Polka dots or Stripes?	Neither – solids for me.

NT: On behalf of our readers, thank you for your time today. It was lovely to learn a little more about you. We very much appreciate your candor and openness. We all look forward to the deepening our relationship.

Rev Sheena: Thank you for your time and curiosity! We should do this each month with different people so we can get to know one another better!

NEW TEAM

The Ministry and Personnel committee is happy to share that we now have two full-time caretakers. Stephen Wallace has already been working for a few weeks, daily during the week, with Jampa continuing as usual. As a result, not only is there a human presence continuously in the church during the weekdays and evenings, there is also an overlap of their shifts in the daytime to allow a two-person work party, for large tasks such as erecting the stage. Stephen has had a long history of maintenance duties with a number of Calgary agencies, most recently as a temporary cleaner with the Calgary Board of Education. We welcome him to Knox. We welcome Stephen with thanks for his help during our busy Christmas season.

Roman Sizer is now installed as our part-time "IT and social media" person. His work is evident in the ever-improving online presence of Knox. We are very grateful that Roman has agreed to support us in this important outreach ministry. We will let Roman introduce himself in his own words:

"Greetings fellow Knox congregants! My name is Roman Sizer, and if you haven't yet met me, I'd like to take this opportunity to introduce myself. Knox became my space for Sunday worship in June of 2022 as I was searching for a church community to be a part of. Having been so moved by how welcoming everyone was, I began volunteering weekly to help with (mostly) computer related tasks around the office. Now, I am in charge of keeping up Knox' online presence through the social media channels and website. This time is balanced with my role as a stay at home father for my charismatic 7 year old, Phineas and as a student enrolled in ministry studies at Alberta Bible College."

Invitations for the year-end appreciation meal for employees have been sent out. We are excited to look forward to a full table at the event.

BAPTISMS!

- On November 27th, Reston James Sarom Nhoek (Parents: Alisia and Chan Dary Nhoek)
- On December 4th, Violet Louise Hadley Campbell (Parents: Heather Robertson and Johnathan Campbell)
- On December 11th, Brianna Katherine Elms (Parents: Alyssa and Alan Elms)

JOIN THE FAMILY – MEMBERSHIP

Reverend Sheena welcomes all adherents (and complete newbies) who want to explore membership of our Knox UCC family. Please contact her for a conversation if you are interested at strotterdennis@kxcalgary.com.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

There is so much happening at Knox and so much of it is supported by our wonderful volunteers. We are very grateful for them and all the time they give to help Knox thrive.

This month, we would particularly like to call out and to thank:

- everyone who made the stewardship program successful
- everyone who made food, served and cleaned up at the stewardship lunch
- everyone who came to the church throughout the second half of November to decorate the Sanctuary for Christmas
- everyone who volunteered at the many concerts

Thank you! You made our November a time of joyful community, both with each other and with all our visitors and guests.

Ushers and Volunteers Required – Numerous occasions

Volunteer ushers for a number of concerts and also for the Christmas Eve Service are urgently needed.

Most rental agreements we host require that we supply ushers.

As a result, we need volunteers. We can't do it without you! Please support Knox in this important way.

Please go to the Knox website (www.kxcalgary.com) and sign up for the many events and the position of your choosing.

UPDATE ON KNOX GOVERNANCE

At the Congregational Meeting held on November 27, the Congregation elected its new officers:

- Co-Chairs - Dennis Ruf and Betty Norman Bray,
- Secretary - Lisa McKay, and
- Treasurer - Janet Zatzka.

Each of these persons is volunteering their time and considerable gifts and abilities to Knox, initially for one year. They will be working with the Knox Commission to be the governing body for the Congregation.

A service of installation for these new officers will be held soon in the new year where the Congregation will formally make our pledges of support to these people. In the meantime, Dennis, Betty, Lisa and Janet immediately begin working hard for Knox in their new positions of leadership.

Please pray for them. Be kind and patient with them.

Make two assumptions going forward:

- Assume that each action taken is taken with the best of intentions for good of the Congregation, and
- Assume that mistakes will be made, because we are all human. Let's look at mistakes as our opportunities to learn and grow into the people God call us to be.

Please pledge your support, your willingness to forgive, and your commitment to work with your leadership team for the fulfillment of God's call to this community of faith.

Roslyn Campbell, Knox Commission

STEWARDSHIP TEAM

As the Stewardship Team Lead, I extend a sincere thank you to this Knox Congregation for stepping up to the plate to make the 2022 Stewardship Team a reality. When I think back to our first meeting on a hot August evening in the Knox boardroom and follow this through to the celebration of a successful Stewardship and Appreciation Lunch in the Knox Parlour on November 20, 2022, the pace and accomplishments was miraculous. We accomplished this feat by pulling together, completing hours of hard work with a touch of laughter along the way. Congratulations to the following team members for creating a true desire to see Knox "Sing a New Song".

