

THE LINK

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church



February is here and offers us new opportunities for worship, reflection and planning. According to Walter Brueggemann in *A Way other than Our Own*, "Lent is a question, a gift, and a summons. The questions of Lent are: What are we doing? Are we working for that which does not satisfy?"

February 2023

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Victoria, BC

Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, February 22 with a noon Ash Wednesday service at St. Andrew's. This 30-minute worship provides us an opportunity to answer the questions that Brueggemann has recommended. Just as Christmas Day is empty without the celebration of Advent, Easter without the deeply personal spiritual journey of Lent will leave us unprepared for Easter celebration.

Lent begins on Ash Wednesday and continues through the Holy Week services of Maundy Thursday and Good Friday before reaching the celebration of Easter morning. The weeks in-between allow us an opportunity of study and reflection. We offer a Lenten Bible and book study based on the movie *Chocolat* and the book ***Christ and the Chokolaterie: A Lent Course*** by Hilary Brand.

This study will be held on Thursdays from 3:00 – 4:30 pm at Knox Presbyterian Church, 2964 Richmond Road, and jointly taught by Rev. Laura Kavanagh, Rev. Cathy Victor and Rev. Mitch Coggin. Our study begins on Thursday, February 23 as we watch the movie on which the book and Bible study are based. During the weeks from February 23 – March 30, each week uses the film as a starting point for exploring issues about God, the world, and what it means to be human. The book uses five group sessions with the themes: *Giving up - the prelude to change*, *Giving out - the power of a gift*, *Getting wise - the possibility of change*, *Getting real - the power of acceptance*, and *Growing up - the process of change*. Each session include segments from the film, discussion questions, exercises and meditations, and suggestions for individual reading and related Bible passages.

Our multi-week study is an opportunity to deepen our faith and prepare our lives for the celebration of Easter made significant through our study together. You can purchase a paperback or Kindle version of ***Christ and the Chokolaterie: A Lent Course*** by Hilary Brand through Amazon to begin your preparation for your Lenten journey.

As Brueggemann concludes, "Lent is being drawn: to Jesus' way in the world, to Jesus' news, to Jesus' people who practice generosity and forgiveness and hospitality, away from greed, away from fear, away from anxiety, away from brutality."

Also, during February, please attend the 2-hour exercise led by Pastor Mitch on Sunday, February 19 immediately following coffee hour. Together, through this exercise we explore the riches of St. Andrew's: the people (you!), the skills, the resources, our connections in the community and our buildings (and everything in and about them). This exercise is called asset mapping because it allows us to discover and name resources that we may have never considered assets! The exercise is a momentum builder that you will not want to miss!

Rev. Mitch Coggin

Session Report

Rev. Wayne Stretch, Interim Moderator, opened the meeting with prayer.

Elders were saddened to hear of the recent death of Alistair Grant, long-time member of St. Andrew's. Alistair is remembered for his devotion to the church as usher captain and for his cheerful good nature.

January is the fifth month at which there is no appointed Session Clerk. Jerry Verwey volunteered to take minutes. However, in addition to recording of the minutes, there are many other responsibilities during the month that require a session clerk.

Correspondence was received from Sheelagh Garson on behalf of the Kitchen committee reporting that a group of people have ideas: a) how we might make better use of space in the building and b) ideas for future community building activities. The upcoming asset mapping exercise will be an opportunity to share and flesh out those ideas with the congregation.

Jack Reimer, Treasurer, provided final updates on the budget for presentation at the Congregational Meeting on 22 January. It was agreed that a brief explanation should be prepared for the congregation regarding the recommendation to approve the removal of earthquake insurance from the church insurance cover. It was noted that in January 2022, the session, pending approval from Presbytery, approved the removal of this insurance for earthquake cover.

The Annual General Meeting for St. Andrew's will be held on Sunday, February 26.

The session was pleased to agree to the Mission and Outreach motion that the February PWS&D campaign funds will be targeted for the humanitarian crisis in Pakistan.

