

# ***“The Best Gift Possible – Advance Care Planning Sunday”***

***An interview with Dale Gellatly***

***Reflection based on Matthew 16: 21-23***

Today we are doing something a little different again.

Over this past week, faith communities across our region have been encouraged to have conversations about end-of-life care wishes, values and beliefs. It is a part of a local campaign called Time to Talk.

In our culture today, we seem scared to talk about the things that matter with the ones who matter most to us... death is taboo... a conversation for later... something to deal with when we are presented with its reality... but it is important to have these important conversations now... it is Time to Talk... regardless of your age and stage...

as the poet says... “death comes to us all.”

And it is good for us to talk about...

Perhaps we can take comfort in the fact that even Jesus’ friends had trouble talking to Jesus about his death.

The Scripture that was read this morning often reminds me of conversations

I’ve had with people in my ministry over the years...

“I try to talk with my kids about my coming death...

and they don’t want to talk about it.

They say, Ah Mom, you aren’t going to die yet.”

Time after time, Jesus tries to talk with his friends,

his closest followers about his coming death...  
and they don't understand...  
they don't want to talk about...  
even Peter, ah Peter...  
tries to take Jesus aside for a 'give your head a shake' confrontation...  
"Look Jesus, he seems to say, all this talk of death is getting us down...  
it isn't good for your image...  
if you know this is what is going to happen when we go to Jerusalem...  
then why go? Can't we just avoid it?"  
To which Jesus replies  
with the frustrated harshness of one who is fully aware  
of the reality of his circumstances...  
may it not come to this with those whom we love...  
We need to talk...  
and the time to talk is now.

So that's what we are going to do this morning...  
and that is why Dale is here.  
Now, I'd like to invite Dale Gellatly forward to join me at the front.

Dale Gellatly is the Community Engagement Facilitator with Conversations Worth Having. With a background in volunteer management she enjoys working with the staff and volunteers in this program and as a longtime resident of the K-W and Guelph area is pleased to be working throughout the Waterloo Wellington region on this important initiative.

Conversations Worth Having is a 3-year collaborative project of Hospice Waterloo Region and Hospice Wellington. It is funded by the Waterloo

Wellington Local Health Integration Network with the goal of bringing information and increasing understanding of Advance Care Planning across both the community and health care sectors.

So, Dale, could you tell us what is Advance Care Planning and why is it important to talk about it?

What are the assumptions we make when we talk about these things? What do we think we know or think we have already taken care of but may be wrong?

How does one have a conversation about this topic? What are we really talking about when we talk about it?

Dale, we are in a church service this morning, why do you think it is important for a community such as this to talk about this topic with our loved ones and each other?

Thank you, Dale, for sharing your passion and your experience with us today. You've brought some resources with you today that those who are interested can pick up during our coffee hour – and I understand that you will be joining us for coffee hour so that folks can talk more with you after the service.

On behalf of St. Andrew's Guelph, I want to thank you very much for being with us this morning.