



June 2026

# THE LINK

## St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church

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On the day Jesus is crucified, he has a confrontation with the Roman Governor Pontius Pilate. Pilate asks Jesus this famous question, "What is truth?"

In this age of "fake news," what *is* truth?

Is it objective reality? Is it what you feel, what you subjectively think, or what you want or wish to be true?

Not too long ago, we were heralding the age of the information revolution – an age in which information would be valuable and those who had information would be powerful. We seem to have quickly moved beyond that golden age to the new age of "information overload." Now, what is real information or truth, has to be sifted out of a sea of false information and lies ... and it can be very challenging to discern the difference between the two.

In this age of conspiracy theories and accepting as truth *the things you want to be true*, the words of Jesus in that meeting with Pontius Pilate are refreshing, "I came into the world, to testify to the truth."

Even though politicians and those in power may want to "spin" the truth for their own purposes, I take comfort in the thought that beneath all of the many perspectives of those who desperately want to cling to power, there is God's truth. Scripture tells us that this kind of truth is not self serving. It works for the reality of a better world for all God's children – rich or poor, black or white, male or female, Christian or Muslim, gay or straight. This truth recognizes the inherent value of every human being and points toward a world of justice, prosperity and peace for all people.

As Christians, we are called to stand with Jesus and "testify to the truth." Perhaps the first step in accomplishing that will be to trust that there is a God who holds this universe in the palm of that divine hand, whose thought establishes truth and opens us up to the possibility of discovering and living that truth in our own lives.

And what might that look like? I think most of us already know ... supporting ministries that serve the homeless, and those suffering from drug addiction and mental illness, making Canada a welcoming country for refugees from violence and political persecution, or simply listening, with care and support, to the concerns and fears of friends and family members. Simply put, to "be" there for others who are struggling and afraid.

I suppose, as always, the truth begins by responding with love, care and generosity towards all those whom God loves.



Victoria, BC

Rev. Wes Denyer

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## Session Report

Congregational Life reported that they have made preparations for the Presbytery meeting scheduled for Tuesday, June 23<sup>rd</sup> to be held at St. Andrew's. Coffee and lunch will be served to the Presbytery members when they meet for the June session starting at 10:00.

Property & Finance Committee reported the cancellation of routine patrols after consultation with the VIC PD community resource officer, as to how to maintain the security of our grounds. This cancellation will save the congregation several hundred dollars per month. The gym roof repair quotes were discussed and the committee is waiting for an assessment of the quotes by a qualified source. This assessment is expected within the week of the session meeting. In view of the expected outcome, Session has scheduled a Congregational meeting for the approval of expenditures on Sunday, June 14<sup>th</sup>. This will occur directly after the Sunday Communion service.

Property Committee also indicated that the TAP donation system is in the works and has subsequently been installed in time for Podium (choral festival) held on May 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>.

Under the Finance portion of the committee, an expanded role for Rev. Wes Denyer proposed by Rev. Cunningham, our Interim Moderator, was approved for presentation to Session. Rev. Denyer's contract will be extended to the end of December as a half-time ministerial position to include regular pulpit supply and pastoral visitation. This reflects the actual work Rev. Denyer has taken on on behalf of the congregation.

Presbytery report indicated that the commissioners to the General Assembly, to be held June 7<sup>th</sup> - 11<sup>th</sup> in Toronto, were formally commissioned. They are: Rev. John Peang (St. Columba), Rev Irwin Cunningham, John Lee (Chinese Victoria) and Jerry Verwey.

**Jerry Verwey**  
Session Clerk

## Coffee and Conversation

Coffee and Conversation after Worship each Sunday is a special time to get to know people at church—whether they are regular attendees or visitors.

Coffee time is organized and served by two different teams:

Team #1 organizes coffee on the first and third Sundays in the Kirk Hall. (Leader - Moira B.)

Coffee Team #2 organizes coffee in the Gathering Room on the second and fourth Sundays of each month. (Leader - Dorothy R.)

With the summer time coming up and since some of our team members might be away on vacation, we are in need of some helpers.

We are looking for volunteers to serve coffee, help clean up or bring a plate of cookies.

Helping on a coffee team is fun! You get to know people, and you feel a sense of satisfaction, friendship, and belonging.

If you are able to help for one or two (or more) Sundays in the summer. Please talk with Dorothy Reimer at coffee time or at 250-592-5051 and she can give you more information.

Thank you!