As a continuation of the revision of the roll begun in November 2022, session agreed to remove from the roll, the list of adherents presented. We continue to follow up with members with whom we have had no recent contact.

Collaborative Ministry

The interim moderator encouraged elders to continue forward with other sessions with a view to establishing a collaborative ministry in Victoria.

St. Andrew's is greatly motivated by the desire to begin a formal ministry search as are the other vacant churches. We all face significant barriers to proceeding with the search: a) declining or already insufficient financial resources; b) the absence of a 'critical mass' of worshippers and a very aging demographic; c) the burden of buildings that we struggle to maintain; and d) a crisis of leadership in key positions of administration oversight, eldership and pastoral care/mission outreach. But to look at it from a different perspective, perhaps those constraints are timely and have been a gift of God.

1 Corinthians 1:2: *To the church in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus and called to be holy, together with all those everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

Rev Stretch asks, 'What does this mean to us?':

- We have the only essential resource we need - Christ alive in us by faith.
- The call of God to ministry in His church is a combined call, perhaps a 'combined call' to a

(Continued on page 10)

In Loving Memory



Alistair Grant - January 9

And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain....

Revelations 21:4

Mission and Outreach Committee

ST. ANDREW'S SUPPORTS PAKISTAN

Presbyterian World Service & Development (PWS&D) is the relief and development agency of The Presbyterian Church in Canada. Through PWS&D our church works with the global church to provide support where needed to our most vulnerable neighbours. PWS&D is committed to Christ's message of love through action.

As part of our annual budget St. Andrew's typically donates \$2000.00 to PWS&D and more if it is donated. Each February, Mission & Outreach at St. Andrew's selects a particular focus and encourages its members and adherents to donate to PWS&D. This year's donations will be directed to Pakistan. Unfortunately in the past few years Pakistan has experienced more severe droughts and flooding. As Pakistan is predominantly reliant on agriculture, climate change has led to even more food insecurity for its people. Families most affected will receive immediate PWS&D supported food assistance, followed by training in climate smart agriculture. Providing food for struggling families provides much needed nutrition for growing children. Artisan women will also be trained to market their goods so that they can increase their income.

Other partners participating in this program include the Canadian Foodgrains Bank, the Government of Canada and Community World Service Asia.

Please consider donating to PWS&D. You can donate through your church envelopes by cash or by cheque, indicating PWS&D. You can also donate on the church website at standrewsvictoria.ca

Patti Jackson



News from the Choir Director

A new member in our choir this year is **Alberta Brown**. She is a professional flautist with the Victoria Symphony Orchestra for this season. Alberta sings alto in the choir and often plays her flute on Sunday mornings. In January, Alberta and I played "Flower of Flowers". The piece was written by Alberta's father, Stephen Brown, for Alberta and me. Stephen tells me that the piece is inspired by Dufay's *Flos Forum*, early Renaissance music and Gregorian Chant. Stephen is writing a set of 3-5 pieces for us. The second piece "Come Creator Spirit" is in my hands now and will be played in February. We look forward to sharing it with you.

Christine Purvis



Rabbie Burns Tea at St. Andrew's



The Victoria Scottish Gaelic Choir held a Rabbie Burns Tea on Sunday, January 22 in St. Andrew's Presbyterian Kirk Hall. The hall was packed for an afternoon of Scottish entertainment all in honour of the famous bard, Robert Burns. There were poetry readings (My Love is like a Red, Red, Rose and A Man's a Man for A' That) and bagpipe favourites (Scotland the Brave). Two members of St. Andrew's, Joyce Nordwall and Jannette Hennigar sang with the Victoria Scottish Gaelic Choir. The Vancouver Island Scottish

Country Dance Society performed graceful reels and strathspeys and young dancers from Kathleen Laurie School of Highland Dance showed their expertise with sword dances, highland flings and sailors' hornpipes! Many cups of well-brewed tea and shortbread cookies were consumed! The tea ended with the traditional singing of Auld Lang Syne.



