

THE LINK

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church



February
2021

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By the time you read these words, Lent will be less than two weeks away. Look up “lent” in the Bible and you will not locate it. The early church, using the old English word, “Lenten” meaning spring, created the 40-day season of Lent to honour the approaching springtime with a “season for the soul”.

Israel languished in the wilderness 40 years before being ushered into the Promised Land. Elijah waited in silence 40 days before hearing God’s voice. Jesus spent 40 days in the desert enduring the temptation. Our lent affords us an opportunity to cleanse our souls, learn to live by God’s grace and listen intentionally for God to speak.

Theologian Walter Brueggemann offered, “I imagine Lent for you and me as a great departure from the greedy, anxious anti-neighbourliness of our economy, a great departure from our exclusionary policies that fear one another and a great departure from self-indulgent consumerism that devours creation.”

Brueggemann continued, “The usual way of being in the world is anxiety. We are pressed, harried and worried, which in turn leads to defensiveness and fear. We are determined to keep what we have. Lent provides a fresh opportunity to gain the awareness that the God who calls us is, indeed, the same God who goes along with us.

Lent is an invitation to a season of examination. During these 40 days (excluding Sundays) we will recognize the wilderness of our lives and be called again to the story of God’s presence with the Israelites through their own wilderness. The sermon focus during the Sundays of Lent will allow us to remember how the Hebrews’ experience of abandonment, guilt, grief, loneliness, doubt and sinfulness parallels our own wilderness anxiety.

Last year, even with an interrupted in-person worship experience with the onset of COVID, we used the Lenten cross during our services where week by week we extinguished a candle until we faced the completed darkness of Good Friday. Again, we will light the Lenten cross during our virtual worship on Ash Wednesday, February 17. Depending upon what Dr. Bonnie Henry tells us about the resumption of in-person worship now or later, we will again, celebrate during Holy Week, a Tenebrae service on Maundy Thursday, April 1 and Good Friday on April 2, virtually or in-person.

Lent is an opportunity to experience being in the world in a new, more intentional way. Even though we may not be able to gather as we have always enjoyed, why not commit ourselves to calling someone we used to see regularly in coffee hour to catch up? Why not send a card to a person whose wilderness over these months has brought nothing but loneliness and isolation? Why not read through the Psalms during the 40 days of Lent or commit to memory a verse or two of scripture each day?

A Lenten Bible study will commence during the month of March (topic to be announced). This is our opportunity, even through the Wilderness of Lent to be able to hear again, the still, small voice of God. Listen.

Prayerfully,
Mitch

Message from Session

2021. A new year has begun. There is much work to be done. We are reminded and encouraged by these words, “the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you”. John 14:26.

The process of transition continues and there are important tasks for session to complete in the coming months including compiling the church profile which is required by the Presbyterian Church in Canada in preparation for the search for a new minister. Session is prioritizing what needs to be achieved, by whom and when. Despite the challenge of not being able to come together in person, a top priority is to develop the mission statement for the congregation— an important statement of who we believe God wants us to be in the next stage in our history.

One great change over the last year, is the number of people who join us to worship online, some of whom have not or will not attend services in the sanctuary. The important question before us is to find a way to make a more personal connection with these worshippers, and to find a way to include them in our church life. A small group will be meeting to share ideas as they research what other congregations are doing to reach out to those online, and what St. Andrew’s might do.

While we understand that we cannot predict when we will be able to gather again for worship in the sanctuary, we can and must be prepared. Steps will be taken to ensure that we have enough ushers trained and ready to welcome people into the sanctuary, while maintaining all procedures to keep everyone safe as prescribed in the Provincial COVID guidelines. While we are keen to gather again as soon as possible, session will take the time to ensure everything and everyone is in place to ensure the safety of everyone. There may need to be a short delay between the provincial go-ahead for faith-based gatherings and the next in-person gathering at St. Andrew’s.

