

# The STUC Spotlight

Volume 5

September 2023



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Tammy Figol / Margaret Gidley  
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Stonehouse / June Powell / Elaine Gray  
Sean Ziesmann - coffee supplies

# Words from Your Hospitality Team - by Wanda Veer,

THE STUC SPOTLIGHT. VOL. 5

*This issue has been a long time in preparation. It seems Hospitality was very busy in our post-Covid role at St Thomas. Our mandate was to provide, you guessed it.. Hospitality, and events to encourage our congregation back to our church building.*

*The Hospitality Team, along with our regular duties of Newcomers, Ask Me, Nursery, Coffee, Name Tags, and Birthday Sundays, also participated in the October Stewardship Fair; the December Carols and Cocoa; the February Mardi Gras and Pancake Supper; the May Coronation Big Tea; the June Pride Prom; and the July Stampede Breakfast.*

*All the events were very successful, but worthy of mention again is the Coronation Big Tea held on May 7. This took months to coordinate, was very unique, and resulted in recognition by BBC and CBC. Our team worked hard and our congregation was very supportive.*

*We hope you enjoy reading this issue... the biographies, pictures, and words of wisdom.*

*A special thank you to our editor, Jane Wittstock.*

*Wanda Veer*

## Words to Ponder and Live By

**“May today there be peace within. May you trust that you are exactly where you are meant to be. May you not forget the infinite possibilities that are born of faith in yourself and others. May you use the gifts that you have received, and pass on the love that has been given to you.**

**May you be content with yourself just the way you are. Let this knowledge settle into your bones, and allow your soul the freedom to sin, dance, praise, and love. It is there for each and every one of us.”**

*Mother Teresa*

**“I am only one, but I am one. I cannot do everything, but I can do something. And I will not let what I cannot do interfere with what I can do”.**

*Edward Everett Hale*

**“We make a living from what we get,  
We make a life from what we give.  
What we do for ourselves dies with us,  
What we do for others and the world is immortal”.**

*George Eliot*

# Meet Our Newcomers

## Sean Ziesmann & Adrian Obusan – Newcomers 2022

Sean Ziesmann was one of St. Thomas's first newcomers in January 2022. He and his sister spent a good chunk of their life in Alberta and BC. During Sean's teen years, the family lived and owned a business in Jasper, AB. Sean remembers working at the family business from age 12 on, often unpaid. The job was always there when the school day was finished. In 1987, Sean moved to Calgary for University where he obtained a BA in Political Science, with a minor in Business. Initially, he wanted to become a teacher but, as is often the case, he discovered other interests along the way. Sean's parents eventually left Jasper in the early 1990's and came to Calgary as well. It was after Sean completed university, and landed his first corporate job, that he met his partner, Adrian.

Adrian was born in the Philippines. His family moved to Singapore when he was 5. He lived there until the age of 16, when he moved to California to attend the University of Southern California in San Diego. He obtained a degree in Biology and decided to move to Calgary in 1995. He quickly realized that Calgary was not the biotech market for Canada. This gave Adrian the incentive to pursue another passion and he completed schooling at SAIT in technology. In 1997, while both Adrian and Sean were living in Calgary, they met. When I asked how they met, Sean chuckled, saying that it was in the "pre-app" times, when meeting new friends was largely done by phone.

Sean ended up working in the consumer goods industry (food & personal care products), first working with Nabisco & Unilever in Calgary 1995-2002. Adrian moved to California in 2001 for work and started his retail technology career with Disney Stores, then Hot Topic. Sean joined him in Los Angeles for two years before returning to Canada. From 2004-



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2018, Adrian and Sean were in Toronto. Sean worked with companies such as AC Nielsen, Wrigley/Mars and Adrian worked with Shoppers Drug Mart, before landing a Retail IT Consulting role with T4G Consulting. In 2018, they decided to head to Singapore and the Philippines for a time. In 2020, as the Pandemic began, Sean decided it was best to return to Canada. Adrian stayed in Asia longer, but returned to join Sean in Calgary in 2021.

When he returned to Calgary, Sean studied for, and obtained, his real estate license. He has worked now for almost 3 years in the commercial and residential real estate sectors, and he also provides business brokering services (helps people buy/sell their business). Adrian works in the tech industry as a Project Manager, where he bridges the gap between business needs and tech/software needs.