Karen Harrison
David Westwick
Chellan Hoffman
Jim Smith

Tony van der Vliet
Michael Malolos
Ken Allen
Carey Barrett

Sue Forsyth
Chuck Curry
Kimberley Wilbur
Rev. Bob Mutlow

Steve Miller
Kay de la Ronde
Crystal Day Chief

A total of \$205,000 was gathered from this year's 2022 Stewardship Campaign. Funds come from three "baskets" of donations:

- "Solid" donations of \$84,400.00 came from 2022 Stewardship Pledges/PAR,
- "Strong" donations of \$62,025.00 are expected to flow from continued Knox monthly giving, and
- "Hopeful" donations of \$58,700.00 are likely to continue from weekly Sunday envelopes, special-givings, and celebratory offerings.

Collectively, this represents 90% of the donations received from the 2021 Stewardship Program. This is remarkable given the issues we lived through this year and we expect donations will continue beyond the 2022 Stewardship period. The Commissioners and others can use this projected income source to build the 2023 Knox Budget.

Over the last month:

- David Westwick stepped down as Co-Chair of the Stewardship/Finance team to assume new responsibilities for the Knox Foundation and Board of Trustees,
- Kay de la Ronde was appointed to serve with two others on the negotiating team of Knox and the Calgary Foundation, and
- Jo-Anne Willment will continue to be the lead of the Stewardship Team into the New Year.

As the Finance Team now helps to build a 2023 Knox Budget, we now require a Finance Team Convenor. If you are interested, please see Jo-Anne Willment or Bob Mutlow for further details.

The next Finance/Stewardship meeting is scheduled for December 11, 2022. The meeting will occur after the Bake sale in the Knox Boardroom on the second floor of the Annex. Bring your curiosity to the meeting as we discuss our next steps.

Respectfully Submitted by

Jo-Anne Willment, Stewardship Team Lead & Rev. Bob Mutlow, Commissioner, Finance/Stewardship Team

MISSION & VISIONING TEAM

The Mission & Vision Working Group have been meeting to thoughtfully and prayerfully discern a new set of values for our Congregation, which will inform our initiatives and our communications throughout the next stage of Knox's story. At the Congregational Meeting on 27th November, Doug Chandler presented a draft of several new value statements and the near-term initiatives that flow from them. If you haven't seen the draft yet, please ask the church office or any of the working group members for a copy.

The proposals represent a significant change in direction for our church. But at this stage, they're only proposals. It is only with more voices that we will reach a true consensus about what we as a Congregation value and wish to live into. We need your thoughts and comments. We especially need to discern whether members of the Knox community will step up to become involved in any of the initiatives that are being proposed. None of them can proceed without volunteer involvement and leadership. If you want to see any of these initiatives become reality, now is the time to say how you might help.

The Working Group meets again on December 7th at 6:30pm to consider your questions and concerns and what else we need to do to build a consensus before any changes are brought to the congregation for adoption. You are welcome to attend the meeting either in person in the Church board room or on Zoom.

Use this link to join the meeting from your computer: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82739261760?pwd=Mms2bWRYN0dpZjh3ZzErT3N0NnImdz09>.

To join the meeting by phone, call (587) 328-1099 and use Meeting ID: 827 3926 1760 and Passcode: 599908. If you have thoughts about the future direction of Knox but can't attend the meeting, please talk to any one of the

group members. The Mission & Vision working group currently includes Bob Benner, Doug Chandler, Chuck Curry, Kay de la Ronde, Karen Harrison, Holly Smith, Tony Vander Vliet, Gerrit Voordouw, Susan Wood and our Commissioner, Reverend Tom Melvin, who jointly submit this report.

KNOX COMMUNITY LIFE

KNOX APPRECIATION LUNCHEON – 20TH NOVEMBER 2022



Chef Chuck Curry provided the feast



Ablly assisted by the crew including Keith, Vi, Stephen, with Sue



The choir sang grace



We had esteemed guests, members of our Commission, Rev. Roslyn Campbell & Rev. Bob Mutlow, with Alison Mitchell



Alex Laidlaw of The Calgary Foundation, with Kay de la Ronde & new co-Chair of the Knox Governing Council, Betty Norman Bray.



Of course, there was cake. Sandra and Rick Hand show us how it's done!



Gabiela & Ricardo Moraes-Pinto gave us sweet BosaNova sounds.



Steve Miller improvised to the beat (with condiments).



Appreciation for their contributions was shown to those present and to absent friends who couldn't make it. Gord receives a card from Dennis Ruf, new co-Chair of the Knox Governing Council.

CALGARY ALLIANCE FOR THE COMMON GOOD

DECEMBER UPDATE

Issues Facing Calgary

(4) Calgary City Budget:

As of this writing, the Calgary City Budget is being set by Mayor and Council for the next four years. Consultation with the citizens of Calgary, and with public interest groups began on the 22 of November, and is continuing. The Calgary Alliance and its partner organizations are working together to advocate for our priorities of Reconciliation, Climate Justice and safe reliable transportation.