We are approaching the time of year when our practice would be to host the Annual General Meeting, this year it will also include the approval of the budget for 2021. While we are hopeful that this may go ahead in person, with attempts to include many of those not attending in person, at this time we are not able to set a date. We will proceed to write the annual report in preparation for a meeting. This report becomes an important historical document for the year.

After ten years of hard work, Sheelagh Garson has resigned from the session of St. Andrew’s. We have appreciated Sheelagh’s attention to detail. Sheelagh and her husband,

Dave, spend many hours throughout the week at the church, working tirelessly to make sure that all is as it should be for all of us who use our building. We are grateful that Sheelagh will continue with this important work. Sheelagh has attended Presbytery meetings as the representative elder. This is an important role, remembering that many important decisions about the life of a congregation are made, or at least must be approved by Presbytery. Session is taking the time to decide on which elder will best represent St. Andrew’s at this time.

The Property Development Committee (PDC) has received the report from Cox Developments Ltd, which was paid for by a generous donor. At this time, as requested by Cox, the report is confidential and to be shared only with the PDC. Session agreed that the PDC engage in further negotiations with COX, with no commitment financial or otherwise and to maintain the right to engage with other property development groups. At this time, the potential development of the Kirk Hall site would be a profit-sharing proposal that in addition would provide an annual income and useable space for St. Andrew’s. It is important to remember that any future development, while potentially providing an income stream for the congregation, must be congruent with the mission and vision of the congregation.

As a session and a congregation, we all greatly value the leadership and pastoral care that we continue to receive from Pastor Coggin in his role as Transitional Minister. It is good news indeed that Pastor Coggin has been invited to join an Interim/Transitional Work group being led by the Rev. Tim Purvis, Associate Secretary, Ministry and Church Vocations, The Presbyterian Church in Canada. Other congregations will benefit from the wisdom and years of experience that Pastor Coggin brings to churches in periods of transition.

A few updates:

- The equipment required for a more expansive live-streaming of our services has been purchased and installed. Trials are underway in readiness for sharing our in-person worship online.
- It is noted that the insurance premium for 2021 has been increased by 15%, now at \$31,000. There is a disclaimer regarding infectious diseases.

We rejoice knowing that even through these strange, difficult and often lonely times, we are not ‘going it alone.’

‘For this God is our God for ever and ever; he will be our guide even to the end.’ Psalm 48:14

Colina Titus,
Session Clerk

Presbyterian World Service and Development: our Lenten focus for 2021

Presbyterian churches across Canada will focus on the work of Presbyterian World Service and Development on Sunday Feb. 7th. Working together through this national agency, Presbyterians in Canada have helped make positive changes in our global village for over 70 years, supporting people and communities according to their need, and regardless of their faith. This work is typically carried out by working through local partners, and often as part of a larger team of development organizations.

Presbyterian World Service and Development focuses on six key areas, as stated on their web page:

Food security: Communities are learning innovative and sustainable agriculture practices to increase crop yields, improve nutrition, and build resilience to environmental changes.

Livelihoods: Families are empowered to meet their basic needs through education, skills training and small business development. When people becomes self-reliant, they are able to improve their quality of life, shape their future, and lift up others in their community.

Health: By ensuring mothers and children receive the medical care they need, caring for people affected by HIV and AIDS, and providing access to water and sanitation programs, families and communities are growing healthier and stronger.

Human rights: Injustices are combated through a shared commitment to human rights, with a special focus on promoting and protecting rights for women, children, workers, subsistence farmers, persons with disabilities, and refugees.

Refugees: No one is a refugee by choice. By sponsoring refugees to Canada, and advocating for and supporting refugees and displaced people around the world, families are able to rebuild their lives without fear of persecution.

Emergency relief: In the aftermath of conflict and disaster, immediate and long-term relief ensures the most vulnerable people have access to food, shelter and medical attention, and are able to recover from economic loss and emotional trauma.

