

THE LINK

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church



November 2023

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thelink@shaw.ca

Victoria, BC



Forty-five days! This is the duration of the medical leave that has comprised these last weeks of mid-September through the end of October.

- Thank God for Dr. Zarzour and team for excellent care over these months and a successful surgery!
- Thank God for St. Andrew's Session, Shannon Cummings, Christine Purvis, Rev. Wayne Stretch – Interim Moderator and all at St. Andrew's for your prayers, support and covering for me during these weeks of recuperation.
- Thanks to all who sent cards, emails, phone messages, texts and stopped by with good wishes and treats over these weeks.
- Thank God for Linda for her constant care, encouragement, and untiring commitment to provide everything she has done during these weeks to assure that I was doing everything necessary for a full recovery.

I am blessed to be where I am. The exercises prescribed by the physio are indicators of the daily improvement. My next doctor's appointment will perhaps give the all-clear to drive again.

A look back over these 45 days is a helpful reminder of the various ways that God has walked with me through this experience.

A time for Silence – Never in my work life have I ever taken such a lengthy leave of absence. This time has been different by necessity. I had not realized that living with constant pain and the stress of guiding a congregation through multiple challenges was as draining as it had become. I vowed to turn off email, meetings, and the constant barrage of mental “should’s” and “ought’s”. With God’s help, this “turning off” process allowed a new silence to settle in my mind and heart. May it become a permanent fixture in my soul!

A time to Listen – Without the deadlines of sermons, articles to write, meetings to moderate and attend, this new quiet place allowed greater time to read and reflect, study and sleep and to pray. I read *Klee Wyke*, *House of All Sorts*, and *The Book of Small* by Emily Carr. I read *Finding the Mother Tree* by Suzanne Simard, *The River We Remember* by William Kent Krueger and *A Winter Grave* by Peter May.

Of course, we have all been shackled to the horrors of news clips from Israel and Palestine following the bombing of Israel on October 7 by the terrorist organization that rules Palestine. Since then, thousands have lost their lives as rocket and ground attacks continue. Regardless of the political barrage of blame from both sides, innocent Palestinians and Israelis are being murdered. Half of those murdered have been women

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Session Report

Share the Joy

In 2022, 18.4% of people in the 10 provinces lived in a food insecure household. That amounts to 6.9 million people, including 1.8 million children. (<https://proof.utoronto.ca>)

What can we do?

It was agreed that this Advent and Christmas Season, the Mission & Outreach Committee would like to encourage members and adherents of St. Andrew's to donate to Share the Joy, with donations directed to The Mustard Seed Street Church Christmas hamper program.

Ribbons in the sanctuary

In June 2021, session agreed that ribbons be placed on specific pews on the ground floor of the Sanctuary, to care for vulnerable members during COVID. At some time during this summer, without authorization from session, the ribbons were removed and not replaced. A COVID surge has begun that has led to changes in safety protocols in health facilities, and numerous warnings to the public from health officials. Session affirmed replacement of the ribbons on alternate pews on the southernmost sections of the ground floor of the Sanctuary, to care for vulnerable members during the current COVID surge. If ribbons are removed for concerts/events, it is important that they be replaced prior to Sunday worship services.

Presbyterian World Service and Development (PWS&D)

The Missions Committee of the Presbytery has arranged a visit from Guy Smagghe, Director of PWS&D, and as part of that visit, they would like an

opportunity for folks to gather and learn about the work of PWS&D at one of the Victoria Presbyterian churches. All the local Presbyterian churches are invited to this joint presentation.

Note that the venue has changed to provide better access to parking. The event is scheduled for Thursday, November 30th 12-4pm at Knox Victoria, located at 2964 Richmond Rd. Refreshments will be served.

Discussion and debrief about the 3 shared services.

We joined with our sister congregations for shared services (Knox, Victoria: 1 October, St Andrew's: 8 October and Trinity: 15 October). The three ministers (Rev. Laura Kavanagh, Rev. Wayne Stretch and Rev. Cathy Victor) all preached from the lectionary scripture passages allocated for those Sundays, each providing a message that encourages us toward needing to be together and focusing on the question "Is God with us?"

A few thoughts from elders who were present at the worship services:

- We felt comfortable. People smiled and seemed pleased to be there.
- There was lots of talk and interaction between worshippers.
- It was compared to family- a meeting of familiar strangers.
- Coming together was very positive, promoting a greater sense of 'being' in God's presence.

