

HARVESTING HOPE TOGETHER

Thankful for Every Life, Every Step, Every Story & Every Journey

Message from the Executive Director

I did a little research on the history of Thanksgiving and uncovered a couple of interesting tidbits. First, it's earliest celebrations were connected to being thankful for deliverance from danger and trial (1578, *Martin Frobisher and crew, for surviving a dangerous ocean passage, and 1879, the recovery of the Prince of Wales from serious illness*). Secondly, the earliest celebrations in Canada and the U.S. were celebrated not only with other European settlers, but alongside Indigenous neighbours, who had helped them survive and thrive in the new world.

Of course, Thanksgiving is also about thanking God, and celebrating in community. Thanksgiving is not meant to be celebrated alone! So, putting that all together, this Thanksgiving we can thank God for all He's done for us, the blessings as well as the help in the challenges, alongside (*and being thankful for*) people just like us, and people very different from us!

We live in a beautiful but broken world, full of blessings and challenges, and we need God and other people to walk, work, and celebrate with us, if we are going to experience the Shalom - the flourishing, abundance, health, peace, and joy - that God intends for us.

May God richly bless you this season, and thank you for walking, working, and celebrating with Shalom Counselling Centre as we do the same with those who come to us seeking hope, healing, and peace.

**Grace & Peace,
Rob McLaren**



Holding Space for Hope

Thanksgiving has a way of inviting reflection. As the seasons change and the days grow quieter, we are often reminded to pause and notice the things that truly sustain us — connection, compassion, kindness, and the people who help carry us through life's difficult moments.

Hope is not always loud or easy to recognize. Sometimes it exists quietly in the background — in a conversation that made us feel understood, a moment of rest after a hard day, or the simple reminder that we do not have to carry everything alone. Holding space for hope means allowing ourselves to acknowledge both gratitude and struggle at the same time.

For many, Thanksgiving is joyful and comforting. For others, it can bring feelings of grief, loneliness, stress, or reflection on what has been lost or longed for. However this season feels for you, your experience is valid. There is no perfect way to move through difficult seasons, and healing rarely happens all at once.

Perhaps holding space for hope begins with giving ourselves permission to slow down. To breathe. To appreciate small moments of peace and connection. To speak more gently to ourselves. To recognize that strength is often found not in having all the answers, but in continuing forward even when life feels uncertain.

This Thanksgiving, may we be reminded that hope can still grow in tender places. May we hold space for one another with patience and compassion, and may we remember that even small acts of care can bring light into someone's life.

Wishing you peace, comfort, and meaningful connection this Thanksgiving season.

**With gratitude,
Sandy Landin ~ Administrative Assistant**

Shalom's Staff is Thankful for...



Rob McLaren
Executive Director

Thirty-eight years ago, just six weeks after getting married, my wife and I moved to Red Deer, thinking we would be here for only three to five years.

I'm so thankful God had other plans. I'm grateful for the joy of raising our kids here, for the friendships we've built and the memories we've made, and now, for the opportunity to serve Central Alberta through Shalom Counselling Centre.



Kathleen Dubas
Operations Manager

My grateful heart remembers when today's blessings were once yesterday's prayers.



Sandy Landin
Administrative Assistant

I am grateful for my Lord and Savior, Jesus, my four adult children and my 5 grandkids (soon to be 6) — they truly are my heart. I am grateful for my church and my family and my friends. I am grateful to work in a place where people are seen and heard no matter where they are in their life's journey.



Carolyn Wheaton
Evening Receptionist

This is my first year without my wise father beside me, and I deeply miss praying with him. Yet his faith and words, "put your trust in God," remain with me. I'm grateful for the legacy of faith he left behind.

I'm also thankful for my two daughters and every opportunity I have to spend time with them. And as fall arrives, I'm grateful for quiet walks with my camera, enjoying the beauty God has placed around me.



Julia Schmidtke
Receptionist

I am thankful that God's mercies are new each morning.