Adrian and Sean share a love of travel, of being able to share thoughtful conversation and meals together. Their travel to this point has focused mainly on Asia, exploring places such as Bali, Cambodia, Japan, Malaysia, Taiwan and Thailand. Future travels will likely include Europe along with Central and South America. Ironically, if they do visit Germany in the future, although Sean has German heritage, it is Adrian who speaks German. As part of his high school requirements in Singapore, he needed to learn a second language and he chose German.

After purchasing a home in Citadel, Sean found St. Thomas UC on the internet. It is close to home, affirming, and gay positive. He and Adrian have had many good conversations with Tracy, in the office, and sometimes walking with her fur-babies. Adrian's church background is Roman Catholic. Sean's grandma was very involved in the Pentecostal church in Germany before coming to Canada. They find St. Thomas, and especially Tracy, "super-refreshing and down to earth", and the United Church not as structured and rigid as what they have experienced in the past. They feel welcome and find the services "build you up" and are relevant.

Sean is a member of the STUC Affirming Committee and works with the Hospitality Team making sure that our Sunday morning coffee makers have needed supplies. Sean's also leading a new project in the church...A Business Directory where STUC community members share their business product(s)/services with our church family. Adrian, is working with Tracy to pursue the possibility of St. Thomas facilitating a workshop focused on Senior's decisions & planning as they head into the golden years.

Sean and Adrian, thanks for your work and ideas. It is great to have you with us at St. Thomas. We look forward to getting to know you better.

*Written by Sherrill Knight (Hospitality) with the assistance of Sean & Adrian.*



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## Julie Cao & Annaliza Morales- Newcomers – January 2023

My delightful conversation with Anna and Julie began by talking about their “fur babies” ... in other words, their two pooches. “Ally” is a 12-year-old American Bulldog, who is currently having some health issues. “Ike” is a handsome 13-year-old Pug. I sensed that both are cherished family members.



Julie was born and raised in Toronto, ON. She described her childhood as “a lot of fun

and full of outdoor adventures”! Anna was born in the Philippines and, when she was age 5, her family moved to Toronto, ON. Her father was an entrepreneur, her mother was a nurse. Various business ventures ended up with moves to places like California, BC, New Jersey and San Francisco. Anna attended 13 elementary schools which must have been challenging. When she was in grade 7, the family moved back to Toronto.

In 2002, Anna and Julie met, while working in the same business. Anna was a sales manager and Julie was one of the agents. They discovered that they were truly soul mates and have never been apart ever since.

In 2015 they decided a fresh start was needed and they wanted to reunite with Julie’s sisters who moved out west a few years ago, so they packed up everything, including Julie’s parents, and moved to Calgary. Anna’s parents and sister stayed behind in Toronto. For the first 5 years they missed Toronto greatly, but they now realize that Calgary has a lot going for it. The amount of sunshine and milder temperatures it receives in the winter feel like a bonus and everyone is now content to age here in the west with no plans to move back east. Anna and Julie started a small cleaning business here, focused on multiple salons and esthetician locations. In their spare time they enjoy watching favourite programs on TV, going for drives, eating out and just hanging with the dogs, the family, and new friends.

How did they find St. Thomas? While Anna and Julie love Jesus, they are weary of organized religion and only occasionally went to church. But during some very stressful times, they

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prayed to God for help and promised Him that they would go to church every Sunday. So, they started looking for an affirming church and found that St. Thomas had resumed in person worship. They attended their first service and were blown away with our Affirming statement. They felt warmly and genuinely accepted. They appreciate Rev. Tracy's message, and enjoy the "seniors" in our church family. Gradually they are stepping up to take part in some of the church activities and services.

Anna and Julie, it is great to have you in our midst, and we look forward to getting to know you better.

*Written by Sherrill Knight with the help of Anna and Julie.*

*Craig, Cindy and Veronika Huisson - Newcomers December 2022*

This interesting family moved to Calgary from Montreal last summer. It was my pleasure recently to chat to them and learn a little bit about their backgrounds, and about what brought them to our city.

