

Merry Christmas & Happy New Year



December 2025



Dear Friends and Supporters,

As we enter the final months of the year, I want to take a moment to reflect on the very real pressures many people in our community are facing, and to share both our gratitude and our hope for the work ahead.

The pressure under which so many live



Life today is filled with stressors — financial strain, isolation, shifting work and family dynamics, and the emotional weight of uncertainty. The Christmas season, while joyful for some, can also bring added anxiety: increased expectations, grief, loneliness, or fear of not having enough.

Recent national figures help anchor what we see locally:



- More than half of people struggling with their mental health report they are not receiving the help they need.
- Only 47.9% of Canadians reported their mental health as “*excellent*” or “*very good*.”
- In any given year, one in five Canadians experiences a mental illness.
- In 2022, over 5 million Canadians aged 15 and older (about 18%) met diagnostic criteria for a mood, anxiety, or substance use disorder.

These numbers remind us that mental health challenges are not rare exceptions — they are part of the fabric of our society, especially now. Many people quietly carry burdens, and without help those burdens grow.

**“But the angel said to them,
'Do not be afraid. I bring you
good news that will cause great
joy for all the people. Today in
the town of David a Savior has
been born to you; he is the
Messiah, the Lord.'”
Luke 2:10–11**



Our privilege and responsibility at Shalom

At Shalom Counselling, we are honoured to provide a safe, accessible space where anyone who is struggling can find support. For 26 years we’ve served our community, and this year our new building has helped us widen our reach — create a more welcoming environment and expand capacity.

However, this new facility brings a financial commitment. While the space is working out wonderfully, we continue to work toward paying it off and ensuring the long-term sustainability of our services.

Thanks to your generosity and our community partnerships, we are able to offer subsidized counselling for those who cannot afford full rates. This means that when someone says, “*I don’t know where to turn*,” we can say: “*We are here — and we have a way to help.*”



How you can help right now



Continue your support. Your donations make a direct impact — enabling people to receive counselling who otherwise might go without.

Spread the word. Tell friends, neighbours, employers, and community groups about Shalom Counselling Centre. Let them know that affordable, professional help is available.

Pray for us. Please pray for our clients, our counsellors, and our staff — that peace, healing, and wisdom will guide every conversation and decision. Prayer sustains this ministry and reminds us that we are not working alone.

Consider a year-end gift. As we enter the busy holiday season, many people experience increased stress; and the need for support grows. Your donation today helps ensure these vital services are available in the months ahead.

Advocate for mental health. Encourage workplaces, schools, and community groups to recognize that mental wellbeing matters. Invite conversation, reduce stigma, and support access to help.

Looking ahead



As we approach the season of lights, gatherings, and reflection, let's not forget that for many the holidays bring mixed emotions. Some will feel pressure, some solitude, some grief, and some fear — and for some, hope comes from simply knowing someone cares.

At Shalom, in our building and in our hearts, we're committed to being that *"someone who cares."*

Thank you for being part of this community of care. Through your giving, your words, and your prayers, you are helping ensure that when the weight of life grows heavy, no one has to face it alone.

Warm wishes for peace and resilience,

Bruce Stollings - Board Chair,
Shalom Counselling Centre



"A Cup of Comfort This Christmas"

A cup of hot chocolate reminds us that small moments of comfort can brighten the whole Christmas season.

This year has been full of memories, growth, and milestones. As we wrap up, we are grateful for every connection, experience, and opportunity that made 2025 unforgettable.



CROCKPOT HOT CHOCOLATE

Ingredients:

12 cups milk

4 cups semisweet chocolate chips

3 cups heavy whipping cream

2 (14 oz) can sweetened condensed milk

2 teaspoons vanilla extract

Add ingredients to crock pot and cook on low for 2 hours.

Serves 20



Counsellors Corner



As we enter the Christmas season, I've been reflecting on the many small but meaningful moments I've witnessed in the counselling room this year. Children discovering new words for their feelings, families finding new ways to connect, and individuals showing courage in the midst of uncertainty. These moments often come quietly, but they speak of resilience, hope, and the deep strength within each family and individual.

Christmas has a way of inviting reflection. I have been reminded that light can enter our lives in unexpected ways, such as a child's laughter, a shared story, or a simple moment of calm after a long day. In many ways the image of Jesus born in a humble manger offers a reminder that hope often arrives quietly, in the simplest of places. For some, this season may be joyful, for others, it may bring mixed emotions or tender memories. Whatever your experience looks like this year, it is valid, and you are not alone in it.

In my work, I'm often reminded that growth rarely comes all at once. It appears in small steps, gentle shifts, and quiet realizations. My hope is that this Christmas offers you space to notice those moments. Sometimes the most meaningful progress is found in the things that seem small. As a season rooted in hope, Christmas invites us to pause, breathe, and make room for peace. I know all of us at Shalom are grateful for the trust you've placed in us this year, and for the opportunity to be part of you and your family's journey.