Photos by D. McLean



Lenten Opportunity 2023

Remember last year about this time? Twenty of you shared your faith in our St. Andrew's Lenten Reader. My hope is that, like me, those reflections were a source of inspiration and encouragement in your own life with Christ. We want to create a Lenten Reader for 2023.

We are not asking for your perfection; we are asking you to share your unique experience.

What regular practice or experience in your everyday life connects you to the presence and goodness of God?

Perhaps, reaching out to a friend just when they need you (and you them) most, reading scripture in the quiet of the morning light, noticing the new buds on your rosebushes, or baking for your neighbour, connect you to the presence and goodness of our faith in God.

Each of you experience moments that are prayerful reminders of God's presence; sometimes in the midst of difficult circumstances and often in the middle of our daily routines. Each of us both struggle and find joy as we attempt to know God.

We invite **YOU** to share:

- A practice or experience that is prayerful, that reminds you regularly that God is here,
- A regular routine that connects you to the presence and goodness of God in your everyday life.

Describe your experience in any way that you choose: a description, an example, a story, poem, (handwritten or typed) or photograph that can be included in our daily guide for the season of Lent. Send to **Linda Coggin** or drop your submission by the Church office by **Sunday, February 19, 2023**.

Consider this opportunity to share your life of faith. If you have any questions or need encouragement, please ask!

lindacoggin@gmail.com
250-880-0932

Sunday Coffee and the Lecture Room

In recent weeks you may have been hearing discussions regarding more regular use of the Lecture Room for our Sunday Coffee. Those of us who often work in both the Hall kitchen and the Lecture Room can tell you there are advantages and disadvantages to both areas.

As we all know, the many rooms and spaces in our church building and hall have changed in recent years. It has become even more important that we look at how can we make better use of our spaces.

First, how can the spaces work for us as a congregation and second, can those spaces have a dual, or even a multi-purpose? There are many in our congregation who find the stairs into the hall very challenging and the risk of a fall is very real. Having Sunday coffee in the Lecture Room would be a good option but at present it is not set up for regular use. Some renovations and a working dishwasher would need to be in place. All of this has a cost - money for the required changes to the work areas, a new dishwasher and, most importantly, help from the people of the congregation to make the necessary changes.

So our questions to you are: Do you think making changes to the Lecture Room is a good idea? Are you willing to help in some way to accomplish this? Help comes in many forms. Sometimes it means physically lifting or carrying, sometimes it is financial help and sometimes it is supporting fundraising initiatives.

Whatever is decided, we must keep in mind the commitments we have made to support St. Andrew's in 2023. Those commitments must go hand in hand with any new initiatives. Please send your comments, or questions to office@standrewsvictoria.ca or phone (250) 384-5734. We need your help to make good decisions.

Kitchen Committee



Baptism and Relationships

At our Sunday service on January 8, the Meditation was titled "The Benefit of Baptism". As sometimes happens, the message sent is not always the message received. Baptism may be considered by some as a ceremony or a ritual, while for others it may be just part of life.

Reverend Mitch tied the message of Baptism to the being a "member of the family of God" and then went on to share how people participate as a member of the family of faith. He continued with his message of conversations which take place over coffee after our Sunday Service and/or visits by members to others in the St. Andrew's family. Invariably, the conversations are much more than "how's the weather", but more of "how are you doing", "can I do anything for you" and others of interest, and sometimes offers of help and encouragement. Sometimes these conversations are opportunities for people to make suggestions on how to make St. Andrew's better.