Cindy was born, raised, and schooled in Langford, BC, just outside Victoria, on Vancouver Island. Her dad, originally from England, was a Master Mariner, who worked for the Canadian Government's Department of Fisheries and Oceans, as Captain of the oceanographic research ship, CCGS John P. Tully in the Pacific Ocean, and also as Captain of the CCGS Sir Wilfrid Laurier in Canada's Arctic waters. Cindy's Mom grew up on an apple orchard in the Okanagan, and worked as an ER nurse in Vancouver and Victoria before she had children. Cindy was the oldest of three girls and, because her dad was away at sea for extended periods, they, along with their mom, were often a household of women, frequently joined by Cindy's grandmother from the Okanagan. Cindy speaks of growing up on the West Coast as "beautiful" ... cycling, hiking, running, figure skating, beach combing ... it was a good childhood, especially when her dad was home from the sea for a stretch.

At age 17, Cindy spent a year in Taiwan to study Mandarin Chinese at the National Taiwan Normal University, while experiencing the art and culture of that country. She taught English while there and travelled southeast Asia. It was a wonderful year. On her return to Canada, she entered McGill University where she earned a Mechanical Engineering degree, and then began working for Pratt & Whitney Canada in Montreal. During the day, she designed and analyzed gas turbine engine components, and during the evening she completed her Master of Aerospace Engineering degree (specializing in Propulsion) at McGill University. She worked in the Engineering, Manufacturing, Strategy, and Marketing organizations of Pratt & Whitney Canada, and obtained her MBA in Corporate Finance and International Business from McGill University as well.

Craig's dad, originally from the Netherlands and his mom from Picture Butte, AB, met when they

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were both working for Wardair up in Yellowknife. Craig was born in Niagara on the Lake in Ontario. When he was age two, the family moved to Timmins, ON, where his dad, who flew helicopters, started his own company. Life was busy growing up in a household with 5 sisters and 1 brother! In the summer, the family would come out to Alberta to camp and visit his mom's relatives (3 brothers and 1 sister). Back home Craig's days were busy attending school, playing hockey and basketball, learning how to work on helicopters, and learning to fly. He acquired his fixed wing license at the age of 17 and later was licensed to fly commercial helicopters.

Craig worked with his dad during those years, flying in northern Ontario, in Quebec and the NWT, fighting forest fires, flying for wildlife research, medical air transport, mining exploration, acid rain and waterfowl surveys, dealing with spruce bud worm outbreaks, whatever was requested of the company. Eventually he attended the University of Western Ontario, London, in Mechanical Engineering but worked flying in the summers. He also earned an MBA at McMaster University in Hamilton, ON. In 1996, Craig joined Pratt & Whitney Canada, first in Toronto and then moved to Montreal.

Cindy and Craig met in 2004 while both were working at Pratt & Whitney Canada in Montreal, and they married in 2006.

It was interesting talking to Veronika about living in Montreal. Veronika was born in Montreal. Growing up in Quebec, her schooling was in French, so the whole family is, admirably, bilingual. In Montreal, Veronika was a competitive swimmer, and her favourite stroke was the butterfly. Currently she is working towards her bronze medallion classification. She would like to be able to lifeguard eventually.

Here in Calgary she is in her first year of high school, attending William Aberhart. What is in store for her in the future? Neurobiological research is what Veronika thinks might be an interesting field of study. It will be interesting to see where the next years take her.

So, what led the Huisson family to move to Calgary? They love adventures, were ready





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for a change, and they have lots of family in the West; in Alberta, central BC, and on the Island. They enjoy hiking, cycling, skiing, mountain biking, skating, and camping with their trailer, and the West is a great place to do all those things. In August 2022 they camped their way across the country and arrived in Calgary just in time for school. Since the Pandemic, the opportunity to work remotely has increased and that gives them flexibility as well. Cindy is working virtually on proprietary product design and development. Craig continues with Pratt & Whitney and works remotely in the Security and Defense group. Currently the focus is on unpiloted air vehicle systems, jet trainers and hybrid-electric engines, as countries around the world look for new sources of equipment. With Pratt & Whitney in Lethbridge, and De Havilland expanding in the Calgary area, the aerospace industry is growing in the West.

Craig, Cindy, and Veronika made the move to their home in the Hamptons in August 2022. After settling in, they began looking for a home church. Cindy watched some of STUC's online services and found Rev. Tracy's sermon's relevant and challenging. When they first attended in person in December, they felt warmly welcomed. St. Thomas UC feels "authentic and inclusive". Veronika is enjoying the youth group and activities and has found a new best friend, and kindred spirit, in Isabella. The Huisson family has "jumped in with both feet", making after service coffee, writing one of the Lenten meditations, and making cupcakes with the youth. How lovely to have you in our church family! Thanks for sharing a little of your story.