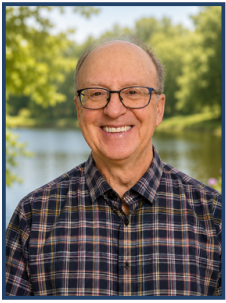


Jolayne Webb
Accounts Administrator

I'm grateful for the everyday moments that remind me how blessed I am. I appreciate seeing God's presence in the world around me—in the beauty of creation, in the kindness of others, and in the many little blessings that can so easily be overlooked. These things remind me to slow down, appreciate what I have, and be grateful for each day.



*"Always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."
— Ephesians 5:20*



I am grateful for working with such a dedicated team at Shalom Counselling.
I am grateful for God's provision and favor in our lives, as a couple, and as a family. I'm grateful for health and the continued ability to help people!

Ken Doucet
Registered Social Worker



This summer I have had the blessing of spending many of my weekends camping in the midst of the mountains. I am so thankful for the beautiful part of creation that I live in. The rest, solitude and peace of the mountains is lifegiving to me. Thank you God for placing me in this part of your creation.

Pam Nyrose
Counsellor



I am thankful for seeing healing, hope and restoration.

Shari Moore
Registered Psychologist



I am thankful for the cooler weather—a time to bring out the thicker throw blankets and add more warmth to the home. I am thankful for the return to routines and the excitement of new ideas and programs beginning, bringing endless possibilities and new visions.
I am thankful for the small harvest my garden produced and for the fall soups and baking that are in store this time of year. I am looking forward to pumpkin spice lattes and candles, as well as a delicious Thanksgiving dinner with family—all the comforting things this season brings.

Jennifer Frehlich
Registered Psychologist



Message from the Operations Manager

I realized a long time ago that my thankfulness depends greatly on the way I choose to think. When I intentionally focus on gratitude, my life feels full of blessings. When I concentrate on my woes, troubles and worries about what may happen, I call that “*stinking thinking*.” It can quickly steal my joy and make it difficult to recognize the good things around me. Choosing gratitude helps me notice the little things that brighten my day—the beauty of a sunrise, the first sip of coffee, a kind word or a quiet moment of peace. Blessings do not always have to be big; sometimes we simply need to slow down, enjoy this moment and look for the good in the day before us.

As Thanksgiving approaches, I encourage each of us to pause and recognize the blessings in our lives, even during difficult seasons. At Shalom Counselling Centre, I am incredibly thankful for our compassionate counsellors and staff, as well as our clients, donors, volunteers, prayer supporters and community partners. Each person contributes in a meaningful way to making Shalom a place of hope, healing and peace. Wherever this Thanksgiving finds you, I hope you will choose gratitude, notice the good around you and discover many small reasons to be thankful.



Kathleen Dubas
Operations Manager

We are thankful for our Board of Directors and the time, care, and support they continue to give. Your commitment helps make a meaningful difference in our community, and we truly appreciate all that you do.



I'm thankful for my family, the team at Shalom, and a functioning furnace in my home.

Paul Martin
Counsellor

“Sweet, savoury, and full of warmth — sometimes the best surprises come from trying something new.”

Maple Balsamic Brussels Sprouts with Cranberries & Feta

Ingredients:

- 1½ pounds Brussels sprouts, halved
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
- 1 tablespoon maple syrup
- ½ cup dried cranberries
- ½ cup crumbled feta
- Salt & pepper to taste

Directions: Roast at 400°F for 25–30 minutes. Toss with cranberries and feta before serving.



Counsellors Corner

As the newest counsellor at Shalom, I am so grateful for the opportunity to share a little about the heart of our work here.

Every week, I have the profound privilege of witnessing incredible courage. I see people step into the vulnerable work of facing uncomfortable—and sometimes overwhelming—emotions, memories, and beliefs. They put hope into action simply by showing up and creating space to talk through their stress, anxiety, anger, dreams, and deepest aspirations.

In many of my conversations here, I find myself returning to a wonderful passage in *Matthew 7:9–11*. Jesus asks a deeply relatable question:

"Which of you, if your son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? If you, then, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask Him!"

Jesus uses our natural desire to give good gifts to our children as a beautiful picture of God's generous heart toward us.