As part of our annual budget, we at St. Andrew's typically commit a minimum of \$2,000 to international development work – and more, if it is donated – through targeted givings during Lent. Given the extraordinary circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic, the on-going needs of refugees, and after communication with the PCC's national Presbyterian World Service and Development office, the Mission and Outreach Committee recommended and Session agreed that this year we raise funds to support Presbyterian World Service and Development's pandemic-related work with Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh and struggling families in Afghanistan. This continues our focus of last year, but mindful of the new circumstances: it is hard to imagine the difficulties of adhering to someone like Dr. Bonnie Henry's advice for reducing the spread of this disease in refugee camps, where people are crowded and daily life is already difficult! Throughout Lent, let us reflect on the impact of the pandemic on some of the most vulnerable people in the world, keep them and aid workers in our prayers, and consider how we can support the work of Presbyterian World Service and Development through our donations.

Mission and Outreach Committee

For more reading:

Presbyterian World Service and Development: <https://presbyterian.ca/pwsd/mission/>

Rohingyan refugees: <https://presbyterian.ca/pwsd/2020/09/10/supporting-rohingya-refugees-through-the-years/>

Presbyterian World Service and Development Sunday, Feb. 7, 2021: [Celebrate PWS&D Sunday – February 7, 2021 - Presbyterian World Service & Development](#)

To donate: On the St. Andrew's website (<https://standrewsvictoria.ca/>) go to the "Donate" button (<https://standrewsvictoria.ca/financial-support/>), choose one of the three methods that you prefer (Canada Helps, eTransfer, or cheque by surface mail) and indicate "PWS&D" on all donations.

Jim Ferguson posed three questions in the January issue of *The Link*. The answers are as follows:~

Why are there no handles on the Douglas Street doors of St. Andrew's?

I do not know the reason. I asked the question as I read the following from a book titled *How's Your Faith* subtitled 'An Unlikely Spiritual Journey' by David Gregory.

In the chapter titled 'Surrender', this paragraph jumped out at me.

"Cardinal Dolan mentioned a painting based on a verse from the Book of Revelation in the New Testament. 'Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.'

The image in the painting is of Jesus knocking at the door of a bungalow. If you look at the image closely, the door has no outside handle. Cardinal Dolan interprets it to mean that Jesus is always knocking at the door to our heart. Until we admit that things are beyond our control, Cardinal Dolan told me, we are going to be frustrated, lost and fatigued. It is our job to recognize that we need a saviour, and to beckon God in."

Why this jumped out at me! At lunch recently, I made a comment about St. Andrew's not having door handles on the Douglas Street doors, and for me it meant we were not very 'welcoming'. It strikes me, perhaps the explanation is in the above scripture and then the description by Cardinal Dolan? I have to wonder, how many other people wonder why we don't have door handles? Mind you, it could be as simple as during construction, St. Andrew's ran out of money and couldn't afford the door handles for its new church?

Answer provided by **David Smith**:

"We wish our doors to be open to all. Our doors are open so that everyone will know we will welcome them; a handle is not necessary when the door is already open."

Does anyone know why a newel is upside down and if there is one at St. Andrew's?

Different lunch, different person provided this answer:

"It is in one of the back staircases that the public doesn't use, I think it was whitish. It's one of the balusters (spindles) about half way up. The story goes that in every church the carpenters make an obvious mistake so that their work is not perfect, as only God is perfect."

The important words here are 'a newel'. When I began attending St. Andrew's, I noticed the occasional newel was upside down. Only one per stairway. It was years before I learned that it was considered to be bad luck for all of the newels to be upright. One is opposite to the rest for good luck.

Was there electricity during the time of Christ?



Perhaps not as we know it today. As the saying goes, a picture is worth a thousand words: **Linda Coggin** took this picture at St. Andrew's. You will notice in the upper left is a light bulb. It took a while to figure it out and one would have to *reflect* on it. (The light bulb was reflected on the glass protecting the painting when Linda took the photo.)