A few questions for session and the congregation to be considering:

- Is there strength in being together?

In Loving Memory

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



Marilyn Bullock - Oct. 11

- Do we want to work and worship together? If so, we must come together as equal participants for ongoing open discussions.
- What is the ministry opportunity at each location? How can we help each other?
- Can we repurpose any or all the facilities currently owned by the congregations? There needs to be a thorough, all inclusive examination of each site to see each in the honest light of its viability for all aspects of church life and mission.

All the local Presbyterian Congregations: Knox Victoria, Saanich Peninsula, Knox Sooke, Chinese, Trinity and St. Andrew's are invited to participate in discussions about our future as a witnessing Christian community in the Greater Victoria area.

Is God with us?

Indeed. God has promised that he is always with us.

So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. (Isaiah 41:10)

Colina Titus

Session Clerk (pro tempore)

Thank You from Mission and Outreach

A huge thank you to each and everyone of you for supporting our recent fall fundraisers with donations and continuing encouragement. On September 30th, our local Victoria team cycled and walked in the Journey for Hope fundraiser. Journey for Hope supports Presbyterian World Service and Development food security projects worldwide. We had 18 enthusiastic team members join in from St. Andrew's, Knox Sooke, Knox Victoria, and Trinity. We raised a total of \$4,495.00!

In addition, folks gave \$345.00, during our Thanksgiving food drive, to the Mustard Seed Street Church to aid in supporting their ongoing work with those in need in our community.

All donations are very much appreciated.

Patti Jackson,
Mission and Outreach

(Continued from page 1)

and children. The world needs to demand an immediate cease fire. We must pray for innocent persons caught in the crossfire. Our listening over these days hears the drumbeat of war across Ukraine and Russia. Finally, we have heard all too frequently from our Southern neighbours of another mass murder last week by someone with a mental illness with no business owning a firearm. Our listening over these days has been reminiscent of Paul's words in Romans 8: ³⁵Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? ³⁶As it is written: "For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered." ³⁷No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. ³⁸For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, ³⁹neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

For me and for each of us, this remains a time to be silent and a time to listen. May we hear the still, small voice of God reminding us that God is not far from any of us.

Healing Blessings to each of you, Friends.
Mitch

St. Andrew's Choral Scholars

We have been truly blessed over the years at St. Andrew's with beautiful choral music which glorifies God and energizes and inspires the congregation.

When our choir supports the congregation's singing, it helps to transform people's lives in a very direct way. We become what we sing. When we take words, especially the Word of God, and put them to music, the music and words become part of who we are. In this way the congregation is empowered and prepared for discipleship through the powerful ministry of music.

Besides supporting and building up the congregation's singing, our choir opens up to the congregation a lot of great music that is a bit too complex or difficult to be sung without extensive rehearsal. The texts set to this more challenging music can comfort, bring joy or inspire us all at the moment when we need it most.

St. Andrew's Presbyterian choir is fortunate to have three choral scholars who work hard to create the beautiful music that glorifies God and touches people's souls. Let me introduce them to you.



l to r: Lauren Steinmann, Eva Smith and Darby Howard

Eva Smith recently graduated from the University of Victoria with a Bachelor of Music, where she specialized in choral music education. She also holds a diploma in Music Production from Nimbus School of Recording and Media. She hopes to pursue a career in music education, teaching band, choir, and voice. Currently, Eva works as a leader with an out of school care program, where she teaches kids about environmental science and healthy living. She is also part of the Emerging Artists program with the Ensemble Laude treble choir. Eva has been a choral scholar at St Andrews since September 2022, and is looking forward to another great year working with the choir.

Lauren Steinmann is currently finishing up her degree in Music at the University of Victoria as a voice major. Her love of music began when she started singing in a children's choir at the age of 9. From there she performed in many musicals such as *Into the woods*, *Little Mermaid*, *Jesus Christ Superstar*, and many more. Lauren wishes to pursue a career as a performer and teacher, traveling and exploring other cultures and their music. She has always had a fondness for choral singing from a young age and enjoys immensely having the opportunity to sing in the choir in such a beautiful sanctuary.

Darby Howard is a current Teacher Candidate studying at UVic. For the past three years she studied voice with Anne Grimme as she gained her bachelor's in music education. Darby also enjoys working with children as an out of school care leader and enjoys video games and reading. She is pleased to have the opportunity to stretch her range and work alongside the choir at St. Andrew's Presbyterian as well as Ensemble Laude this fall.