This is the message I hope every person feels when they walk through our doors at Shalom:

God wants to give you good gifts.

Holding onto that truth can give us strength as we move through the pain and uncertainty that often accompany growth. Change is not always easy. It can ask us to take risks, face things we would rather avoid, and trust that our efforts will eventually bear fruit.

Michael Dye's Hope Formula captures this beautifully:

HOPE comes from **CHANGE**

CHANGE comes from **RISK**

RISK comes from **FAITH**

And faith gives us the hope to change, to take risks, and to keep moving forward.

This Thanksgiving season, my prayer is that you take time to reflect on God's enduring faithfulness in your own life. In the midst of both gratitude and challenge, may you continue to trust in His generous heart and in the good gifts He has for you.

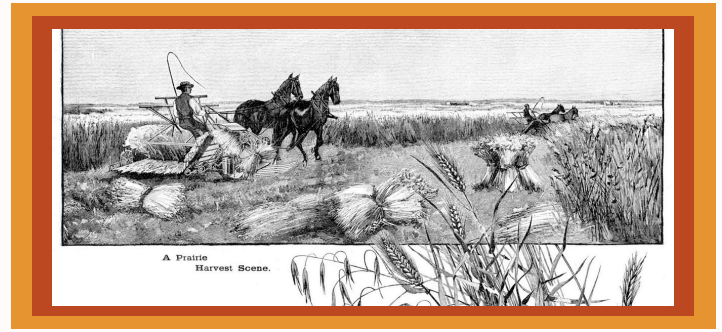
Paul Martin
Clinical Counsellor



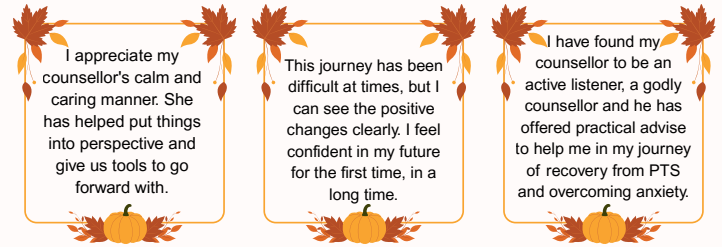
Shalom Counselling Centre is a registered non-profit charity, incorporated under the Alberta Societies Act (*Charitable Organization #317905*). Through the generosity of donors, we are able to subsidize counselling services for families across Central Alberta. For the coming year, Shalom's fundraising 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



Fun Fact: Before autumn was commonly called "autumn" or "fall," people simply referred to it as the "harvest" season because it marked the time when crops were gathered and communities prepared for winter.



A Call to Action

At Shalom Counselling Centre, we believe that everyone deserves access to quality mental health support. Through our sliding-scale fee structure, counselling services are offered at rates based on household income, helping ensure that financial barriers do not prevent individuals, couples, and families from receiving the care they need.

The ability to provide these subsidized services is made possible through the generosity of donors, successful fundraising initiatives, and grant funding. Together, these contributions allow us to extend hope, healing, peace, and support to those who may otherwise be unable to access professional counselling.

Partner With Us

As the need for counselling services continues to grow, so does the demand for financial assistance. We invite you to consider partnering with Shalom Counselling Centre as we work to meet this increasing need within our community.

If you currently support our ministry through occasional gifts, we encourage you to consider becoming a monthly donor. Consistent monthly support provides a reliable foundation that helps us plan ahead, sustain our programs, and continue offering affordable counselling to those who need it most.

Every gift—large or small—makes a meaningful difference. Your support helps create opportunities for healing, strengthens families, and brings hope to individuals facing life's challenges.

Thank you for your generosity, your partnership, and your commitment to making mental health support accessible for all.

Ways to Give:

E-transfer: info@shalomcounselling.com
Credit Card, On-line or Cheque
20 Trinity Close, Red Deer, AB T4P 0R1 or by
Phone at 403-342-0339



If you would rather receive our newsletter by email or mail, please contact our office at 403-342-0339 to update your delivery preference.

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of Central Alberta