Yes, electricity was there at the beginning of time. But not in the form which we think of. No batteries or generators. Static electricity and lightning have always been with us. Piezoelectricity I am not sure of, but maybe.

On a side note, Tesla (the inventor, not the car) was experimenting with drawing electricity from the atmosphere to use for powering homes, factories, and anything that electricity could be used for. Financing was withdrawn when the financier found out that Tesla was going to supply the power for free.

Mission & Outreach



When you hear the word Bangladesh, you may think of George Harrison's famous song of the same name, or perhaps you will be reminded of news footage showing appalling flooding during the relentless annual monsoon seasons. A more uplifting image might be the unique orange stripes of the Bengal tiger, peering out from one of the world's largest mangrove forests.

Bangladesh has been an independent country since 1971, this year celebrating fifty years of independence from Pakistan. The country is situated in the Ganges River delta on the Bay of Bengal. It is bordered mainly by India with a short border with Myanmar (Burma) in the southeast.

While Bangladesh occupies an area slightly larger than Greece and slightly smaller than the U.S. state of Iowa, it is one of the world's most densely populated countries with a population of more than 164 million.

So it's not surprising there was great international concern when over 600,000 Rohingya refugees fled

Myanmar in August 2017. And now, to add to that misery we have a world pandemic and a challenging situation in the refugee camps of Bangladesh.

Fortunately, confirmed cases of COVID-19 remain lower than predicted estimates due to rapid initial interventions from the World Health Organisation and support groups including Presbyterian World Service and Development, that have provided effective testing and contact tracing. They have also worked towards providing 300 health care providers who have been receiving training on infection prevention and control.

Thanks to your faithful and generous support, the Rohingya refugees are receiving assistance with vital health care needs and other necessities to help keep them safe and healthy during this challenging and frightening time.

Patricia Shuckburgh

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Audio Visual Update

Last July, Session decided that we should look into live streaming our services and take advantage of the incentives provided by Presbytery. After discussion of system and size, two quotes were obtained, and one was accepted in October. The components were ordered and arrived in various stages from late November to Christmas. It was anything but 'plug and play'. I've learned the many and varied connections: RCA, VGA, HDMI, RJ45, DVI and not to mention European plugs—each of which we encountered, making the pieces incompatible without ordering adapters.

We pulled the cables shortly after Christmas and my long reach was an asset. Having decided on the location of the two cameras, they were promptly mounted and all connections securely made, we were ready to try live streaming.

However, hardware problems were not the only glitches encountered. Software was also notoriously uncooperative. After several hours of 'plug-in' downloads, William Stewart (our contractor for the project) and I were able to stream online. Then an interesting thing happened - whenever a bus or heavy vehicle passed the church, there was 'a whole lot o' shakin' going on'. Bracing was tried but it only increased when the banister was hit. So, new locations had to be found and subsequently the cameras were relocated, braced underneath, and the image was steady on close-up.

A second problem was that the sound output on live stream was minimal unless we upped the in-church volume to shattering sound - not good. Different connections were tried and subsequently satisfactory sound levels were obtained. At this point we are still sorting out new bugs but coming clearly to the point of offering a quality live stream instead of the single view that we have had (with problems) on Facebook when we were meeting in the sanctuary

What we need now are people willing to learn how to operate the new system. We can't rely on one or two people. It is a whole lot of new technology that I'm grappling with. It may be intuitive to some but for these retired brain cells, it sure is a work out. If you are so inclined, give either Whitney or the minister a call so that we may schedule training, and we can be ready once we are able to again hold in-person services.

Jerry Verwey

"Coldest Night of the Year"

Sponsored Walk

Saturday, February 20

"Coldest Night of the Year" is an annual fund-raiser to support local people struggling with poverty and homelessness. Since 2011, over \$33.5 million has been raised in 149 communities across Canada, including Victoria, through sponsored walks and donations (<https://cnoy.org/>).