May this Christmas bring you reflection, rest, and renewed hope as we move into a new year.

Amber Kakanis

Canadian Certified Counsellor and Play Therapy Intern



THE WARMTH OF CHRISTMAS

Christmas often arrives with a gentle glow — a season filled with moments of joy, connection, and the comfort of being together. But it can also stir quiet emotions: longing, loneliness, or memories that sit tenderly on our hearts. While the world around us may feel busy or bright, some of us are simply moving through the season with care.

This time of year, can bring pressure to appear cheerful, even when our hearts feel heavy. Christmas has never been about perfection — it's about showing up as we are, allowing love to meet us in the realness of life. Whether we find ourselves in a room full of voices or in a quiet moment alone, our emotional and mental well-being matters, and presence is what truly counts.

The warmth of Christmas lives in the small things: a kind exchange, a moment of understanding, a simple act that reminds us we are not walking alone. For those carrying sorrow or missing someone deeply, may comfort find you gently. For those feeling stretched thin, may rest and quiet assurance meet you where you are.

This Christmas, let's hold space for both joy and tenderness. Let's remember the warmth of Christmas — love, hope, and compassion — is big enough for all of us, exactly as we are.

Written by Sandy Landin on behalf of the Shalom Counselling Centre Staff



YEAR END GIVING



As 2025 comes to a close, we reflect with deep gratitude on the past year and the countless lives touched through our services. Every story of healing, empowerment, and connection reminds us of the importance of the work we do together.

We are reaching out to our community — friends like you — because your partnership helps ensure this work continues and grows. We have made meaningful progress, yet important work remains as we prepare for the year ahead.

Your charitable gift, no matter the size, directly supports individuals and families seeking care. It strengthens our ability to provide a safe space for growth, support, and positive change. With your generosity, we can continue creating meaningful impact for everyone who relies on our services.

Please prayerfully consider joining us in this mission. Your support today lays the foundation for a stronger, healthier, and more connected community tomorrow.

We are profoundly grateful to each person who chooses to support Shalom. Your generosity — through donations, prayers, and advocacy — makes it possible for us to continue offering essential services to those in need, regardless of their ability to pay. Because of the kindness and commitment of our community, we can provide care on a sliding scale and meet people where they are, offering hope, support, and healing when it's needed most. Thank you for being the heart of Shalom and helping us make a real difference in the lives of so many.

WAYS TO GIVE:

E-transfer: info@shalomcounselling.com (for operations)

or capitalcampaign@shalomcounselling.com (for capital)

Credit Card: by phone: 403-342-0339

Cheque: 20 Trinity Close Red Deer, AB T4P 0R1



**SHALOM COUNSELLING CENTRE STAFF AND
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
WISH YOU A VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS &
A HAPPY NEW YEAR!**

Helping others find peace

YES! I would like to help my neighbors find hope, healing and peace with my tax deductible donation!

Whether you choose to contribute a one-time gift, give to our daily operations, or commit to monthly support, every act of kindness brings hope, healing and peace for someone. Together, we can empower individuals on their transformative path to wellness; cultivating a community where every heart finds solace and strength.

Name _____ Phone Number _____
Address _____ Prov _____ PC _____
Email _____

Gifts and Donations are accepted by: Visa, Mastercard, Cash, or Cheque.

E-transfer - For Operations: info@shalomcounselling.com OR **Capital:** capitalcampaign@shalomcounselling.com

Monthly Sustainer \$ _____ / month

One Time Gift \$ _____

Credit Card _____ Exp: _____ CVC: _____



RETURN FORM TO #20 TRINITY CLOSE RED DEER, AB T4P 0R1 OR CALL 403-342-0339

Shalom Counselling Centre is a registered non-profit charity, incorporated under the Alberta Societies Act (Charitable Organization #317905). Through the generosity of donors, we are able to subsidize counselling services for families across Central Alberta. For the coming year, Shalom's fundraising goal is \$635,000, with fundraising expenses representing only 8.08% of the overall budget.

We are committed to being faithful stewards of every contribution entrusted to us. While donations designated for a specific project or program are gratefully received, they are accepted with the understanding that, should that initiative be fully funded or not proceed, the funds will be redirected to support other ministry priorities at the discretion of our Board of Directors. This ensures that every gift continues to advance Shalom's mission of extending Christ's hope and healing through counselling.

We also value your privacy. Your contact information is kept strictly confidential and is never shared with other organizations. For further information, or to request a copy of Shalom's most recent financial statement and current budget, please contact our Operations Manager Kathleen Dubas at 403-342-0339

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of Central Alberta**



United Way
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Ed Stelmach
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