**Dorothy Reimer**



## Search Committee – Update...

Basically I have a “report of no report” but I wanted to let members of the congregation know how things are unfolding.

We have received resumés and applications following the National Church protocol. In its simplest format, a vacancy is announced, people may read the list of vacancies and decide to apply. You will notice on the last page of a recent issue of the Presbyterian Connection (spring edition) there are 47 vacancies (not all are full-time and not all are for ministers). This is who we are competing against in our search. To say nothing of the ministers coming to the end of their careers and fewer ministers graduating from seminaries.

During my professional career if I had a vacancy, I could easily contact people in my network to see if they, or anyone they knew, might be interested in coming to work for my employer. I had success in taking this approach.

At our most recent Search Committee meeting, a couple of suggestions/ideas were kicked around. One idea was to prepare short (1-2 minutes) video clips of members/adherents/visitors at St. Andrew's explaining why they attend St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Victoria.

I was at a seniors' luncheon recently and sat at a table with a frequent St. Andrew's attendee and asked him the question “Why do you attend St. Andrew's?” His response was “I enjoy the music”. Other people will have different reasons. One answer is not more correct than others but could reflect the theology, the ministry, the social aspect, the community, community outreach and any number of elements that contribute to making St. Andrew's the downtown choice.

### **So here's the request:**

Would you be willing to take a moment and sit in front of a camera to answer the question “Why do you attend St. Andrew's?” We could then put your comments into a short video clip and post the clip on our website or YouTube page.

If you are interested, please contact me at: [searchcommittee@standrewsvictoria.ca](mailto:searchcommittee@standrewsvictoria.ca) or via phone at 250-415-3687. Thank you for your support as we continue our search.

**Jim Ferguson**  
Chairman  
Search Committee  
St. Andrew's Victoria

## Upcoming Concert

**Quartet Fest West: UVIC School of Music**

Featuring String Quartets from across Canada

**Sunday, July 5 - 3pm**

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church Sanctuary

## Organists and Music Directors at St. Andrew's (1866-present)

<b>Name</b>	<b>Role</b>	<b>Dates</b>
Mrs. Atwood	organist & choir director	1866-1869
Miss Mary Macdonald	organist	1870-1875
Miss Georgina Macdonald	organist	1875-1882
Mr. J.J. Austin	choir director	1875-1883
Mr. Robert Burns McMicking	choir director	18??-1883
Miss Anderson	organist	1882-1887
Mr. Trimen	organist	1887-1889
Mr. George Pauline	organist	1889-1890
Mr. R.H. Bennett	interim organist	1890
Prof. F.B. Fenwick	organist	1890-1891
Mr. Taylor	choir director	ca. 1900
Mr. G.J. Burnett	organist	1891-1904
Mr. Jesse Longfield	organist & choir director	1904-1939
Mr. Cyril Warren	organist & choir director	1939-1971
Mr. Richard Proudman	organist & choir director	1971-1978
Mr. Rupert Lang	interim organist & choir director	1978
Mr. Tobias Yenny	organist & choir director	1978-1979
Mrs. Kathleen Jennings	organist & choir director	1979-1988
Mr. Stephen Shields	organist & choir director	1988-1999
Mr. W. McColl	relief organist	1954-2000
Mrs. Marjorie McIntosh	relief organist	1999
Mrs. Dorothy Barss	relief organist	1999
Mrs. Dorothy Barss	interim organist	1999
Mr. W. McColl	interim choir director	1999-2000
Mr. Douglas Hodgkinson	organist & choir director	2000-2014
Sandra Fletcher	Director of Music Ministries	2014-2017
Christine Purvis	Director of Music Ministries	2017-2025
Susanne Reul-Zastre	Director of Music Ministries	2025-present

The list of persons who have provided music for worship services at St. Andrew's now spans an incredible 160 years! The role has undergone a metamorphosis from "organist" to "organist & choir director" to "Director of Music Ministries", as its evolution acknowledges that the job description has changed significantly since 1866. What has stayed the same is the high standard of music excellence. Anyone who has ever studied an instrument or led a choir appreciates how many years of learning and mastering a discipline is required before one ever considers playing a prelude, liturgy, hymns, anthem, solo and a postlude in public for a congregation. As you might suspect, the behind-the-scenes administrative time commitment has skyrocketed, including liaising with staff and volunteers, looking after instrument and music library maintenance, submitting required info to livestream hymns, writing up reports to Session, and undergoing a Police Information Check with Vulnerable Sector screening, to name just a few. Director of Music Ministries is therefore a fitting title as many of us truly believe that we are "called" to do this special type of ministry.

