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Victoria, BC

THE LINK

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church



Therefore, Be It Resolved...

The 14" x 18" poster, suitable for framing, opened with the above headline. In the body of the text, among the litany of 'whereas' and 'therefore' was my name, Rev. Mitchell J. Coggin in bold letters. I had never before, nor since, ever been granted a resolution in my honour.

I was but a mere 20-year old university student serving a part-time church as an interim pastor in a rural locale near my hometown.

The resolution was handed to me as I left the monthly meeting of the city council, at which I had delivered the invocation. The "Be it Resolved" assertions included 'whereas' and 'therefore' that related to the purpose and priority of the city council. They resolved to make it a priority to give God honour in their decisions and to be respectful in their deliberations. My presence, as well as the monthly invitation to a minister representing all faith traditions, represented an indication of their inclusivity from a faith perspective. The resolution was their way of honouring the invocation and my presence to deliver it as critical to the work they were there to conduct.

Be it resolved, whereas and therefore that the contributions that each of you make in talent, prayers, and financial contributions are in fact a testimony of your love and commitment to God and to the church's role in making a key and critical difference in the lives of all at St. Andrew's and persons throughout Victoria, British Columbia and wherever our ministry is heard and seen.

Why are statements such as the above more powerful and lasting than most of the ones that we often make in January? "I resolve...to lose weight, to start an exercise program, to cut back on _____." Herein is usually a promise that we make to ourselves that often contains very few specifics. This is why New Year's resolutions are likely to fail. Promises and will-power most often lack the depth of commitment necessary to make lasting change.

Be it resolved states the obvious and is a declaration of what is true, what is noble and what may be counted on because it has stood the test of time. Imagine our "Be it resolved" assertions that we might make about the coming year based upon what we know to be true.

Whereas St. Andrew's has stood the test of time and has been significant in the lives of countless individuals and families throughout Victoria, including my own, Be it resolved that I recommit my life to Jesus Christ through my service to God at St. Andrew's in 2021.

Whereas God has faithfully carried me through the rigors of a pandemic year with health, peace and resolve to carry forward, be it resolved that I recommit myself to support St. Andrew's through my talents, prayers and finances to the best of my ability throughout the coming year to the best of my ability with the help of God.

What Be it Resolved commitments might you make now for the coming year because you know them to be true already?

Love and Blessings,
Pastor Mitch

Message from Session

The format of the December session meeting was quite different. All regular session business was postponed until January 2021. The focus of the meeting was a discussion based on four questions, summarized below are the responses.

1. What can we celebrate at St. Andrew's?

- All the planning and preparation for us to safely open the doors of St. Andrew's for in-person worship in September. The commitment and work done by many; those who "did their best to do the best they could". Our resiliency through COVID.
- That we are available for each other; we listen, we call, make porch visits.
- God's provision for us, e.g. the timeliness of the development of TWASA prior to onset of COVID, the skills and leadership of Pastor Coggin.
- The skills that Whitney and Christine have brought to virtual worship.
- The amazing people in our congregation.

2. What has been the most valuable lesson you have learned as an individual this year?

- Differences of opinion are not wrong, just part of solving a challenge.
- To listen to each other.
- The importance of keeping in contact with the people in my district; what warmth they give to us
- Our ongoing online ministry is appreciated.
- I missed the 'normal things' and learned not to take those things for granted.
- God is with me if I listen and seek him. He gives me words when I don't know what to say.
- God can use my vulnerability. That means being able to admit when I don't know when I am wrong and being willing to say sorry.
- "It is a shame to waste a good crisis". I have become more aware of my own weaknesses.

3. What has been the most valuable lesson you feel that we have learned as a congregation this year?

- To support each other with listening, understanding and patience.
- We are a community of faith; we are not defined by our building. There are persons who want to worship with us on-line without necessarily attending regularly on a Sunday. We have learned to be intentional in considering and providing for a range of needs.
- We can respond to the crisis of the day (COVID) and become an even stronger community.
- That even though we can't be in our building, we can still reach out to the community.

4. What is your greatest hope for our Session in our work moving forward in 2021?

- As elders to become better leaders and make the important decisions before us next year.
- That as elders we keep respect, love and kindness in our hearts for each other.
- That we will continue to Worship collectively and individually and show leadership to the congregation and support for Pastor Coggin as he leads us.
- To be an excited, creative, cohesive team with a sense of God's purpose and vision for the future.
- That we grow in corporate spiritual maturity and in our relationships with each other.

