

THE LINK

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church



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Victoria, BC



Consider participating in a Lenten Bible Study during March with Pastor Mitch! For three Wednesday evenings, we gather from 6:00 – 7:15pm to examine the Gospel accounts of Jesus' last days of ministry before his triumphal entry into Jerusalem. Who were some of the people he interacted with? What do his last stories and parables say about his coming arrest, crucifixion and resurrection? How do the four accounts of Jesus foretelling his death and resurrection differ from one gospel to another?

Lenten Bible Study - Wednesday, March 10th, 17th & 24th at 6:00 – 7:15pm

A Zoom link will be posted next week in This Week at St. Andrew's.
Bring your Bible and yourself.

Maundy Thursday Service - Thursday, April 1

Joint Virtual Service with Knox, Trinity and St. Andrew's Presbyterian.
Posted on our website, Facebook page and YouTube, by Thursday, April 1.

Good Friday Service - Friday, April 2

St. Andrew's Virtual Service, posted on our website, Facebook page and YouTube.
Join Christine, Pastor Mitch and our musical guests for Good Friday worship.

Finally, by the time you read this our Lenten journey will be 16 days into our 40 days between Ash Wednesday and Easter. Have you used Lent to fast, to pray, and to examine scripture for the certain things that God may want you to listen to and understand during this brief period of time?

Are there certain foods or activities that you may have "given up" for Lent? Pope Francis encourages us with other examples of a Lenten fast. Consider for your life:

Fast from hurting words and say kind words.

Fast from sadness and be filled with gratitude.

Fast from anger and be filled with patience.

Fast from pessimism and be filled with hope.

Fast from worries and trust in God.

Fast from complaints and contemplate simplicity.

Fast from pressures and be prayerful.

Fast from bitterness and fill your heart with joy.

Fast from selfishness and be compassionate to others.

Fast from grudges and be reconciled.

Fast from words and be silent so you can listen.

Warmest Lenten greetings,
Pastor Mitch

Message from Session

Rev. V. Tan opened the meeting reading from Isaiah 43:19. "See I am doing a new thing". He encouraged us to think about 'What new thing is God doing in our lives?'

The agenda for the meeting was short. However, there is a lot of work in progress that is being conducted by small working groups of session. Progress reports were submitted to the session ahead of the meeting and did not require discussion at this time.

On occasion when session approves a decision via email, as per church polity, the decision is then homologated (ratified) at the next session meeting. In February, we were pleased to be able to respond to the urgent request for the use of the Kirk Hall for "extreme weather shelter". Using email enabled session to make a speedy decision and the Kirk Hall was made available. The decision was subsequently homologated at our February meeting.

Ongoing work of the various task groups includes:

- Initial work preparing the church profile which is required before a search for a new minister can commence.
- Reviewing how other churches are conducting virtual worship and considering how we might connect with those who worship with us remotely.
- Potential redevelopment of the Kirk Hall site.
- Exploration of emerging models of eldership in the Presbyterian Church, and what is the best fit for St. Andrew's.
- Looking at current committee structures, and leadership of these committees. It is a priority to determine who might fill positions which are either vacant or where the incumbent leader has done the job for a long time and would like to be replaced.

As we work on these important tasks, the elders continue to value and appreciate the leadership from Pastor Coggin. As we continue through this period of transition, there is much work for session to complete in the months ahead. We ask for your prayers. Although we must stay apart, we continue to worship and to be the church family of St Andrew's.

We live with expectation and hope. God says; "*See I am doing a new thing*" (Isaiah 43:19) and we pray; "*Rejoice always, pray continually*" (1 Thessalonians 5:16,17).

Colina Titus,
Session Clerk

"Coldest Night of the Year" Sponsored Walk Saturday, February 20 Warm Hearts - Victoria

We had a small team, formed a short time before the event, to participate in the **Coldest Night of the Year** (CNOY 21). It is a Canada wide Covid-safe, family-friendly walk to raise money for charities serving people experiencing homelessness, hurt, and hunger. The donations we received went to Our Place downtown and Pacific Family Centre in Westshore. Many teams participated across Canada and the funds raised go to their local charities.

Thank you so much for your donations and prayers.

This seems to be a yearly event and I hope next year we can get organized in time to have many more participants from our congregation. We started out with a goal of \$200, then as donations came in, we raised it to \$500, then \$950. We raised a total of \$1,030!!

Our Fundraising Progress

Raised:	Goal:
\$1,030	\$950



We've raised
108% of our goal!

Ardath Shand



forobysland

Ardath, with her grandchildren:
Kate, Heidi & Blake.