*Written by Sherrill Knight, with the help of Craig, Cindy & Veronika*

### **Nancy Sprules & Wayne Hodgson** *Newcomers – June 2022*

"What a small world it is!" This is what came to mind during the first few minutes of my visit with Nancy and Wayne. Who would have suspected that they knew my husband, John, before I did, 54 years ago? Read on to discover a little bit about their story.

Nancy was born in Winnipeg, where her father was a research biologist. The family later moved to London, Ontario where her father taught at the University of Western Ontario. When Nancy



was age 4, the family moved again, this time to Ottawa where her father worked with the De-



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partment of Fisheries and Oceans and later became Director of International Fisheries. Ottawa was home for Nancy from 1951–1965. After graduating from Ridgemont High School, she attended Queen’s University, in Kingston, Ontario, studying Geography and Geology. It was during this time that she met my husband who was also studying Geography and Geology. What a small world! Nancy has an older and a younger brother.

Wayne was born in Victoria but grew up in Saskatchewan. When he says “Saskatchewan”, he means just that! His father worked initially with Saskatchewan Power as a timekeeper for power line construction, and later with Saskatchewan Power Gas as a gas fitter. His mom worked as a cook in many of the work camps to which they were sent. This work took them all over Saskatchewan. Over the years, Wayne, his 2 brothers and 1 sister, lived in many communities: Humbolt, Swift Current, Leader, Kindersley, Hudson Bay Junction, Fort Qu’Appelle and Grenfell, to name a few. In 1964, following high school graduation from Grenfell High School, Wayne entered the Royal Military College in Kingston, Ontario for a degree in Commerce. While at RMC, he and Nancy met and, in 1969, a week after graduation, they were married.

Having acquired his degree at RMC, Wayne was required to give at least 3 years military service. After a year apart while Wayne attended more training in Borden, Ontario, Wayne received his first posting to Greenwood, Nova Scotia and he and Nancy drove east in May 1970. There were many postings after Nova Scotia: Winnipeg (1973-1975), Trenton/Belleville (1975-1976), Lahr, West Germany (1976-1980), Ottawa (1980-1983), Calgary, Currie Barricks (1983-1988) and finally back to Ottawa for 32 years. Wayne’s work focused on logistics, specifically finance. Ultimately, Wayne worked as a civilian liaison with the Department of National Defence, in the area of military industries; those in Canada and those in other countries, such as in the USA, the Middle East, the Asia/Pacific and Australia. He retired in 2005, having worked for 40 years either in, or within the Department of National Defence.

Nancy and Wayne have two children – a daughter Laura born 1972 in Berwick, Nova Scotia and a son Kyle born 1977 in Lahr, West Germany. When not organizing the family for a move or settling in to a new home, Nancy spent 20 years with Girl Guides of Canada, beginning with a Brownie Pack in Nova Scotia and moving on through positions as Guide leader, Commissioner and ultimately to the National Council. Along the way she took up quilting beginning in Nova Scotia where her first attempt at a bed-sized quilt was hand quilted by the ladies of Aylesford United church in exchange for time holding newborn Laura! Once settled in Ottawa, with the children in high and middle school, Nancy returned to school taking a library course at Algonquin College. After several short-term situations, she began working at the Canadian Museum of Contemporary Photography (CMCP, now closed) and eventually at the National Gallery of Canada Library. She retired from this job she loved in 2008.

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Nancy and Wayne’s daughter, Laura, husband Marvin and two children, Iain (16) and Claire (14), live here in Calgary and also attend St. Thomas UC. Their son, Kyle, wife Morgan and children, Faron (9) and Gretchen (7) live on an acreage just outside Saskatoon. After retiring, Nancy and Wayne had hoped to move out to Calgary much earlier to be closer to their young grandchildren, however, the responsibilities of caring for Nancy’s elderly mom kept them in Ottawa. Amazingly, her mom lived to be 102! Wayne and Nancy moved to Calgary in 2020 and live in Tuscany, close to their daughter and family.