Following discussion around these questions, we talked briefly about the next steps in the transition process.

Mission and Vision: It is the responsibility of the session to develop a cohesive vision and mission for the congregation before we can begin the search process for a new minister. Once a vision and mission statement for St

Andrew's is completed, we will be able to describe the type of person we are seeking as our next minister and the competencies that we require of them.

Prior to searching for a minister, the Presbyterian Church in Canada requires that a congregation complete a congregational profile (https://presbyterian.ca/wp-content/uploads/mcv_congregational_profile_form.pdf). A small group will begin work to document the measurables of St. Andrew's (i.e. referring to 'who we are now' and 'who we have been'). Goals for the future of the congregation can only be determined after extensive discussions about the mission and vision for our congregation.

Worship: We have become very aware of the importance of our on-line worship. A group of elders will be researching ways in which we might creatively connect with those who are joining us for worship through the internet. They are valuable members of our community of faith and perhaps some would value a two-way connection.

Although this has been a strange year, amidst the sadness and the difficulties, we have much to celebrate and be thankful for. As we go forward into 2021, we remember one of God's many promises:

"For I am the LORD your God who takes hold of your right hand and says to you, do not fear. I will help you".
Isaiah 41:13

Blessings from the elders to our St. Andrew's church family.

Colina Titus
Clerk of Session

In Loving Memory



Ronald Burnett - Dec. 8
Margaret Reid - Dec. 11
T.A.M. (Tom) Peet - Dec. 31

Prayer for a Renewed Heart

O Lord, you have mercy on all.
Take away my sins,
and mercifully kindle in me
the fire of your Holy Spirit.
Take away my heart of stone and give me a
heart of flesh,
a heart to love and adore you, a heart to
delight in you,
to follow and to enjoy you,
for Christ's sake.
Amen.

Ambrose, d. 397

Share the Joy of Christmas 2020 Update

Thank you to everyone who made donations to St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church's ***Share the Joy of Christmas Campaign 2020!*** Your generosity filled the gift bags for 15 women and 30 men who are residents at Our Place where they are endeavoring to put their lives back on track. Your kindness also provided 20 turkeys (over 440 pounds) to the kitchen at Our Place which fed and will feed those living in Victoria who need a nutritious, hot meal and would not otherwise have one.



The gift bags were delivered on Tuesday, December 22nd. Erin Gesner, a staff member at Our Place, received the bags and has sent an email expressing thanks to all at St. Andrew's.

I phoned the kitchen also on that Tuesday and was told that turkeys from St. Andrew's were roasting in the ovens at that moment to ensure that they would be cooked in time for a special Christmas luncheon planned for later that day. The following is an abridged quotation from the Our Place website:

"Our chefs never disappoint.," said [Our Place CEO Julian] Daly. "The team was busy cooking turkey, mixing stuffing, perfecting the gravy, and

getting fresh vegetables ready for the steamer."

"[A] Christmas Meal was served on Tuesday, Dec. 22 from 11:30am to 1:30pm...As well as the special meals on Christmas day...other December meals PLUS were ensured by our wonderful donors and sponsors."

A former Our Place family member recently wrote a small note to explain just how much a special meal like this means. "Not that long ago the folks at Our Place took me in when I was at my lowest and most vulnerable, and slowly over time offered everything I needed to start again. Today, I am

housed, gainfully employed and feel safe enough to go deeper into the healing I need for myself, my family and community. I am just one of the thousands of folks Our Place have helped (and still helps every day) raise from the ashes of trauma, poverty, addiction and despair."

The meal service was markedly different this year in that Our Place couldn't have several hundred people sitting down all at once to enjoy their meal. Volunteers, politicians and other community representatives

also were not on hand due to COVID restrictions. Instead, the kitchen extended the mealtime to two hours, and service was cafeteria style.

"Our Place has always been there for people going through difficult times -- regardless of the reason," said Daly. "And this year, more than ever, people who thought they would never need our services are finding our doors are open."

I want to recognize Thrifty Foods, Fairfield Branch. The meat department manager, Mike, gave us a good price per pound on the turkeys that we purchased and had them delivered free to Our Place on Wednesday,

December 16th. Thrifty's also donated the 45 shopping bags that we used to hold our gift items. All of these kindnesses add up to make more funds available to fill the bags.