As I was listening to Mitch's message, I reflected on two recent newspaper articles. One was in the *Globe and Mail* and spoke to the importance of ritual (i.e. ceremony) and the rituals we have around Christmas time such as decorating the Christmas tree, dining with family, exchanging gifts and attending Christmas Church service. If we were to do these things at other times of the year it would not have the same meaning. The hidden element is the "sense of tradition" or another way to describe it would be the "sense of comfort". We have ritual at our typical Sunday service, whether it be the way we greet people in the narthex, sing hymns or respond to prayers. The closing comment in the *Globe* article reads as:

In a world that is constantly changing, stability can be comforting. Besides ritual actions themselves are highly structured and repetitive – think of hanging ornaments on the tree or sing the words of a carol. Laboratory and field studies show that the types of repetitive rituals are soothing because they provide a sense of predictability and control.

The second article was from the January 1st issue of the *New York Times* and spoke of the importance of friendships. Friendships come in many forms – some through our neighbourhood, school, work, and Church. Studies show people who have friends (not just acquaintances) have a more satisfying and enjoyable life.

At St. Andrew's we have the best of both – the ceremony of Sunday service gives us some comfort and predictability along with the interaction with others who over time have become more than "just other worshippers" but friends.

We are blessed on both fronts.

In friendship,
Jim Ferguson

Lenten Bible Study

Based on the movie *Chocolat* and the book, *Christ and the Chocolaterie: A Lent Course*
by Hilary Brand

Thursdays, February 23 – March 30

3:00 – 4:30 PM

Knox Presbyterian Church
2964 Richmond Road

Co-sponsored, led, and taught by Rev. Cathy Victor, Rev. Laura Kavanagh, and Rev. Mitch Coggin

You may obtain the book via Amazon Kindle version for \$4.27.

“Creative Ministries in Chaotic Times” – Presbytery Retreat

Summary: *Observe what God is doing both in our midst and around us and then join in, mindful of the need for personal and corporate spiritual and character transformation.*

Presbytery met in Nanaimo on Jan. 17-18 for its first annual retreat since the COVID pandemic began. The timely topic of “Creative Ministries in Chaotic Times” was led by [the Rev. Andrea Perrett](#), an associate of the [Centre for Missional Leadership \(CML\)](#) of St. Andrew’s Hall, where her focus is “New Witnessing Communities”. Presbyters were unanimous in agreeing that all congregations on the island are facing serious challenges. None claimed to “have the answers”, and all were eager to learn from Andrea Perrett and from each other.

The key text for the retreat was 2 Corinthians 4:1-5:10. Focusing on sharing “the treasure in clay jars” (2 Cor. 4:7), Andrea suggested that congregations struggling now were probably struggling before COVID. The pandemic simply moved us along a trajectory that we were already on.

However, we have a God of hope, and the future of the church is not up to us, it is up to God – and God still includes us in His plan. This is a recent and major shift in theological thinking about mission. In essence, “*being missional is joining in with God’s work in the healing of the nations*” (D. Guder): first, be still and observe what God is doing around us, and then join in. Once truly grasped and internalised, an understanding of what is known theologically as “*Missio Dei*” (“*Mission of God*”) leads away from actions or programs, to focusing on the nature of the church; from being task-oriented, to becoming a missional church; from “ministering to”, to “ministering with”; from the individual, to the communal. Renewal through internalizing the meaning of *missio Dei* can also mean throwing out clay jars that are cracked (i.e., structures and programs) and then making new jars to hold the treasure.

Andrea described the work of the *Centre of Missional Leadership* (CML), and the programs it offers. The Centre wants to make a difference in the lives of congregations, and is now transitioning from being a place of learning that students *go to* for training to being a place that also *reaches out* to individuals and churches to offer its knowledge and experience. They

have a newsletter; a Facebook page; study guides; a regular conversation that people – laity and clergy – join on Zoom (or can later access online); a two-year course designed for groups that requires 8 Saturdays and an experimental project in their church (St. Columba in Parksville is part-way through the course); one-day events; a library; and other resources.

