

- more hugs
- padded pews
- bells installed in steeple
- more use of chimes (organ)
- university students in choir
- use of building to address needs of our community
- camp ministries
- caring for our building and properties (especially 'the Manse')
- strong leadership in church school and youth (appreciation for Jenny Emerson and Mary Rife mentioned frequently)
- use of contemporary music more frequently balanced by great appreciation of tradition music (leads to a blend of some kind)
- more meals together as a community
- noon concerts and organ recitals
- junior choir
- presence of children in worship welcomed
- conferences with noted speakers/themes
- more opportunities for intergenerational gatherings
- continued openness to change and different ways of thinking
- building on friendliness and warmth
- lots of hard workers and people willing to share their particular talents and gifts
- continued focus on mission and global issues
- congregational mission trips
- engaging student ministers to work with our minister
- build more connections/partnerships with other churches in community
- use Crieff Hills more often for events

Within this list were many positive comments of our current staff and a high regard for the ways in which they continue to excel in their particular areas of work and ministry. On behalf of Andrew, Darlene, Fred, Jim, May, and myself, I'd like to say thank you to the congregation for your support and encouragement over the years. It doesn't hurt to continue to share your appreciation of our staff on an ongoing basis. It is always welcome to hear that what you do is actually meaningful to someone else.

Coffee Parties with Rev. John

February – March 2007

*“Here’s what people had to say...
maybe it was YOU who said it!”*

Membership Demographic of Note:

One of the interesting assumptions I had when I began these coffee parties was that the majority of our congregation became members in the 1950s. It was true that 1/3 of those who participated in the coffee parties had been involved in St. Andrew's for forty years or more. Yet a quarter of the participants had only been at St. Andrew's in the last nine years.

While a few of the coffee parties had to be rescheduled or cancelled, in the end I offered thirty opportunities to meet for coffee. I met with approximately 200 people from our community of faith. As I said to begin each party, my purpose was for me to get to know the congregation better and vice versa. I believe that purpose was fulfilled in a very enjoyable way over the period of a month.

Thanks again to all those who took the time to share of their time and their selves. I really appreciated the opportunity.

Yours in Christ,

Rev. John

1. What drew you to St. Andrew's in the first place?

The answers to this initial question varied a little but for the most part focused on four areas: **atmosphere of welcome, ministers, music programs, and concern for mission & outreach.**

Many described their first experiences of St. Andrew's as "coming home," "finding a place to call home," and "entering a very warm and inviting family." Certainly some very special people played a role in this experience. Here are some of the names that were mentioned more than once at the Coffee Parties:

Margaret Hall, Ross Pauli, Anne Pennock, Alf Walberg, Alan Smart, Marjorie Reynard, Wilma Smart, & Mary Rife. Thanks to these people and those not named who make people feel welcome each and every Sunday.

2. What are the things you value at St. Andrew's?

Not surprisingly, we are a group of people who value **preaching, worship and music** very highly. It was commented on numerous occasions that we have been a congregation blessed by wonderful and capable leaders for worship, preaching and music both in the past and currently. The diversity of worship and music experience and appreciation was raised often and many of the coffee parties discussed the challenges and opportunities of more "contemporary" expressions.

We have a strong desire to continue our commitment to **Mission and Outreach** at home and abroad. We have a long history of supporting our denomination in its mission efforts and today is no different. Our more recent ventures with "Towards a World without AIDS" was mentioned as a very meaningful and successful campaign focusing our energy on the very pressing need to address the AIDS epidemic. The AIDS banner at the entrance of the church building was also highlighted as a powerful symbol of our commitment to the community.

The desire to **educate ourselves in areas of ministry, theology and faith** was highly valued. We have appreciated the occasions in the past to learn and share and continue to seek ways of growing in our faith journeys and knowledge of God.

Finally, we appreciate the ways in which we function as a '**family**'. Many spoke very deeply about their sense of St. Andrew's being an extended family that cares and supports each other in their daily living. This was expressed in a variety of different ways but ultimately stressed the need for effective communication to the congregation as a whole on a continuing basis.

As an extended family, I wonder if I might encourage you to reach out to one member of our family from the past. One name that came up time and time again in the coffee parties from a variety of different ages was John Greenwood. He was involved in the youth program for some time in the 1970s and had a significant gift for music leadership. If people were still speaking about me as they were about John Greenwood after years had past, I'm sure I'd appreciate knowing about it. If you know of John's whereabouts or know him personally, I'd encourage you to pass along our deep appreciation for his ministry among us.

3. What are your dreams for St. Andrew's?

I promised to just list these 'dreams' without judgment in the hope that we may find a way of fulfilling them sometime in the next few years. The Session and the Board will be encouraged to look at this list and see if there are items that they wish to address sooner rather than later. Thanks for your honesty in expressing these hopes and dreams. I hope you or someone within the congregation might catch your dream and make it come to fruition.

Dreams for St. Andrew's

- More young people
- Youth worker
- Programs offered by older people to teach younger persons crafts and skills (knitting, crocheting, etc.)
- a bus to pick up neighbourhood kids
- visitation by lay people to hospitals, shut-ins, etc.
- return to regular elders' visits