Barred Owl Visitors to Our Backyard Trees in Fall and Winter

For approximately nine years, a Barred Owl arrived in our yard every October or November, spending most days resting in our hawthorne, spruce and fir trees. Often the owl's presence was brought to our attention when noisy crows attempted to drive this predator out of their territory. Eventually the owl learned to hide beside the trunk of one of the trees, where it was less likely to be seen or harassed. Each evening the owl would fly off around dusk to hunt, and arrive back later the next morning. Often, after the crows flew away, the owl moved into branches more visible from our kitchen window, and over the years it became less afraid of us when we were in the back yard. It was easy to take photographs of the owl as it did not fly away even when we walked nearby.

Unfortunately, however, Barred Owls are a problem for the endangered Northern Spotted Owl, a native species. The Barred Owls are not native to BC and followed the westward movement of Europeans here. The Barred Owls, native to eastern North America, were attracted by the rat populations that eventually grew after settlers developed farms and towns. The Barred Owls were larger and more aggressive than the native Spotted Owls, taking over their territories. In some areas in North America, Barred Owls were shot as an invasive species, in order to protect the Spotted Owls. In BC there is currently a breeding and recovery program and a protected habitat for Spotted Owls. From 2007-2021, 150 Barred Owls were removed from the area and relocated. You can read more about these programs by checking out "Gov.bc.ca Recovery and Breeding Program". There is a great deal of information on-line regarding owls of many species, including other types of owls native to Vancouver Island.

Victoria is known for its high population of rats. These rodents like to live in compost piles, which give off heat when the vegetation breaks down, providing a warm nest site. As well, compost heaps are also a source of food for rats, as is the produce of our gardens. Fruits, vegetables, seeds and nuts are plentiful throughout most of the seasons of the year in Victoria. Even when people choose not to use compost piles, they cannot control what gardening methods are used by neighbours. In our neighbourhood we consider the Barred Owls a blessing as they help to keep the potential rat population under control. We are thankful that the owls help to protect our vehicle engines by reducing the number of rats looking to chew on the wires. Such repairs can be expensive!



Unfortunately, as far as we can tell, there are no Northern Spotted Owls or other native owls visiting our neighbourhood, so we are pleased that a Barred Owl roosts nearby each year helping to reduce the number of rats. The original owl probably died as it no longer visited after 2017. The new owl is shyer, so we don't have the same relationship or opportunity to take close-up photographs.

Submitted by
Dianne Penner

The Next Page for Tamara Aerts



Tamara Aerts, granddaughter of Sheelagh and Dave Garson, graduated in June from Reynolds Senior High School after a successful year in Grade Twelve. Tamara attended Sunday School for several years at St. Andrew's with her older sister. Both of them often come back and help with fundraising events.

Now Tamara attends the University of Ottawa where she is studying Linguistics. Because of her fluency in French and English, she was able to apply and was accepted into the House of Commons Page Program. Only 40 pages are chosen each year from across Canada, four of whom are from British Columbia. Tamara is the only student selected from Vancouver Island.

Since September, Tamara, and the other pages have been working part time in the House as well as attending their first year of university. The primary job of a page is to serve the House, and the Members of Parliament. This can look different depending on the required tasks but some examples are getting pens or water for the MPs, passing notes or delivering packages.

This incredible opportunity has already been an amazing experience for Tamara. She has enjoyed seeing our country's democracy play out before her own eyes

and being a small part in the operations of this system. One of her favourite things is that every work day is something different and that keeps things interesting. So if you are ever watching CPAC (Canada Public Affairs Channel) you might just see her standing in front of the Speaker's chair or delivering a glass of water, she will be the page with two pigtails in her hair.



Unmarked Graves at Alberni Residential School – What is our response?

A news release from the [Tseshah First Nation](#) on Feb. 22, 2023 that 17 suspected unmarked grave sites were found at the Alberni Residential School led to an immediate [statement](#) from our denomination: *“With profound repentance, The Presbyterian Church in Canada acknowledges these findings. We pray for healing for the harm we have caused, as well as comfort for all those who grieve. We continue deepening our commitment to work for healing, reconciliation and redress. Reflection is now needed, from a spirit of repentance, on the findings Tseshah First Nation has announced.”*

Locally, Vancouver Island Presbytery invited Katherine Sisk and Dr. Allyson Carr from PCC [Justice Ministries](#) to present more information on the deaths of children and unmarked graves at the school at its April meeting. In brief, the speakers reviewed the [history of the school](#), which was one of 12 PCC schools in Canada. Sixty-seven children died there, and there are 17 potential unmarked grave sites. The speakers reviewed the history of the [Doctrine of Discovery](#), and how it engendered attitudes of “superiority”, including at the Port Alberni Residential school (using historical statements written by workers there). They then spoke of the harsh reality of intergenerational trauma [*which is not limited to First Nation families*], and closed by emphasizing the need for all of us to be informed and involved in truth and reconciliation. The discovery of unmarked graves will present challenges to us locally, but also opportunities.