Reconciliation: For the last three years we have been advocating for an Indigenous Liaison Officer in each City Police district. In at least one instance, money in the police budget was added for that purpose, and then disappeared into general revenue. Now, the City proposes a cumulative \$105 million operating budget increase for police over four years. The police budget is already the highest per capita in Alberta. The Calgary Alliance does not believe that greater enforcement of by-laws and more and better police equipment (armored vehicles and helicopters) will do anything to solve the social problems that disproportionately affect indigenous people in our city.

Climate Justice: Rather than responding to Calgary's Climate Strategy, the budget proposes redirecting \$24 million in public funds from existing communities to build a new interchange and 6-lane roadway expansion at 144 Ave. NW (north of the ring road) to support future sprawl. Ryan Anderson, Lead Organizer of the Calgary Alliance, says that suburban sprawl comes with financial costs. "It stretches our police and fire services, and there's no actual tax revenue until those communities have filled up. Because of the outward expansion of the city, the Council could be forced to cut services that people depend on, in order to provide basics at the edges of the city." (Calgary Herald)

Transportation: Before the pandemic, the Calgary Alliance for the Common Good was already advocating for affordable, accessible and frequent transit for all Calgarians. In the proposed budget, fares are set to rise to \$4.00 for adults, and there is no plan to return transit frequency to pre-pandemic levels. This disproportionately affects the lives of poor Calgarians, those who cannot drive, and those who cannot afford a car (not to mention the gas to drive it). We recommend freezing transit fares for the next 4 years, and setting minimum transit frequency to 10 minutes on all LRT, BRT and major routes.

Rev. Erin Klassen, speaking on behalf of the Calgary Alliance said, on CTV News this week:

"The desire to reduce mental health challenges, addiction, homelessness and systemic racism experienced by Calgarians every day are all stated priorities for City Council. But this budget cuts funding to those organizations that support these things."

So this is not a budget for the vast majority of Calgarians. It is a developers' budget, a budget for the upper middle-class, a budget for growth outward and neglect at the core. It's a budget for division: of the 'haves' against the 'have nots'; of me against you. The Alliance is working hard on behalf of all Calgarians to raise the concerns of the majority of citizens. More spending and higher property taxes are not a bad thing, but please, Calgary, spend our money well!

Research Action Team Meetings:

- **Mental Health Research Action Team:** December 5th at 7:00 PM
- **Reconciliation Research Action Team:** December 13th at 7:30 pm

For further information, or to attend one of these meetings, which may be held on ZOOM, contact Susan Wood, or email info@calgarycommongood.org, or phone 403-993-7123. Please specify that you are a member/adherent of Knox United Church

If you want further information, or want to help with organizing an Alliance team at Knox, contact Susan at [su-sanwood125@outlook.com](mailto:susanwood125@outlook.com)

DECEMBER CALENDAR

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
27 th 10:30 Worship Service – 1 st Week of Advent 11:45 Knox Congregational Meeting	28 th 13:00 Bell Choir Practice	29 th 19:00 Knox Book Club	30 th 10:00 Coffee Break in the Sanctuary	1 st 19:30 Choir Practice	2 nd	3 rd UN International Day of Persons with Disabilities
4 th 10:30 Worship Service – 2 nd Week of Advent 11:45 Knox UCC Foundation AGM	5 th 13:00 Bell Choir Practice	6 th National Day on Violence Against Women 19:00 Knox Book Club	7 th 10:00 Coffee Break in the Sanctuary 18:30 Meeting of Mission & Vision Working Group	8 th 19:30 Choir Practice	9 th	10 th UN Human Rights Day 19:00 “All is Calm, All is Bright” carol service at Grace Presbyterian (choir singing)
11 th 10:30 Worship Service – 3 rd Week of Advent 11:45 Bake Sale	12 th 13:00 Bell Choir Practice	13 th 19:00 Knox Book Club	14 th 10:00 Coffee Break in the Sanctuary	15 th 19:30 Choir Practice	16 th	17 th
18 th 10:30 Worship Service – 4 th Week of Advent	19 th 13:00 Bell Choir Practice	20 th 19:00 Knox Book Club	21 st 19:00 Blue Christmas Service	22 nd 19:30 Choir Practice	23 rd	24 th 19:00 Christmas Eve Service 23:00 Christmas Eve Service (Communion)
25 th Christmas Day 10:30 Worship Service	26 th Boxing Day	27 th	28 th	29 th	30 th	31 st New Year’s Eve

Follow Knox on Social Media:

Check out our refreshed website at www.kxcalgary.com

Follow us on FaceBook at <https://www.facebook.com/KnoxYYC>

Follow us on Instagram at <https://instagram.com/knoxunitedcalgary>

Follow us on Twitter at www.Twitter.com/KnoxYYC

There will be no January newsletter due to the holidays, so please note the deadline for submissions for February’s newsletter is January 23rd. All are invited to participate.

For any further information on anything in this newsletter, please contact Sue in the Office at sforsyth@kxcalgary.com