Back in Ottawa, Wayne and Nancy were very involved in Glen Carin United Church. Whatever needed to be done, they were there to help out. Wayne was involved in Stewardship and Finance. Nancy is a lifetime member of UCW and misses that involvement here at St. Thomas. She was head of the Outreach Committee for 6 years and in this position also sat on the Church Council. At St. Thomas UC, they have felt warmly welcomed. Already Nancy has helped out as a communion server and scripture reader. They look forward to a little “reset” as they decide just how they want to be involved in this, their new church family.

Nancy and Wayne, it is wonderful to have you attending St. Thomas! We look forward to hearing more about your past church experiences and ideas as you worship, work and play with us.

*Written by Sherrill Knight, Hospitality, with the help of Nancy and Wayne.*

## The Sedley Family (Steve, Raylene, Emmett, Isla & Aidyn)

Newcomers June 2022

Recently, I had the pleasure of getting to know a little bit about this new family at St. Thomas. Steve grew up in Yorkton, Saskatchewan, one of three boys. Raylene, lived in Canora, a small community just north of Yorkton. She is one of four girls. They both grew up in very close families and they remain close, visiting back and forth as they are able. Steve and Raylene didn’t cross paths in their early years. After high school, they both went away to



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Moose Jaw and Regina for further study. It wasn't until after completing some post-secondary education that they returned to their home towns. It was then that the "stars aligned".

Raylene's studies were initially in Cosmetology in which she obtained her Journeymans in the trade. After a couple of years working in a salon, she began taking her Early Childhood Education. Part way through her studies, her home town of Canora asked her to set up a licensed Childcare Centre. She jumped at the opportunity, and continued her studies on line. Meanwhile, Steve was attending the University of Regina taking his Bachelors of Social Work. He briefly paused from his studies and returned to Yorkton to work for a while. It was during this time that they met, bought and renovated their first home in Canora, and married in the fall of 2010.

In 2013, after Steve completed his BSW, they decided to spread their wings and head to Alberta. One of Raylene's sisters lived near Calgary and they were excited to be closer to her, as well as to have the opportunity to live in a province which they had visited and enjoyed in the past. They lived and worked in Strathmore and in 2015 their son, Emmett, was born. Steve and Raylene smile when talking about their various moves. Raylene has Doukhobor roots and her family sometimes tease them, calling them "Russian Gypsies". True to their adventurous spirit, The Sedley family made another move, this time to Hinton, Alberta in 2017. Steve worked in Children's Services while Raylene was a Director of a Childcare Centre. It was a busy time during the first pandemic years, with the Childcare Centre reopening quickly for families of essential workers, after initially being locked down.

Steve, Raylene and Emmett used their expert moving skills once again in the spring of 2021 and moved to Calgary. Initially, Steve continued his career with Children's Services and Raylene taught preschool. In early 2022 the Sedley family happily expanded with the adoption of, now 3-year-old, twins, Isla, and Aidyn. Raylene describes the twins as a "perfect match" as they have many characteristics in common, including their Scottish/Irish and Russian heritages.

Steve currently works as a Disabilities Caseworker with the Government of Alberta and Raylene has just returned to work, this time as a Child Care Licensing Officer, also with the Government of Alberta, her "dream job". Emmett, now 8 and in Grade 3, loves playing hockey games and tournaments with the Crowfoot Coyotes. He also enjoys go-carting and soccer and these days he has a shadow in little brother, Aidyn. Aidyn loves anything to do with tractors, construction and is so inquisitive about how things "work". I wonder what he will be up to in 20 years? Isla loves her baby dolls and is proud to tuck her babies into a little crib that used to be Raylene's, when she was a little girl. The family is very proud of Isla as she is making great strides with her walking and speech as she begins to discover all she can achieve.

Steve and Raylene are so thankful for the skill and support of the staff at Alberta Children's Hospital. They are determined to foster as much independence as possible for Isla as they try to make her life as much the same as it is for Emmett and Aidyn. As a family, they love being outside together, whether for a little hike, biking, picnics together or simply exploring in the backyard.

As to how the Sedley's found St. Thomas UC, Emmett mentioned that he wanted to go to church. That was the nudge for Steve and Raylene, with backgrounds in the Presbyterian and United Church, to look into the church closest to their Arbour Lake home. Lucky for us, it was St. Thomas! They felt warmly welcomed and "at home" right away. They really enjoy the music at STUC, something that is part of Steve's background, and the children love the Children's Time and Sunday School.