Andrea Perrett then spoke about [Cyclical Vancouver](#) and [Cyclical PCC](#), and their role in nurturing a “spirit of experimentation” in outreach for starting new churches. Key changes she sees in the formation of “new clay jars” include moving from a focus on location, to leaders; from launching an activity, to joining in with what the Holy Spirit is already doing; from single leadership, to plurality of leadership; from “ministry to”, to “ministry with”; from congregation-based, to new worshipping communities. Examples she gave included the [Rector’s Cupboard](#) podcasts, the [Evangelically Departed](#) blog site, [Theology In Pieces](#) podcasts (i.e., theology in small snippets), and [Local Worship](#) on Apple Music.

She also gave an example of an initiative within the Presbyterian Church of Canada. With [Church On The Road](#), a minister with a mobile home now drives through rural and First Nations communities where there are no ministers (as in one-third of PCC congregations) and holds services and gives pastoral care. Andrea emphasized again that the starting point is always a time of intentional discernment and letting the Holy Spirit guide and reveal what God is doing, and how we can participate – recognizing that none of us knows what the PCC will look like in 20 years, and that new ways of ministering, such as Church on the Road, will emerge. It is a time to experiment, to take new steps, and also to recognize that we will learn through failure, and thus need not dwell and fret if something we attempt fails – keep moving forward.

Finally, two Island churches shared with Presbytery their current experiences in more detail. Austin Penner, from Nanaimo, spoke of working as a DJ in nightclubs, quickly drifting into alcoholism for 5 years before hitting “rock-bottom”, becoming a Christian, and then going through a discipleship course at St. Andrew’s Nanaimo. Over time, he discerned that the nightclub scene offered an opportunity to work missionally and, with the support of St. Andrew’s Nanaimo, he pursued this dream. He and Jeremy Bellsmith worked with the Centre for Missional Leadership to find resources, support and

encouragement, and launched a church (UpperLVL) that meets in a nightclub two Sunday evenings a month. They are supported by enthusiastic young people from a VIU Christian student group and youth groups of local churches – a “critical mass” of Christian young people having fun in a nightclub atmosphere will hopefully be a draw for the unchurched. UpperLVL comes under the umbrella of St. Andrew's, but there is no expectation that new Christians from UpperLVL will join St. Andrew's.

St. Columba in Parksville then shared their missional journey within a more traditional setting. As part of their two-year course at the Centre for Missional Leadership, they explored the needs of their local community. Their objective was a missional activity which met the combined needs of both the community and their aging congregation, and an opportunity evolved to start a chair yoga class. They do not yet know if this will catch hold, and so are treating it as an experiment in a new way of understanding and implementing *missio Dei*.

In summary, many cracked clay jars within the traditional church need replacing with new jars to hold an old treasure for a new era. Grasping and internalising *missio Dei* offers an opportunity for congregational transformation and renewal that can fundamentally change our “why”, even if the “what” is more like chair yoga in the Lecture Room than a missional nightclub in the Strathcona Hotel.

May the Holy Spirit guide us in *our* reflections on *missio Dei*, and truly transform our individual and corporate characters and spiritual lives so that we join in God's activities with renewed missional hearts and minds!

(A more complete report with more examples and links to helpful websites is available on request.)

Brian Titus
Rep. Elder to Presbytery

St. Andrew's Needs Your Ideas!

God has blessed St. Andrew's richly, in more ways than we realize. How might we put those riches to use for God?

This is your time to come forward with your ideas. Bring your ideas as Pastor Mitch leads us in an exercise in which together, we explore the riches of St. Andrew's; the people (you!), the skills, the resources, our connections in the community and our buildings (and everything in and about them).

Having explored what we have and who we are, we will seek to discover how we might use these riches for God's purpose!

This exercise is called **Asset Mapping** because it allows the participants to discover and name resources that we may have never considered assets! Pastor Mitch has led this exercise many times and in many circumstances. It invariably creates opportunities for brainstorming, sharing ideas and creating plans for immediate action. It also creates excitement and enthusiasm!

Come and join us.

This session is for everyone; we hope you will set aside time to join in this important congregational activity.

When: Sunday, February 19

Time: Starting immediately after coffee hour

Lunch: A light lunch will be provided.