When asked why the graves are an issue when there is no evidence of murder and secret burials at Port Alberni, the speakers acknowledged that wooden markers rot, but raised questions we should consider, such as: Were families notified of the deaths and burials? (There is written evidence of parents arriving for children to discover that they died and were buried long before.) Were the children buried with dignity? Were parents given the option of taking their children home for burial? It was also emphasised that **why** some graves are unmarked at the Alberni Residential School should not distract us from larger questions regarding the indisputable harm done to children by removal from their families and culture, suppression of their language and customs, harsh discipline, sometimes [abuse](#), and the resultant intergenerational trauma that is so evident today, over more than 100 years since the school was founded.

The PCC is waiting to hear from local chiefs about the reconciliation steps that they would like to see us take on Vancouver Island. We need to be ready to respond to them as a denomination and as a congregation. We can also individually support them when the topic comes up in conversations with people we meet in our daily lives by being informed, empathetic and ready to converse knowledgeably – thus contributing to the truth and reconciliation needed to heal our relationship with First Nations.

May God grant us the wisdom to know how to be **peacemakers** (Matt. 5:9) and not simply **peace-keepers** when First Nation issues arise in conversation!

Brian Titus

Representative Elder to Presbytery

Some resources:

- The history of the [first Presbyterian missionaries among the Nuu-chah-nulth Peoples on Vancouver Island, 1874-1910](#).
- [Intergenerational trauma and residential schools in Canada](#); and the [original "ACE study"](#) demonstrating effects of intergenerational trauma within the general US population.
- [Indigenous Justice](#): a brief summary of statements and steps taken by the PCC from 1969 to 2023.
- Brian Titus would be glad to discuss questions related to this article.

Baby Grand Piano Wanted for St. Andrew's Sanctuary

If you or someone you know is downsizing or having to dispose of a baby grand piano in good working order, please consider lending or giving it to St. Andrew's for use in the sanctuary. For the past year, the congregation had the use of one while its owner was renovating their home. That piano was used a lot during different music events, concerts and services. If we could have the use of another such piano, it would be very much appreciated. Please contact the church office if you can help.

The Vaughan Quartet performed Sunday, October 29, 2023, in St. Andrew's Sanctuary.

"Lauded by the press for its youthful energy, seasoned experience, invigorating playing, and soulful interpretations, the Vaughan Quartet is one of the most active young chamber music groups in Canada."

The Quartet recently located to Victoria (they had previously attended Quartet Fest West at UVic) and St. Andrew's was pleased to provide space and support as part of the Church Music Outreach for an introductory performance.



The Quartet performers: Vladimir Ruffini - violin, Mattia Berrini - viola, Fabiola Amorim - violin, Silvia Buttiglione - cello played several selections by Hayden, Runcini and Villa-Lobos. We look forward to future performances by the Vaughan Quartet in the Sanctuary.

The RCCO Hallowe'en Members' Recital - October 28



Kim Family news for our Church Family.



Many of our church family will remember the Kim family from Seoul, South Korea. Time passes quickly and we have not seen them for three years. Grace Kim recently updated us with a photo and some family news.

My family is doing well, and please say hello to the church members and Pastor Mitch. Is he recovering well? Greetings also and Happy Birthday wishes to Jack DeZeeuw for his 95th birthday.

Jueun (eldest daughter) works in International Banking and has a busy work life. She enjoys the weekends because she is able to occasionally sleep in.

Juhye (middle daughter) is in her last year of Economics at UBC and will graduate this year. She was able to come to Seoul at the end of April for summer vacation. She spent four months as an Intern at a company. She was so busy and we were not able to take a family vacation but we spent precious time together.

Juliet (youngest) has become a middle school student and is busier than anyone else. Korea, especially in Seoul, is very passionate about education, so she is very busy on weekdays and weekends. But she is doing well because her personality is good and bright.