This year, organizers are encouraging people to participate "virtually" by walking alone or with socially distanced friends and family on the afternoon or evening of Sat. Feb. 20th (or any time that week). Congregational members interested in walking or in donating can do so through Our Place in the downtown core (<https://cnoy.org/location/victoriapandora>) or through Our Place Westshore and Pacific Centre Family Services in the western communities (<https://cnoy.org/location/victoriawestshore>).

From their websites, participation as of Jan. 31st is 150 walkers and 30 teams registered, with sponsorship for 58% of their \$60 K goal in the Victoria core, and 84 walkers and 19 teams registered, with sponsorship for 17% of their \$40 K goal in the Westshore.

Brian Titus

Mission & Outreach Committee

Thank You

Dear St. Andrew's friends,

Linda and I thank you for the kind expressions of love shown to us during the Christmas season. We are grateful for your generous gift and each of the expressions of prayers and love during the season.

We love you and love St. Andrew's and anticipate a productive and hope-filled 2021.

Blessings,

Mitch and Linda

St. Andrew's Supports PWS&D in Afghanistan

Presbyterian World Service and Development (PWS&D) is committed to Christ's message of love through justice, poverty reduction and support in times of disaster. This arm of The Presbyterian Church in Canada works to serve marginalized and vulnerable people around the world.

This February 2021, the Mission and Outreach Committee of St. Andrew's-Victoria is encouraging its people to donate to PWS&D, with the goal of supporting projects in Bangladesh and Afghanistan. This article will be a brief description of what PWS&D is doing in Afghanistan. Much of the information has been taken from The Presbyterian Church in Canada's website and particularly from *Partners in Hope, Working for Peace in Afghanistan* by Rebecca Sherbino.

Afghanistan is reported by the United Nations Human Development Index to be one of the 15 least developed countries in the world today. In addition to the continuing violence, the country suffers from widespread poverty, drought, earthquakes, ongoing conflict, a devastated infrastructure and continual danger from hidden landmines and abandoned unexploded munitions. While the situation has improved in the past 10 years, the nation still faces many challenges.

PWS&D works in Afghanistan through a local partner organization, Church World Service-Pakistan/Afghanistan (CWS-P/A) in the following ways:

Education: PWS&D is helping bring education to girls between the ages of 6-12. It is encouraging and empowering them to return to the classroom. Teachers are receiving training and damaged schools are being repaired and rebuilt. Children whose families cannot afford to purchase textbooks are given books for free. Families, the Ministry of Education and the larger community are working together to ensure sustainability of the program.

Maternal, Newborn and Child Health: PWS&D is helping address Afghanistan's high maternal and child mortality rates by working with the community to train and equip birth attendants, improve health facilities and change community attitudes toward maternal health services.

Food Security/Agriculture: With the support of Canadian Foodgrains Bank, PWS&D is helping rebuild Afghanistan's irrigation infrastructures and is providing livestock for families most affected by the food crisis. Families receive cash as payment when they assist in the rehabilitation of **kareezes**, underground rivers channelled for irrigation of farm lands. Restocking goat herds helps to restore the livelihoods of the worst affected families and widows. In addition to the provision of goats, families are supported with vaccinations and food for their animals.

Justice Ministries Working with the Canadian Council of Churches: Justice Ministries has supported the development of a number of action letters from Canadian church leaders to the Canadian government regarding issues in Afghanistan. They have called on Canada to support outreach, research and pilot projects that are designed to further develop dynamic new local reconciliation efforts. They have encouraged the support of organizations with demonstrated support for local governance and peace building activity in Afghanistan, working with traditional and informal authorities at local and district levels. They have also encouraged dialogue with the Government of Afghanistan, as appropriate.

When you donate to PWS&D to support programs in Afghanistan, your gift creates new opportunities for children and families and hope for the future. For example:

- \$6 provides a child with school supplies and a school bag
- \$57 provides a small vegetable garden for a family
- \$120 provides education for a girl in Afghanistan for a year
- \$150 provides a goat for a family in need.

