



## David's Dialogue

Dear members and friends of St. Matthew's,

**John 12:24: Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.**

What do you suppose heaven will look like when we arrive there? Will it actually have pearly gates? Will it be a land floating on the clouds? The writer of the 23rd Psalm ends with, "surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD forever."

Calling to mind such images can be a source of comfort in the face of death.

Many of us have had a personal encounter with death this past year. We have likely all been wondering what comes next. What happens when a person dies? Where do they go?

Jesus knew his followers wrestled with these questions too. In the above passage, he did not point to a place but to a process. Jesus did not say that death would result in a new home up in the clouds but in a transformation into something new, new life, newly abundant life, like what happens when a seed breaks out of its husk and reaches in all directions to embrace a far greater world than it had known before.

I think we have to be a little weary when the Bible gives us easy answers or suggests that for Jesus' and others' death was not something frightening. It was just as it is for us. And Jesus and his followers experienced tremendous grief, as well.

It may have been easier for John the Evangelist to write these words of Jesus in his gospel with the hindsight of many years from the time Jesus lived and died. It is not so easy for us in the face of loss and death, to make sense of dying or see the ways that it results in something positive. Maybe it will take many, many years to understand.



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## *Linda Alldred-Johnson*

FEBRUARY 14, 1948 – FEBRUARY 23, 2024

After retirement Linda became interested in Parish Nursing. She presented the idea to the board of St. Matthew United Church and Amour Heights Presbyterian Church. For some 8 years, she was employed at both churches but continued with St. Matthew's until the end of 2022.

*Helen Smith wrote:* One of Linda's gifts was to accompany people who had doctor's appointments and advocate for them, helping them interpret comments and instructions and be a calming presence. The team members each had a list of church members (mostly shut-ins), that they kept in touch with weekly to say hello and see if they needed anything. Linda also provided personal support regarding health issues for members of the church as well the community at large.



*Lori Stoness wrote:* Linda was a special friend to me and I will miss her greatly, but I will forever cherish the time we spent together talking about our lives and sharing lots of laughs. She was such a special person who cared deeply, gave of her time and love generously, and listened intently. She loved spending time with her family, she loved to laugh, she loved being in the water, she loved the colour purple, and she loved basketball. Her St. Matthew's family and her faith was also very important to her. She loved her long career as a nurse, and later as a parish nurse. That was her calling and she excelled at it. Her bright smiling face, infectious laugh, and the feeling of love and warmth I always felt from her will forever be in my heart.

*Mary Wilson wrote:* To me the most important note of Linda's Parish Nurse Ministry was her outreach to the community. Prayer Shawls and Twiddlemuffs from St. Matthew's have been given and sent to people all over the world. Linda was outward looking as can be seen by the Lunch & Learns and The Health & Wellness Fairs which brought people into our church from the greater Richmond Hill community. In fact more community folk enjoyed and participated in these events than did St. Matthew's parishioners. So, not only the folk of St. Matthew's are going to miss Linda, but many people in the community who found her support and guidance invaluable will also miss her.

*Mary Fleming wrote:* Both my memories have to do with my husband Gordon when he

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was very ill. Linda noted I was losing weight so she came to our house one Sunday after church and stayed until she found overnight help for us. My second memory is that Linda was at our house when Gordon died. She, as a wonderful parish nurse, phoned the doctor to come and sign the death certificate and then she phoned the funeral home. She stayed until we were all ok.

As the Parish Nurse at St. Matthew's she had a committee of volunteers that worked with her to develop and deliver what we knew as our Health Ministry program. She and her dedicated team organized health fairs, foot care clinics, and monthly blood pressure testing supplemented by Therapeutic Touch as needed. One of the main efforts was our Lunch and Learn programmes, held monthly at noon on a Wednesday from 2004 to 2020. For many years, she was able to rely of her connections in the medical community to be, or recommend, speakers for these events. 2005 saw the introduction of the Prayer Shawl Ministry, providing both prayer shawls and twiddlemuffs as care and support to those in need or celebrating a special event. For several years Marj Stewart knit or sewed Christmas bags with ribbon handles for Linda and others on the team to take as gifts to shut-ins. The team all had a hand in filling them.

To help subsidize costs, the team got retirement homes to bring in the lunches for free for the Lunch & Learn program, ran fundraisers with the Curtain Club, and yearly Walk-a-thons from 2004-2022 (except for 2019), which were usually on a Saturday so families could participate. The team also took over the occasional Saturday breakfasts with speakers that Barb and Tom Beattie had started some years before the Health Ministry began.