Steve, Raylene, Emmett, Aidyn and Isla, what a wonderful addition you are to our church family! Thanks for sharing part of your story with us.

*Written by Sherrill Knight (Hospitality Team) with the help of Raylene and Steve.*



Carols and Cocoa, December 2022



## Meet Our Long-timers

### Pauline and Dennis Watson

Imagine meeting at Ballroom Dancing then getting married 7 months later, in Pauline's hometown, Altrincham, (8 miles from Manchester where Dennis was born). They were married in 1960 with their advice to be happily married for 62+ years, is "never go to bed mad".

Pauline was an only child, Dennis had one brother. Pauline and Dennis have three children, two of the children were born in England, Sara was born in La Fleche, Saskatchewan. Jacqui became a teacher and works in Rockyview; Mike became a dental technician; and Sara now works at SAIT. Jacqui, their daughter lives on an acreage west of Crossfield, and the boys live in Calgary. Only Princess, (much loved cat) lives at home.

In Manchester, when first married, Pauline worked at the Federated Employers Insurance Company in Manchester as a machine operator doing accounting and typing. Pauline was very fortunate that after her insurance job she was able to be a Stay Home mom, and never had to work out of the house. Dennis worked in an accountancy firm for 15 years, then decided he wanted to teach. At that time Dennis got teaching accreditation. It was many years later that he got his Education Degree and forever after was the school principal.

War and conscription happened in England. Dennis was excused as he may have had TB when young, Pauline was a child during the war and remembers hearing bomber planes flying over her home.

The Watson family moved multiple times during their lives, and always found exciting things to do. Their first home was in Altrincham. After that they moved to Woodley, and Sutton Coldfield where Dennis was head of the Math department. Packing and unpacking boxes had become a way of life.



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Then the big move to CANADA

Hodgeville Sk was their first home in Canada, then they moved to Regina.

The Watson family lived in Regina for one year, Dennis went to university and got his education degree. Then off to La Fleche, Saskatchewan where Dennis taught at the local school. Pauline and Dennis with their musical talent were active, even on TV.

Viking was their last stop before moving to Calgary. Pauline played the piano and was the organist in the United Church, Dennis was the school Principal. During their spare time they built two homes, with Pauline working hard sanding and staining floorboards.

Their last move was to Calgary. Dennis came to Calgary alone, as the housing market was rather slow in Viking, Pauline stayed behind until their house sold. Pauline and the three children then joined Dennis here.

They moved three times here since moving to Calgary - first to an apartment near Market Mall, then to Ranchlands, and lastly to Scenic Acres where they are now. While in Ranchlands Pauline had a day home and was much adored by the little children she looked after. Again, Dennis was the principal, and worked in Springbank School for 7-8 years.

Pauline was a huge support to the family each time they moved and as they settled into their new home and city. She provided endless encouragement, support, care and love to Dennis and her three children.

Within five years living in Canada, both Pauline and Dennis applied for their in Canadian Citizenship which was done by a Commissioner of Oaths. At that time, it was a relatively short process and much simpler than what it is today.

### **Calgary & St. Thomas**

Dennis and Pauline jumped right in at St. Thomas United Church and at one time belonged to almost every Committee. If there wasn't a committee to fit their needs, they invented one. Dennis was instrumental in the actual building of St. Thomas in Hawkwood, right down to hiring the building contractor, twice. In March 1988 the first service was held in the new Sanctuary. Pauline was playing the piano, and Dennis's was in the choir. Evidence of Dennis's talents were everywhere, from building the Lectern, the Communion table, the Memory Book table and probably much more.

Pauline and Dennis both have been very active in the choir, with Pauline at the piano, and Dennis's voice vibrating in the choir.....and his solos were so well sung they would bring tears to your eyes.

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Now they are enjoying their family, painting, visiting with friends, and spending time relaxing with each other in retirement. We are very fortunate to have such a well-spoken, active, knowledgeable, and fun-loving couple as the Watson's as members of our congregation and wish them well.