Treasurer's Corner - February 23, 2021

This year (2021) has begun with some real optimism that the total lockdowns we are currently experiencing will eventually lessen and hopefully be lifted by the end of the year. If that follows on as anticipated, we as a congregation can look forward to life starting to return to normal. But while looking forward with heightened expectations.... we still must make it through 2021 and that means we cannot let up on supporting St. Andrew's. We have proven in 2020, we can manage that task.

The purpose of my message is to inform all that we have begun the year by seeing a considerable decline in financial support from the congregation. Financial support for January and February has fallen off by about 40%, and if that were to extend through the remainder of 2021, I forecast we will be in deficit by over \$100,000. This would be at least \$50,000 more than the budget (which was already stretched) called for and would be the largest deficit we have ever experienced at St. Andrew's.

We are not alone facing this challenge and without diving into the financial state of other congregations, it is safe to say that they too are reaching out to their congregations. The overall message is that while most will survive and ultimately 'prosper', this will not happen unless the congregations stays engaged now. We have seen leadership and dedication from our Clergy, and from our Administration and Property support staff and need to acknowledge and thank all of them for that 'shoulder to the wheel' approach.

We have taken steps to open new channels for direct financial support to St. Andrew's and encourage those of you that can familiarize yourself with these via our website at <https://standrewsvictoria.ca/> . So, I am asking that each of our congregants consider continuing your financial support as in the past, and if possible, to help reduce the shortfall we have seen over the last two months.

I read a very recent report on a charitable giving forecast for 2021, and while it cites US sources, much of what is put forward can apply easily to our situation in Canada. The report states that *'On the heels of a tumultuous year filled with economic and political uncertainty, charitable giving remains bright. According to the survey, 87% of respondents plan to donate to charitable organizations in 2021, with nearly one in five (19%) planning to give more money in 2021 than in 2020.'*

I remain very optimistic that our congregation shares this call to action and will continue to financially support St. Andrew's as we move closer to a resumption of life as normal.

Should anyone wish to discuss any aspect of my concerns or how to continue financial support, please do not hesitate to reach out, and I will personally respond.

J. E. Reimer

Treasurer

treasurer@standrewsvictoria.ca

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

This is the time of year when we would expect to gather for the Annual meeting. It is not only a time to make decisions, but also a time to give thanks to God for all that was accomplished in the past year. And it is an opportunity to anticipate the year ahead.

Sadly, the Annual General Meeting is just one aspect of our church life that cannot be conducted in person. After careful consideration, we have come up with the following plan for making the important decisions.

As you read this, you will have, or soon will be, receiving a copy of the annual report. As usual this provides an interesting summary of the year, albeit a very different year. The annual report also includes the proposed budget for 2021.

The Annual Report

As it is not possible to gather in person, we have taken steps to ensure that everyone is able to receive a copy of the report and be fully included in the important decisions of St Andrew's.



By making use of email, phone and Zoom, everyone in the congregation:

- can read the annual report.
- can have an opportunity to ask questions.
- can hear/read all questions and answers asked by others.
- can vote on the two motions.

Procedure - AGM 2020 & Budget 2021

There are 3 items that require congregational approval:

- Minutes of AGM 2019,
- Committee reports, and
- Proposed budget for 2021.

Steps:

A) By Sunday, March 7, everyone will have received a copy of the 2020 Annual Report that includes the proposed Budget for 2021 (paper copies will be distributed to those who do not have email).

B) The congregation is invited to ask questions about the report. In particular, please ask for any information that you need in order to make an informed decision about the two motions:

- approval of the Minutes of the 2019 Annual General Meeting (held on February 23, 2020)
- approval of the proposed budget for 2021.

Here are the ways you can seek answers to any questions you might have:

Join a Zoom meeting. The meeting will be moderated by Pastor Coggin. Jack Reimer (Treasurer), David McLean (Property), and Colina Titus (Session Clerk) will be in attendance. Date, time and a Zoom link will be circulated with the annual report.

- Phone in to the Zoom meeting by calling in with your question (phone number will be provided) or
- Email your questions to Colina (Session Clerk) sessionclerk@standrewsvictoria.ca Colina will pass your question to the person best able to provide an answer.

To achieve a timely completion of the business associated with the Annual Meeting, all questions must be submitted no later than March 14, 2021.

Answers to your questions.

Following this question-and-answer process, a summary of questions and the answers given will be emailed together with TWASA on 16 March (and hand delivered with worship materials on 18 March.) Although not as helpful as attending a regular congregational meeting, it is hoped that your own questions, those of others and the answers will be beneficial to your decision making.

How you can vote.

On Wednesday, March 16, the weekly TWASA will include an invitation for everyone to vote by completing a Google document (in the same way that the congregation was able to vote for the new elders). The voting document will also be posted on the St. Andrew's website.