Patricia Shuckburgh and two of her friends wrapped 90 gifts (two for each resident...a toque and gloves in one package and at least two pairs of socks in the second). Patricia wrote out 45 individual Christmas cards to each recipient, expressing warm wishes for each for the holiday and the coming New Year from everybody at St. Andrew's. I really appreciated Patricia doing these jobs. Thank you.



I must also mention all the help from my husband, Jerry Verwey, who frequently purchased items on sale for the gift bags and made the delivery of everything to Our Place very easy for me.

Again, thank you, everyone at St. Andrew's, for your generosity, and God bless you all!

Submitted by **Debra Verwey**
on behalf of the Mission and Outreach Committee,
St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church



Hi Debra & Everyone at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church!

Thank you so much for your generous donation for our residents here at Our Place Transitional Housing! Each and every one of them were so thankful and happy to receive their gift. The holiday season can be a difficult time for many of our residents, but you all put a smile on their faces when they opened their gifts.

We greatly appreciate this donation and all of your support and kindness.

Merry Christmas!
Erin, Addie, Jennifer, and Dawn J



To bring in some extra Christmas cheer at Amica Somerset House, Lisa (Jackson) and her fellow workmates dressed up.

Submitted by
Patti Jackson

Christmas card postage...

I went to the post office recently to purchase some stamps for my Christmas cards. I was sending them to people in Canada and the United States. The postal clerk asked me what denomination; to which my response was: "Two Anglicans, One Catholic and three Presbyterians".

Submitted by
Jim Ferguson

Jim Ferguson has posed the following three questions:

1. Does anyone have an explanation as to why there are no outside door handles on our church doors on Douglas Street?
2. Does anyone know why a newel is upside down and if there is one at St. Andrew's?
3. Was there electricity during the time of Christ?

This invitation is for readers to send their answers to Jim and he will prepare an article for the February Link.

Give it your best shot and send your answers to
jpfergus@gmail.com

Donations and Cheque Writing!

Members and adherents of St. Andrew's are very generous and we receive many donations for funds like Share the Joy, and for our general budget.

If you donate by cheque, please make it out to **St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church** and if you wish, put the name of the fund on the memo line. That way we will be able to process the cheque without any problems.

And at this time of the year, a gentle reminder to make the year change to **2021**. The bank won't allow us to deposit stale-dated cheques.

Thank you so much for your support.

Leona Johns
Envelope Secretary

A New Year's Prayer written by Charlotte Anselmo and Auld Lang Syne sung by Sissel

Happy New Year!

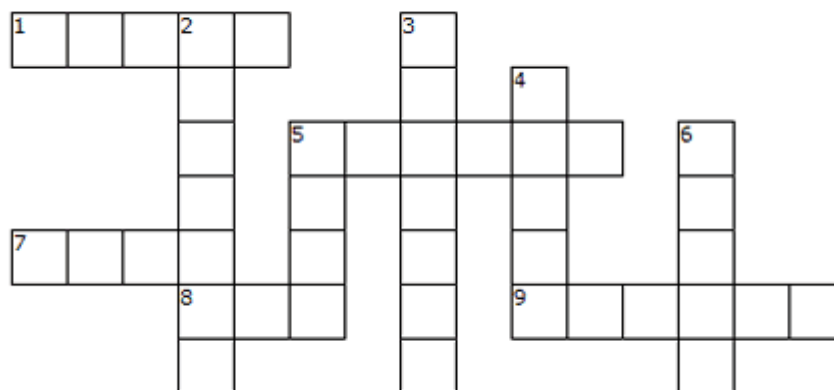
<https://www.youtube-nocookie.com/embed/Rtajxo8d7js?rel=0&controls=0&showinfo=0>

St. Andrew's Children's Page

The Baptism of Jesus

As Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw heaven being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased." Mark 1:10-11

Based on Mark 1:4-11 (NIV)



ACROSS

1. What was heard when Jesus was baptized.
5. The river where Jesus was baptized.
7. The Spirit came down from heaven like a _____.
8. To break one of God's commandments.
9. To turn away from sin.

DOWN

2. To admit that you have done wrong.
3. To pardon for sins.
4. The liquid used to baptize someone.
5. Name of the man who baptized Jesus.
6. A sticky, sweet fluid made by bees.

FORGIVE
CONFESS

JORDAN
WATER

JOHN
SIN

DOVE
VOICE

REPENT
HONEY