*Written and edited by: Pauline and Dennis, Kathleen Stonehouse, Roslyn Campbell, and Tracy Robertson*

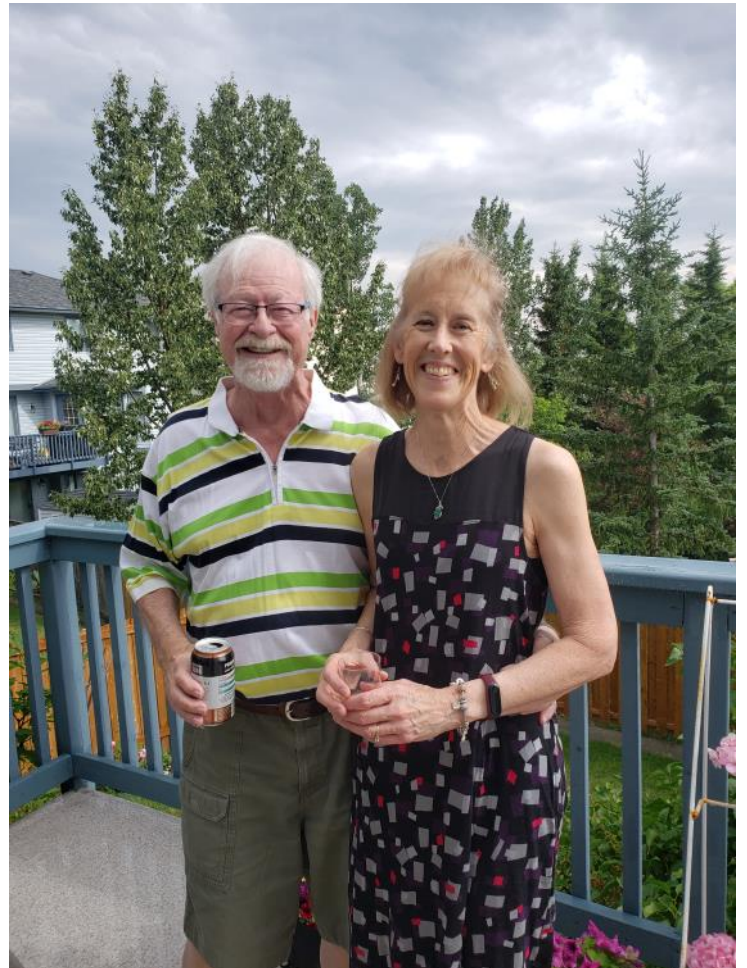
## John and Barbara Robertson

This couple are just SO active and SO busy that I had a hard time arranging a visit and interview with them. You will all recognize John and Barb. John is a bass in the Adult Choir, plus plays BASS guitar and sings with the Strummers, also participates in the 17 year annual invitational golf classic (actually got a 'hole in one'). Barbara directs the Youth Choir and also leads the Exercise Group which is currently meeting virtually and in person every week as we move away from Covid restrictions.

Barbara Jean Lee was born Winnipeg. She completed a B.Ed, B.A, and a pre masters in Music Ed. from the University of Manitoba, an ARCT in Piano Pedagogy and a year of French studies at the Universite de Poitiers in France. Barbara excels at everything she tries, and is her own worst critic. Her career plan was to teach Grade 2 and ended up being a music specialist (in French and English) and whatever else they wanted her to teach....science was not her favourite! She taught for 2 years in Arborg Manitoba and then 8 years in Winnipeg.

Barbara attended Westminster United Church in Winnipeg where she sang in the choir.

She continues to teach private piano lessons and is very involved with the Alberta Registered Music Teachers' Association and the Rotary Calgary Concerto Competition. Her students continually perform at a very high standard, several of them receiving First Class Honors with Dis-



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inction in their exams. She expects excellence from herself, and no less from anyone else. Although Barb always participated in sports, I would say that music fills her life with joy and hard work.

John Beattie Robertson was born on May 25, 1943 in Toronto. His family moved to Winnipeg in 1946. His mother attended All Saints Anglican Church where her father was the choir director and organist. His father, after training in Toronto to be a T. Eaton's rep for Europe, moved back to Winnipeg and purchased the "Robertson Shortbread Company". John spent many weekends before he was 16 pounding dough and icing cakes and then realized that baking was not the career for him.

Johnny loved learning and education of all sorts... just not in a classroom. Now here the interview went in a thousand directions.

Did he start school and finish Grade 12? Well, yes and no. But along the way he surely had a lot of fun.