For planning, it helps to know who will be attending. Please sign up in one of the following ways:

- Sign up sheet in the Kirk Hall on February 5 and February 12.
- Call the office by Tuesday, February 14.
- Email session.clerk@standrewsvictoria.ca by Tuesday, February 14.

If you are not able to attend this session? Please contact us (as above) and we will try to schedule another time or a Zoom session.

Colina Titus

Confidential prayer requests should be sent to:

ryneveld@telus.net.

If you need us, the prayer chain is here, ready and willing to pray with you or for you.



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minister or ministers - is God inspired.

- A call to a ministry in partnership with other churches that may best impact our community for the sake of Christ could be a compelling vision to an ordained minister seeking a call.
- In Martin Luther King's last sermon, he said, "I cannot be all I need to be, until you are all you need to be. And you cannot be all you need to be until I am all I need to be". God has knit us together in Christ... to be as Christ to a broken world.

Asset Mapping

- Pastor Coggin gave a recap of the asset mapping as presented at the December Session meeting.
- This exercise was recently completed by the congregation at Trinity who identified one project with which to go forward.
- Pastor Coggin will soon lead the asset mapping exercise at Knox and St. Andrew's, as well as a shared exercise with a group representing all of the local Presbyterian churches.

Pastor Coggin expressed serious concern that key positions e.g. Session Clerk, Treasurer and Envelope Secretary need new volunteers. This brings us back to the question of collaboration: Can we share leadership and administration? Can we cooperate regarding communication? Can we all work together?

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen Ephesians 3:20-21

Colina Titus

Annual General Meeting

on Sunday, February 26 directly following worship.

This is an important meeting -
please plan to attend.

Ash Wednesday Service

Wednesday, February 22

12:00 Noon

Begin your Lenten season with this brief service of music and meditation at St. Andrew's.

The service will include musical reflections provided by Christine Purvis.

The Ash Wednesday liturgy will be conducted by Rev. Mitch Coggin.

The service will conclude at 12:30 with the imposition of ashes.

Building Community Together

Are we still talking about that?

Wasn't that the thing that happened last November?

Yes, it was, and yes, we're still talking about it. When the event in November was created it was called **Building Community Together** because we wanted to remind everyone that our community of St. Andrew's is a work in progress and that we also have an important role to fulfill as part of the greater community.

We knew that it was not possible to have everything we wanted at the event in November so we agreed that we would have a second event in the spring of 2023.

This event will take place May 12th and 13th and planning has begun. Once again we'll need the help of many from St. Andrew's.


Check out TWASA in the coming weeks. As plans develop, you'll hear more about how you can help.

If you are interested in being part of the planning group for this event, let the office know and Shannon will pass your name on to us.

Our first planning meeting will be Tuesday, January 31, at 10 am in the Study Room (located beside the Church Office).

Building Community Together Committee

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church - February 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2	3	4
				Choir 7:15		
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Choir 9:30 PWS&D Sunday Worship 10:30 Coffee Hour			Open Church 12-1 Meditation 4:30-5:30	Choir 7:15		
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
Choir 9:30 Worship 10:30 Coffee Hour		Happy Valentine's Day! 	Open Church 12-1 Meditation 4:30-5:30	Choir 7:15		Early Music Society Consona Quartet 7:30
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
Choir 9:30 Transfiguration Sunday Worship 10:30 Coffee Hour Asset Mapping	Family Day	Shrove Tuesday Session 7pm	Ash Wednesday Service 12 noon Meditation 4:30-5:30	Lenten Bible Study 3pm - Knox Choir 7:15	The McDades - 7:30	Coldest Night of the Year Walk
26	27	28	March 1	2	3	4
Choir 9:30 1st Sunday in Lent Worship 10:30 AGM Link Deadline			Open Church 12-1 Meditation 4:30-5:30	Lenten Bible Study 3pm - Knox Choir 7:15	World Day of Prayer	

If you would like additions, updates or changes to this calendar, please submit that information to thelink@shaw.ca