Throughout Linda's life as a nurse and parish nurse she had a positive influence touching the lives of many people. This allowed her team the ability to also have a positive influence that changed lives at St. Matthew's and in our community.



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Linda believed she was called to do God's work as a parish nurse, intentionally integrating faith and health which was the link that completed the meaning of nursing for her. One of the things that she enjoyed the most in her role as Parish Nurse was working with everyone on the team, both past and present. In her retirement notice she stated: "To think in eighteen years our little group planted a seed called Parish Nursing Health Ministry and with God's help, our guidance nurturing and lots of prayer, it grew from a bulb, blossomed and flourished into the fabric of St Matthew's. All I can say is well done team!"

As per the family's wishes the Celebration of Life is scheduled at St. Matthew's United Church in Richmond Hill, the date to be determined. More details to come. Cremation has already taken place. Interment will be at St. Andrew's - St. James Cemetery in Orillia.

*This article was compiled by Doreen using information sent by members. Thank you to all those who provided information about Linda, the impact she helped create, and the efforts of our Health Ministry. The photo on page 3 was provided by Ron Johnson. The ones on page 4 come from our Church Directories (top to bottom) in 2002, 2010, and 2015 as taken by IPC—Institutional Promotions of Canada.*

## Missed a recent service? Watch it on YouTube.

Recent services at St. Matthew's.

- Mar 03: [Video recording](#). Sermon titled "God So Loved"
- Mar 10: [Video recording](#). Sermon titled "Listening to Thunder"
- Mar 17: [Video recording](#). Sermon titled "The Poor, the Death, and the Promise "

## BOOKING ROOMS

Booking your needed space well in advance is becoming more and more important. The sooner the better. Please don't assume that the office folks know you want a room. A few weeks of advance notice may leave you disappointed or very lucky. If you are thinking you need a room in Sept. 2024 or 2025, reach out now! If you have something next month, we'll look for possible and alternate dates. But book early then you can rest assured. Don't take a chance and be disappointed due to a last minute request.

Please note: Room 101 is no longer available for meetings without specific reasons for the request and your willingness to move the small furniture before and after your meeting, repair all damage from spills, and vacuum as required, etc.

# PI & Pie & P.I.E. Day

March 14, 2024

PI, Pie and PIE— Are these three different things? Yes!

**National Pie Day** is celebrated on Jan. 23 each year and is all about the foodstuff known as pie, from dessert pies to meat pies. According to the National Day Calendar's website, National Pie Day was created by the American Pie Council in 1986 to commemorate Crisco's 75th anniversary.

March 14 marks PI Day, **an annual celebration of the mathematical sign pi**. Founded in 1988 by physicist Larry Shaw, March 14 was selected because the numerical date (3.14) represents the first three digits of pi, and it also happens to be Albert Einstein's birthday. Math enthusiasts around the world, from college kids to rocket scientists, celebrated Pi Day last Thursday, March 14 or 3/14 — the first three digits of an infinite number with many practical uses. Around the world many people marked the day with a slice of pie — sweet, savory or even pizza!

But March 14 is also P.I.E. Day for our church and the United Church of Canada. P.I.E. is short for “public, intentional, and explicit” as explained in our United Church's Mar. 10th “Gods Mission. Our Gifts”. It then tells us: “These are the standards we hold ourselves to when we seek to be affirming, welcoming, and inclusive. PIE Day was co-founded by Affirm United/S'affirmer Ensemble and Affirming Connections. Every year, Affirm United invites us to celebrate the full inclusion of 2SLGBTQIA+ people in faith communities and beyond. The day challenges us to widen our welcome, to embody love, and to celebrate gender and sexual diversity. It's critical that we do. Gender identity and sexual orientation are used to justify human rights violations around the world. Same-sex sexual activity is a crime in 71 countries; in 11 of these the death penalty can be imposed.



Here in Canada, 1 million people identify as 2SLGBTQIA+. In 2019, police reported 263 hate crimes targeting people for their sexual orientation. This was a 41 percent increase over the previous year and the highest number since 2009.”

At St. Matthew's we celebrated on Sunday March 10th during coffee hour. The photo was taken by Naomi Knight after setting up on Saturday evening. The next morning the table was full of tasty tarts, cookies and squares as well as juice, coffee, and tea!