Here's how it played out. He had bronchial pneumonia in Grade 2, missed two months, and because of Winnipeg School Division rules at the time. Had to repeat Grade 2. His parents then put him in St. John's Ravenscourt until Grade 8. At that time, Johnny realized that GIRLS existed and were NOT at his boys private school. So, he took it upon himself to move to Churchill Public School, where there were indeed GIRLS. School boundaries changed and he moved to Kelvin High School and spent two years with Neil Young and Fred Penner. Theatre, Track and Field, Skiing and Singing, and of course GIRLS took up most of his time and he eventually left Kelvin minus French. In later years John attended U of M and took various courses in Education and Arts.

John's first real job was at the Hudson Bay where he managed the Ski Shop. He then was accepted into the Manager-Training Program for a year. Realizing that everyone in the program was married and had at least two children he left and went out west to work at Sunshine Village as a breakfast cook, singing with his guitar and all the free skiing he could handle much to the horror of his mother. After a while John realized that he had better find a career other than skiing, but not before getting his CSIA Level two instructors license.

John then spent most of his working life in Educational Publishing working in sales and management. He worked for Copp Clark, Ginn, Nelson and Gage, a few years setting up Burke Publishing, from London England, and eventually ending up as Vice President of World Book Educational Products Canada. He also managed time to be President of the Manitoba Library Association and served for a brief time on the Calgary Library Board. During his career he lived in Winnipeg, Regina and Calgary.



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He married in 1969 and has 2 children from that marriage.... Geoff and Candace have 2 young children and live in Tuscany. Jonathan lives in Pitt Meadows with his daughter.

In 1983 Barbara and John met in the Sunshine Ski Hill parking lot. But there's a back story here. Barb's Dad and "Johnny's" cousin, Fletcher were best friends and they spent a lot of time at Winnitoba. Every summer, hundreds of Winnipeg folks hopped a 'CNR Campers Special' train to go to their cottages in the Whiteshell Provincial Forest Reserve in eastern Manitoba. There was no electricity, stores, roads, and the cottages were accessible only by train. Barbara's family started going to the lake when she was 2, and for 3 years, rented each of the 3 cottages belonging to Fletcher's family until they built their "plywood cottage" when she was 5. John's Grandfather built some of the first cottages on the lake in 1927. From age 3 to 16, "Johnny" spent most summers at Florence Lake.

One evening (when Barbara was about 10), a group gathered at a bonfire where 'Johnny' was singing. Barbara requested "Four Strong Winds". "Johnny" denied the request. Bad idea! Many years later, they were both skiing at Sunshine Village and Barbara recognized "Johnny". They married on July 4, 1985 and in 1991 moved to Calgary. ("Johnny" is John's lake name)!

They have two daughters, Christina born in 1988 and Jacqueline born in 1990. Both girls did French Immersion, danced, skated and of course did piano. Christina has stayed in Calgary and works for Douglas Homes, as well as dancing and teaching dance. Jacqueline returned to Winnipeg for University and stayed, working in lighting at various venues in Winnipeg, and now has a position at the Centennial Concert Hall. She also has work from time to time in Calgary and Edmonton with Jubilations Dinner Theatre.

John's life is now consumed with participation in music groups, the Board of the Calgary Folk Club and the Arts Touring Alliance of Alberta and working with computers. John spearheaded and conceived the live streaming of the Folk Club concerts, and the Streaming of the Rotary Calgary Concerto Competitions, (viewed in 28 different countries)! He still works with computers on a daily basis.

Barb practices piano daily, and dabbles at guitar. She would love to revisit her violin and flute. She tries to get lots of exercise and loves skiing. At the lake she windsurfs, (another long "how they met story"), walks, paddleboards, picks blueberries.....and marvels at the beauty of the wilderness.

Everyone loves to spend time at the cottage and looking forward to having everyone together this summer... not sure who is going to get the tent...

*Written by Wanda Veer, edited by John & Barbara*

THE END

# Coronation Big Tea



NEWS

Coronation big lunches and parties

Coronation Tea donations went to support the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society.



Brothers Shawn and Tom were among the guests at St. Thomas United Church's coronation tea party on Saturday to celebrate the coronation of King Charles III. *DARREN MAKOWICHUK* 8

A Calgary Herald article captured the fun of the event, enjoyed by all ages.