Provision will be made for those without email to vote by phone through the church office, or by asking an elder or a friend to email a vote for them. The motions will be clearly stated in the voting document. Everyone in the household should vote.

All votes must be submitted by Tuesday, March 23.

The summary of the questions and responses will be included in the minutes of the 2021 Annual General Meeting.

Important note and rationale for the process for this year's annual meeting procedure:

Because members and adherents cannot interact together with this method (combination of Zoom meeting, phoning and electronic voting) it should be considered irregular and reserved for use only during the pandemic when other real-time options are not possible and important decisions are required.

Please contact me if you have any questions.

Colina Titus, Session Clerk
sessionclerk@standrewsvictoria.ca

Members and friends of St. Andrew's will be pleased to know that despite Covid restrictions regarding the use of our sanctuary for Sunday services, our building was a blessing to the folks who needed shelter during the recent cold snap. The speed with which the call for help was received and acted upon was a credit to the various people who responded in a way that enabled the event to take place and to help those affected by the cold and the snow.



David McLean reports that our church was first contacted by the City of Victoria asking if we could host the Cold Weather Event at 1:50 pm on Thursday afternoon.

By 3:00 pm we responded that we could make our gym available. The next day, Grant agreed to oversee the project and Dave and Sheelagh Garson along with Paul from Ballet Victoria met with the co-ordinator of the Cold Weather Event.

Safety and logistical protocols were agreed upon in record time and by 3:00 pm on Friday Feb. 12th, the gym was opened and remained open until Wednesday Feb. 17th. Those seeking shelter were able to warm up, have a cup of coffee and sleep on mats. Sheelagh provided muffins for everyone. You will remember that on Saturday, February 18th we had that heavy snowfall.

St. Andrew's is very fortunate to have people who are willing to take the time and the trouble to respond to people in crisis on short notice. It is a credit to our congregation that our downtown church can be a practical blessing to our homeless neighbours in their time of need. It cannot be done without the selfless and gracious work of those in our congregation who were able to provide the assistance when needed.

This assistance was clearly appreciated by the Greater Victoria Coalition to End Homelessness. Their Inclusion and Collaboration Manager wrote to David, part of which reads:

Hi David,

"Just wanted to say thanks again for the use of the Kirk Hall – both staff and shelter attendees have reported what a fun and loving vibe was held in the space all weekend. Grant and I have connected re: leftover items and also the invoice for the cleaning for the duration of the activation."

"With much appreciation,"

Janine Theobald
Inclusion and Collaboration Manager
Greater Victoria Coalition to End Homelessness

Mission & Outreach

COVID-19 AND TAKING A STAND AGAINST RACISM

At a recent Mission and Outreach Zoom meeting, members of the committee were distressed and saddened by reports about how First Nations people in the Cowichan Valley were being confronted by a wave of anti-Indigenous racism. This came on the heels of a COVID-19 outbreak on the Cowichan Tribes reserve in early January 2021. Band members and others who “looked Indian” were turned away from stores, refused service and targeted with racist slurs.

Committee members wondered how our brothers and sisters in Cedar Tree Ministries were coping with this discrimination. The last thing that people fighting a COVID outbreak need is more stress brought on by the hurt and harm of racism. As people interviewed in the news pointed out, Indigenous Peoples in Canada have a tragic history when it comes to epidemics, and the local COVID-19 outbreaks bring back devastating memories of what happened to their recent ancestors, their cultures and their lives.

In this issue we share the first of what we hope will be a series of short articles about Indigenous individuals who are making a difference in the world, with dignity and love. We offer these articles in a spirit of solidarity and reconciliation with the First Nations people in the Cowichan Valley.

Patricia’s story about Cindy Blackstock is the first of these stories. If you would like to write a similar story, please contact a member of the Mission and Outreach Committee (to help coordinate topics and themes) who would be glad to encourage you to contribute it to The Link.

CINDY BLACKSTOCK: A RELENTLESS CHAMPION FOR INDIGENOUS CHILDREN

Cindy Blackstock never expected she’d become a household name or hailed as a “national hero”. When she was a young child her first job was picking pine cones for reforestation. She grew up in Northern BC. As a member of the Gitksan First Nations, she experienced the consequences of racism against indigenous peoples throughout her childhood. She became determined to go to UBC where she graduated and became a social worker at the age of 21. In her work in the Vancouver area, she noted a disproportionate number of Indigenous families in need of child welfare services.