Have you ever wondered what preparation is required to provide the music the congregation hears and/or participates in during worship services? Here is a start:

1. The amount of time spent on choosing and preparing repertoire for the weekly prelude, postlude, anthem, and solo adds up in a hurry. This task includes many hours of looking through organ and vocal music, studying scores, choosing registrations, learning accompaniments etc.
2. Next are the hymns to support congregational worship in singing. Choosing hymns actually starts with reading the lessons provided by the officiant for Sunday's service, followed by a first draft that might work with Sunday's theme, ensuring that both the music and the text are either in public domain or covered by our live-streaming/broadcast license CCLI, before finalizing the line-up a couple of weeks ahead of time to be included in the service outline.
3. A big part of this job is working with the choir: weekly practices run for 75 minutes on Thursday evenings from September to end of June and for 45 minutes prior to the service on Sunday morning year-round. And yes, our choristers spend a minimum of 4-5 weeks learning and refining each anthem!
4. We are blessed to support and mentor a number of Choral Scholars since the pandemic. From September to June each scholar presents a piece during Reflection which requires preparing the selection on their own and then rehearsing it with me until it is ready.

Special music is important too. It's wonderful to hear the Bell Choir (2-3x a year), trumpeter (2x year) and guest artists share who their talent with us. To get the Bell choir ready for Easter Sunday morning, there were 5 weeks of extra 30min rehearsals with those involved. There is also the beloved "Gift of Music" Christmas outreach concert in December that demands a lot of planning ahead of time. And there might even be a Hymn Festival to organize in the fall...

In conclusion, I am delighted to carry on the legacy of all the organists and choir directors who have served at St Andrew's since 1866, and I will try my best to continue the high standard they set of providing excellent music during worship services and other events.

**Susanne Reul-Zastre**

## **Save the Date/Outreach Concert/Fundraising Event**

**Traditional Hymn Sing Festival— "160 Years of Making Music at St Andrew's!"**

**Sunday, September 27, 2026 - 2pm**

**Admission by donation to help raise funds for a new baby concert grand piano in the Sanctuary**



**Choirburst  
At  
St. Andrew's**

**May 15 and 16, 2026**

**A Great Success!**

**Well Sung, St. Andrew's!**

Podium, a choral conference and festival, sponsored by Choral Canada, was held in Victoria on May 14-17. Based at the University of Victoria, 400 choral directors and thousands of singers from across Canada participated in a wide range of workshops and performances.

Adam Con, one of Podium co-chairs, said about the event, "It's a celebration of the best of the best we do in Canada!"

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church provided one of the performing venues for Choirburst, a vibrant part of the Podium festival. On May 15 and 16, different choirs moved between St. Andrew's, the Royal BC Museum and the Legislature Rotunda to perform. Thirty choirs sang at St. Andrew's. Volunteers from St. Andrew's and Choirburst partnered to make the two days a great success. Thank you to all those who helped.

John McVie, Chair of Choirburst, sent the following message:

"Thank you for the trust you gave me and my team in coordinating Choirburst. St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, the Royal BC Museum, B.C. Legislature and Greater Victoria Harbour Authority were most accommodating in hosting and for that I am very grateful. It was an experience of a lifetime."



Sequoia Vocal Ensemble, Victoria, British Columbia



Konektis Choir, Brandon, Manitoba



Greeters: Arthur, John, Elizabeth



Oak Bay High School Choir, Victoria, British Columbia



Arion Male Voice Choir, Victoria, British Columbia

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## Summer's Here, Routines Change but some Work goes on!

Thursday mornings in June, July and August, the Activity Group will continue to host “drop in coffee hours”. Stop in for a visit and chat.

On an informal basis, two projects will continue over the summer months. Extra help is always welcomed.

St. Andrew's laneway vegetable garden is planted and growing well, but of course requires regular watering. This year we're growing potatoes, carrots, beets, lettuce, Swiss chard, peas, yellow beans, radishes, tomatoes, cucumbers, spaghetti squash and bell peppers. More gardeners are always appreciated. The tasks are not onerous, and easily done.

We look forward to delivering a variety of fresh produce to James Bay New Horizons as part of their food security initiative. Last year our little garden produced more than 100 bags, big and small, of fresh vegetables to be shared.