Not long ago, we met parents of both families and had a friendly time for the Crusoe Korean Thanksgiving. I visited my mother in the countryside and it seems that autumn is coming early in the countryside. My mom gave us a lot of farm produce that she grows. There was enough that we were able to fill up our car with her beautiful produce.

How is Fall in Victoria? It's Victoria's autumn, which I miss so much. My heart wants to go even tomorrow, but I don't know when I can go.

I pray that you and all our church family friends are healthy and happy with God's grace and protection.

Happy Thanksgiving...

Sincerely,

Grace Kim and family

Humanitarian Crisis in Gaza

As Gaza and Israel are mired in violence and suffering, Presbyterian World Service & Development is planning a humanitarian response through the ACT alliance.

The Presbyterian Church in Canada supports peace keeping efforts in Israel/Palestine. The Presbyterian Church of Canada stands in solidarity with all the people in the area who are suffering and affected by the devastating effects of this conflict. Donations can be made through the website at presbyterian.ca.



The Presbyterian Church of Canada are asking people to pray for all those affected by the conflict and for peace in the land of Christ's birth.

Mission and Outreach

ST. ANDREW'S PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH PRESENTS A
**CHRISTMAS
FUNDRAISER**

18

**NOVEMBER
SATURDAY
2:00 PM**

**THE KIRK
HALL STAGE
AT 680
COURTNEY ST.**



**TICKETS \$30 LIMITED SEATING
CALL 250-384-5734 TO RESERVE**

BALLET PERFORMANCE BY BALLET VICTORIA
TEA & TREATS BY ST. ANDREW'S COMMUNITY
VINTAGE JEWELRY FOR SALE



A fundraiser for St. Andrew's!

Ballet Victoria performs (1 sitting only) in the Kirk Hall on Saturday, November 18 at 2:00 pm. Tea and sweets served by St. Andrew's and all proceeds go to St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church. Call the office for limited tickets. See you there.

Joyce's Scottish Baking

We know everyone is a fan of Joyce Nordwall's baking and will want to know that Joyce has a table at—

“Christmas by the Lake Fair” on Sparton Road where she will be selling her Christmas Scottish baking. That is happening on:

Saturday, November 4th

10 am to 4 pm

If you miss that date, you are still in luck. On

Friday, November 25th

Saturday, November 26th

and **Sunday, November 27th,**

Joyce will be selling her Scottish baking at the Wrinch Winery on OLD West Saanich Road, again from 10 am to 4 pm

It is such a lovely drive up to that area, so why not take a trip on one of those dates and you will be rewarded with beautiful scenery as well as a chance to maybe purchase some delicious Christmas baking.

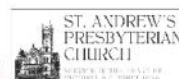
19
NOVEMBER
2:00 PM
03

DECEMBER
2:00 PM

SUNDAY CLASSICAL MUSIC

ST. ANDREW'S PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
924 DOUGLAS STREET
ACCESSIBILITY ENTRANCE ON BROUGHTON
FREE PARKING AT LIBRARY PARKADE

CONTACT FOR MORE INFO
250-384-5734
OFFICE@STANDREWSVICTORIA.CA



It is time to update all church parking passes.

There are a number of different versions in use that are no longer accurate. Parking Passes are only valid in the Broughton Street Parkade and Sussex Place on Sundays from 10am-1pm. Please be aware that the Sussex parking closes at 7pm every night.

When parking in the Sussex on Sundays, make sure you put your pass on the dash. When parking in Broughton parkade, just show your pass as you exit.

If you are parking on church property, please put the pass on your dash. The office will issue new passes to everyone who needs one. The passes will be laminated and your name should be on them as well. Advise the office if you need more than one pass. It is important that a name is on the pass in case a vehicle needs to be moved.

Updated passes for visitors will be available in the Narthex or from the office as needed.

Dave Garson

14
DECEMBER
12:00PM

ADMISSION
BY
DONATION

THE GIFT OF CHRISTMAS MUSIC & CAROL SINGING

Everyone is welcome to join us for an afternoon of trumpet, piano, harp, flute, carol singing, and organ music!

ST. ANDREW'S PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
924 DOUGLAS STREET
ACCESSIBILITY ENTRANCE ON BROUGHTON
FREE PARKING AT LIBRARY PARKADE

CONTACT FOR MORE INFO
250-384-5734
OFFICE@STANDREWSVICTORIA.CA



Confidential prayer requests can 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.

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