Donations to PWS&D's maternal and child health program are maximized by matching funds from the Government of Canada through Global Affairs Canada.

Please consider donating to Presbyterian World Service and Development this month.

Submitted by
Debra Verwey

Whatcha Upto??

Burns Dinner in the Hoose!



fotosbryneveld

There was no Selkirk Grace or Immortal Memory but we did hear from Calum Kennedy and the Simon Fraser University Pipe Band. During pandemic restrictions, even Robbie Burns Day celebrations have to abide by the rules. Since we could not attend a Burns dinner this year, our son Michael who had been visiting over the Christmas season, decided to make a Robbie Burns Day dinner at home.

He prepared and served the traditional fare – starting with cock-a-leekie soup, then roast beef and gravy, bashed neeps, roasted potatoes, onions and carrots, jellied vegetable salad, and of course, the traditional haggis! We had a delicious Scottish meal including steamed carrot pudding (clootie dumpling) for dessert with hard sauce and Calum



Michael slicing the haggis.

Kennedy singing in the background. Michael, who was a piper with the Sons of Scotland when he lived in Victoria, ensured there was recorded pipe band music as well. A truly Scottish Robbie Burns dinner!

We hope that next year things will have returned to normal and we can once again enjoy a shared meal at the church with one another, including pipers, dancers, and toasts to the lassies and the ode to the bard. We are looking forward to it and praying it will be safe for us to be together as a church family again soon.

Fiona Ryneveld

Food Donations to Our Place

On Saturday, January 21, 2021, Annette Pardais and I drove to Our Place on Pandora Street in Victoria to donate some food that was soon to expire.

The food items were normally used for St. Andrew's monthly Saturday Breakfast for the Needy. Because of the BC Government's COVID-19 restrictions, the monthly Breakfast had changed its format from a sit-down meal served by volunteers in the Kirk Hall to one where the breakfast was packaged and given to the recipients as take-out. The type of food used had changed from a pancake/ham breakfast to one which was easier to package and carry away.

Therefore, the supplies of ham and boxed pancake mix were not being consumed and were getting near their expiration dates. It seemed sad and wasteful to not put this food to proper use!

After contacting Brian Cox, Director of Food Services at Our Place, we were very happy to know that there was a place for these food items. We delivered 10 pounds of frozen sliced ham and 24 boxes of President's Choice just-add-water pancake mix. A kitchen worker pushing a trolley to collect the food was delighted when he saw the items and was exuberant in his thank-yous!

Meanwhile, the St. Andrew's Breakfast for the Needy continues on the second Saturday of each month in its take-out spin-off.

Submitted by
Debra Verwey



St. Andrew's Children's Page

Jesus Ministers in Galilee

So he traveled throughout Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and driving out demons. Mark 1:39

Choose the word that best matches the definition.

Answers can be found in Mark 1:29-39



- ___ 1. A place of meeting for worship in the Jewish faith
A. town B. village C. home D. synagogue
- ___ 2. The time of day when the sun disappears below the horizon
A. morning B. sunset C. dawn D. sunrise
- ___ 3. To cure from sickness or disease
A. sick B. prayer C. heal D. preach
- ___ 4. A condition when the body temperature is higher than normal
A. demons B. synagogue C. healed D. fever
- ___ 5. The body part used for holding things
A. feet B. head C. hand D. leg
- ___ 6. To be ill or have a disease
A. demons B. sick C. bed D. hand
- ___ 7. Evil spirits
A. diseases B. sick C. fever D. demons
- ___ 8. To give assistance; to aid
A. help B. preach C. hand D. synagogue
- ___ 9. To deliver a sermon
A. help B. fever C. heal D. preach
- ___ 10. A piece of furniture for sleeping
A. chair B. synagogue C. bed D. table