Our second task, over the summer, is to get ready for St. Andrew's Jumble & Jewelry Sale, September 18<sup>th</sup> & 19<sup>th</sup>. Most of the sale items have already been collected but will need to be priced. On Thursdays, as we enjoy a coffee and a visit, we'll also price the various items that have been set aside for sale. September 17<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> will be the days when everyone at St. Andrew's can help. We will need monitors for the sale tables and monitors for the sale entrance door (the Broughton door). Over the summer, “sale day” schedules will be set. If you can help for an hour or two it would be most welcome.

We hope you can rest, relax and enjoy the many summer activities, with gratitude to God for our many blessings.

**Sheelagh Garson**

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Along with the laneway vegetable garden, we also have a well-cared for garden around the church building tended by our custodian, Grant Shepard. The photo shows him watering the beautiful window boxes that he creates. A lot of his plants come from the ‘nursery’ he keeps which is also located in the laneway.

The laneway was once used for parking cars and is now a place of greenery and produce. A wonderful use of a narrow paved area. Creative minds at work.

**On Sunday, May 24,** St. Andrew's congregation recognized two significant milestones in long-time member, Dirk Ryneveld's life: his 80<sup>th</sup> birthday and his official retirement from his law practice. To mark the occasion, Dirk was presented with an elegant cake, cards, speeches and many good wishes for a happy and enjoyable life away from his long career as a lawyer. His wife, Fiona, and son, Michael, were there to share in the celebration. Dirk reminded those present that, although he was stepping back from the law, he could still offer pro bono advice as needed.



Many in our congregation will remember the Kim family who came to Victoria from Seoul, Korea, in 2020. Grace (mother) and her three daughters (June, Juhye and Juliet) came to Victoria to learn English and little did they know they would be here during the COVID years!

Each of them studied English and since going back to Korea, the girls have all done extremely well because of their knowledge of the English language.

The Kims watch our worship service every Sunday and enjoy seeing people that they were acquainted with.

Please contact me if you would like their address or email address.

**Dorothy Reimer**

Along with Grace Kim's greetings to St. Andrew's congregation, she gives us an update on her daughters' achievements:

“Thanks to Victoria's life, Jueun, Juhye, and Juliet were able to gain many good experiences. Jueun is working hard at the Seoul branch of Citi Bank. It has already been 5 years since she joined the company in 2022. After graduating from UBC in 2024, Juhye joined HSBC Bank's Seoul branch and is currently working for 2 years. The youngest Juliet is the busiest daughter. Becoming a high school student in Seoul is probably the busiest time of her life—after finishing her school day, she goes to a private academy until 10 pm, comes back home, has a quick dinner, finishes homework, and goes to bed around 1 am. Weekends and holidays are similar.”

## *Goodbye...Farewell...Au Revoir...Ciao...Adieu*

### **Dear Faithful Readers of the Link,**

This June newsletter will be our final edition of *The Link*. The three editors of The Link are retiring from producing the monthly church newsletter. Leona Johns, Debra Verwey and Fiona Ryneveld have spent countless years producing and editing The Link and we have come to the realization that it is time to turn the page on our time as your newsletter editors. Our chief editor, Leona Johns, has been involved with the Link as far back as when Bill and Mary McColl were the editors. As you can appreciate, there is a lot of work involved in collating and preparing the church newsletter month after month to ensure it is publication worthy.

The Link has been an important means of communication for the congregation at large. Originally, it was printed and handed out in paper format on the first Sunday of the month. Elders took it around to their districts when they visited those on their roll. It was a great way to keep those who were ill or were shut ins up to date with what was going on at St. Andrew's. Now The Link is produced and put on line so everyone can see it at their convenience. We even have those who have moved away or are attending other churches who say they are still reading The Link as they are interested in the life of St. Andrew's.

As of October 2026, Microsoft will no longer support the publishing program (Microsoft Publisher) that we have been using.

We congratulate Shannon for doing an excellent job in putting TWASA together and sending it out to the congregation. However, at the same time TWASA has made the Link more or less redundant.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the church leadership and the congregation for participating by sharing your stories, celebrating your milestones, and sharing your photos. They show the many ways God's love is alive in our church.

So, at this bittersweet moment, it is with mixed feelings of relief and regret, we are saying "Goodbye."

**Debra Verwey**

**Fiona Ryneveld**

**Leona Johns**



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