In 1999, Cindy Blackstock helped found the First Nations Caring Society, an organisation that helps Indigenous children and families receive the services they need to grow up safely. In 2007 she began fighting a human rights case - that has only recently brought about great and positive changes. The case, led by her First Nations Child and Family Caring Society and the Assembly of First Nations, alleged the federal government discriminates against Indigenous children by providing less funding and poorer services than it does for non-Indigenous children. Later that year, in December 2007, Motion-296 in support of Jordan’s Principle, passed unanimously in the House of Commons.

Jordan River Anderson was a First Nation child from Norway Cree House Nation in Manitoba. Born in 1999

with complex medical needs that could not be treated on-reserve, he spent more than two years in hospital in Winnipeg before being allowed to leave and be cared for in a family home. However, because of jurisdictional disputes within and between the federal and provincial governments over who would pay for in-home care, Jordan spent over two more years in hospital unnecessarily before he tragically died in 2005. He was 5 years old and had never spent a day in a family home. In response to this tragedy, Jordan’s Principle* was created. It is a child first principle calling on the government of first contact to ensure First Nations children can access public services *on the same terms* as other children.

In 2016, a landmark verdict was rendered with the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal, ordering the government to implement Jordan’s Principle in a non-discriminatory manner. Since then, more than seven Tribunal orders have been sent to the government to force it to change its practices.

Last week marked five years since the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal ruled in their favour, and although the



(Continued on page 7)

case is still going through the court system, the good news is that because of the on-going litigation, First Nations children in child welfare are now getting double the budget that they were before the litigation, before the decision. And over 777,000 services have gone out to First Nations children under the Jordan's Principle.

Cindy Blackstock has often been quoted as saying that culturally-based equity is fundamental to meaningful reconciliation. According to the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society, this hard-fought litigation has resulted in hundreds of thousands of services being provided to First Nations children, youth and families.

Finally, in December of last year, the Honourable Marc Miller, Minister of Indigenous Services, made the following speech:

"For far too long, First Nations children have not had the same opportunities to thrive as other children in our country. The tireless work of First Nations advocates and the honoured memory of Jordan River Anderson, tells us that we must do better. That is why we are taking these steps to make meaningful changes to Jordan's Principle to help more First Nations children access the supports they need."

Cindy Blackstock became a mentor to the Pierre Elliot Trudeau Foundation in 2012. As a professor of social work at McGill University and the recipient of many prestigious awards, she maintains a sense of optimism, as an increasing number of caring Canadians become aware of these fundamental inequalities.

* To find out more about Jordan's Principle and how it is being positively administered during the COVID crisis, go to **Jordan's Principle - Canada.ca**

Patricia Shuckburgh
Mission & Outreach Committee

Oberammergau 2022

It all began with the pledge by the people of Oberammergau to act out the Passion Play once every ten years.

<https://www.passionsspiele-oberammergau.de/en/visit/oberammergau>

Ardath Shand is hoping to go to Oberammergau in 2022, and if anyone else is thinking about going, perhaps there could be a conversation about dates and meeting up. You can contact Ardath at yewview@shaw.ca or 778.440.0818.

Hello Friends!

You may remember that **The Friendship Club** had a Legislative Building Tour and Tea for Seniors which had been arranged for March 2020, but which was cancelled due to COVID.

However, we have just received an invitation from the Parliamentary Education Office at The BC Legislative Library, that seniors may register for a free educational program via Zoom.

This will be held every Thursday in the months of March and April. The program is one hour long and is an educational event about the political history of British Columbia.

Please see below for details. Registration will be necessary and advance registration is advised and requested. Please make your own registration and you will receive an "invitation" to join the Zoom presentation.

This one-hour program will take place every Thursday @ 2pm. Please see the note below from the Parliamentary Education Office which gives the details.

Dorothy Reimer

You can register for ***Documents Towards Democracy***, an hour-long journey through the political history of British Columbia as told by items from the Legislative Library shelves, offered every Thursday at 2:00 pm in March and April. Please book ahead if you are interested by contacting tours@leg.bc.ca

The program is run over Zoom and is completely free. We hope to hear from you soon.

Thank you very much,

Nicholas Guerreiro

Player Information Assistant
Parliamentary Education Office
Legislative Assembly of British Columbia



photobyjamesmarsden

A Symbol of God's Promise shining on St. Andrew's

St. Andrew's Children's Page

Cleaning House

So he made a whip out of cords, and drove all from the temple area, both sheep and cattle; he scattered the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables. John 2:15 (NIV)

Based on John 2:13-16 (NIV)



C W C M C P A S S O V E R U N
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DROVE
TEMPLE
TIME
SELLING

SCATTERED
COURTS
MARKET
HOUSE

JERUSALEM
DOVES
CHANGERS
TABLES

PASSOVER
SHEEP
JEWISH
WHIP

SITTING
CATTLE
MONEY
CORDS