



ST. ANDREW'S
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

November 27, 2025

But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid, for see, I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is the Messiah, the Lord."

- Luke 2:10-11

I will honour Christmas in my heart, and try to keep it all the year.

- "A Christmas Carol", Charles Dickens

Dear Members and Friends of St. Andrew's:

It goes without saying that Charles Dickens' novel "A Christmas Carol" has become a timeless classic since its release in 1843. It is without a doubt the great Victorian author's most famous work, read and enjoyed by millions worldwide; it has never been out of print since its publication. Nowadays folks probably know much of that book word-for-word and line-by-line without ever having cracked the spine of a physical copy or passed their eyes over a line of text, because, besides being one of the most famous books of all time, it has also been one of the most popular and repeatedly told stories throughout the history of filmmaking. Since there have been cameras, there has been someone trying to capture Dickens' holiday ghost story on-screen.

The first appearance of Scrooge on the silver screen was in 1901, with a short British silent film called "Scrooge, or, Marley's Ghost", which tells the entire story in under four minutes. Since then, the story has probably been told hundreds of times in the mediums of film and television. Some of my favourite versions include the classic "A Christmas Carol" with Alastair Sim from 1951, George C. Scott's portrayal in 1984 (in a film of the same name), "The Muppet Christmas Carol" in 1992, with Michael Caine in the starring role, and the 1988 film "Scrooged", in which Bill Murray plays a modern rendition of the classic character named Frank Cross, an obnoxious and self-centered successful TV executive who gets the *scrooge* treatment in 1980's New York City. Other alumni of the famous miser include Kelsey Grammer, Patrick Stewart, Albert Finney, Tim Curry, Walter Matthau, and Canada's own favorite funny man, Jim Carrey.

There is no one reason this story prompts constant re-telling in modern popular culture. Part of it is simply that it is a perfect story, perfectly told by a master storyteller, which speaks to something within us which is undeniably and perennially true. Ultimately, it's about the dangers of greed and the importance of generosity, and

that message will never go out of style, and never not need reiterating. In Dickens' own time, the story was a revelation of and direct response to the plight of the working class in England during the Industrial Revolution, and a plea to the upper-class, rich industrialists to open up their hearts and their coffers for the benefit of those less fortunate than they. It was Dickens' attack against the rich, but also a hopeful fantasy of redemption for those who have given themselves over to the callousness of greed and inhumanity. These aspects of the story spoke to Dickens' own time, and have spoken to every generation since it was written, without exception.

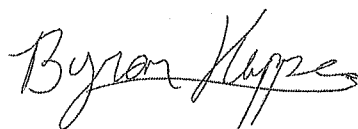
From a religious, *Christian* point of view, it is also a story about the "Christmas spirit", a spirit which is not meant to be a seasonal affair limited to one month out of the year. Dickens was a Victorian Christian in the Anglican tradition for much of his life, even writing his own book about Jesus which was called "The Life of Our Lord", adopted from the gospel of Luke. Dickens, with his lifelong focus on addressing poverty, was a *Christmas* kind of Christian. The point of Christmas and of Christianity for him was generosity, humanitarianism, and ceaseless philanthropy, and that point extended across all of Christian life, and was not isolated only to the Christmas season.

For Dickens, Christmas was a state of mind and a lifestyle, not just a yearly holiday, and we should take his lesson to heart as a Christian people, and a *Christmas* people, here at St. Andrew's. We celebrate the Christmas season for one month out of the year, but the spirit and warmth of heart which it inspires within us should extend across the *entire* year. Each month out of the twelve in our lives should be filled with the Christmas Spirit, insofar as it is filled with the Christian spirit of generosity that we are called by Christ to foster within ourselves and our communities.

In light of this Christmas Spirit of generosity, our special offering for the holiday season will be going towards our *Mission* fund, including 20% allocated to Presbyterian World Service and Development (PWS&D) with a focus on relief work for those affected by Hurricane Melissa, 30% to Presbyterians Sharing, and 50% to local mission work at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church. We are hoping that this special offering allocation will help us to continue spreading the Spirit of Christmas all year long!

We invite you to give generously, and to remember with us that our Lord Jesus Christ was not born into this world for the benefit of a very few for a limited time, but rather for the benefit of all, and for all time. So, let us celebrate the birth of our Lord this Christmas, and remember with Ebenezer Scrooge, the prototypical *changed heart*, to "honour Christmas in our hearts, and keep it all the year"!

Merry Christmas, St. Andrew's!

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Byron Kappes". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

The Reverend Byron Kappes