

THE LINK

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church



The yellow 1975 Gremlin was a hasty purchase. In part due to the aging condition of my 1962 Chevy II and the sporty orange stripe down the side of the bright yellow back of the Gremlin, it seemed like a perfect choice. My mom would have said that most important was affordability. Less than \$100 a month in car payments far exceeded “sporty” in choosing my next vehicle.

While a Gremlin had none of the appeal of prestigious automobile choices, it was right for me, and I was proud to own and to drive it. That was until the 1978 blizzard that blanketed Louisville in a place where blizzards were rare. Strike one. The mechanical failures began to accumulate. Strike two. Strike three emerged when we realized that a child's seat would in no way fit on a back seat no more than 11” deep. Our first child's safety would convince us that it was time for the Gremlin to go.

How do you make significant decisions? What factors help you decide A or B? St. Andrew's is facing the important period in our history of calling a permanent pastor. Do we merely pick the best candidate who teaches like the Apostle Paul, preaches like St. Peter, and prays like Mother Teresa? Of course, like many churches during a pastoral search, it is often thought that a youthful pastor with 2.5 children is of the essence since this seems to jump start the youth program. Or does it? While these characteristics may seem extreme, you might not be surprised to learn that many pastoral searches indeed revolve around these rather superficial parameters.

My car search centered upon the questions, “What can you afford?” and “What looks sporty?” rather than upon “How might your personal needs change in the future that will impact your car choice?” The call of a pastor must be focused initially upon who you are as a congregation, what are your current and future needs and how would you identify your understanding of your mission at this time in your history? How will your next pastor help you articulate and fulfill that mission moving forward.

The most basic mistake many churches make in calling a pastor is in assuming that the pastor will bring his/her vision for your congregation in a briefcase and magically enact that vision. Nothing could be further from reality. Your work of identifying your sense of mission and call must be done now to clarify the specific set of competencies a particular candidate needs to help you achieve what you know (or will discover in the coming days) about your identity.

The first and most basic step, before a pastoral search can be conducted effectively, is the conversation about St. Andrew's identity and purpose. I welcome each of you to join these conversations in physically-distanced places and spaces, and in private meetings that you and I set based on your time and availability and/or on Zoom in

(Continued on page 3)

October 2021

Election in the Gym 3

Mustard Seed 4

Prayer & Cars 5

Cedar Tree 6

Thrift Shop 7

Synod 2021 8

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thelink@shaw.ca

Victoria, BC

Message from Session

Rev. Tan opened the meeting with prayer and a reading from Mark 11:15-18. "My house will be called the house of prayer".

Resignation from session

It is with sadness that we accept the resignation of Donna McKenzie from the session of St. Andrew's. In truth, this is a well-deserved retirement from her active role as an elder. Donna became a member of St. Andrew's in the 1980's and soon after that was ordained as member of the St. Andrew's session. Donna then moved to Parksville where she was appointed to session there. Donna returned to Victoria about 8 years ago, very pleased to rejoin her friends at St. Andrew's. Donna was soon invited to once again become a member of session of St. Andrew's, Victoria. Many of you will know Donna's cheerful face from the choir. Thank you to Donna for her faithful service as an elder over more than 30 years on Vancouver Island. We wish Donna well and are glad that she will continue to be in our St. Andrew's church family.

Communication

We know that as a session and a congregation we must continue to improve our communication, both for our own benefit and also for those outside the congregation who may read about us on the website. Regular platforms for communication are the weekly TWASA and the monthly *Link*, both of which are posted on the website and are available for anyone to read.

Do you have a suggestion for an activity or program? Maybe you have an idea for an event to which you would like to extend a congregation-wide invitation. Sharing our ideas provides opportunities for others to join in, bringing their ideas and enthusiasm. Working together and contributing our skills and gifts promotes inclusion and develops teamwork. A congregation is a team!

So, you have an idea or would like to extend an invitation to the congregation? What do you do?

Session is asking that you take your idea to an elder. The elder will listen with interest and then direct you to the chair of the relevant committee. Moving forward, the communication of an invitation (TWASA, *Link* and website) to any congregational activity will go through one of the church committees.

List of church committees:

- Christian Education
- Communications and Administration
- Congregational Life
- Finance
- Mission and Outreach
- Personnel and Leading with Care
- Property
- Worship.

There are some changes pending and the updated list of convenors will be included in the November issue of the *Link*.

Why are we asking you to take your idea to an elder?

Session is accountable to the congregation for all communication. This is not a responsibility that we can delegate to employees who are key in communication (Church Administrator and Webmaster).

It is the intention of the session that every activity or program in the church falls under the oversight of one or more committees. Primarily, this streamlines budgeting, allocation of space and scheduling of events within the church year.

Note: This does not apply to articles of interest, photos etc. which are always welcomed by the *Link* team.

Mission and Outreach

The Saturday breakfast program has been postponed until further notice. Attendance at the monthly 'take-out breakfast' had declined significantly, leading us to understand that during this time of COVID, the participants are having their needs met elsewhere. This decision will be revisited once the COVID-related restrictions are lifted.

Session agreed that until such time that we again host a monthly Saturday breakfast, the funds allocated to the breakfast will be redirected to Cedar Tree Ministries. Additionally, the funds previously allocated to Cedar Tree Ministries (Thanksgiving donations and narthex food hampers) and to Our Place (Share the Joy) will be redirected to the Mustard Seed. You can read more about these decision in the Mission and Outreach articles in this issue of the *Link*.

Vision for St. Andrew's

Transitional focus groups led by Rev. Coggin through the next couple of months will be the focus for session and the congregation as we all engage in the important work of determining God's vision for St. Andrew's. This is essential preparation for engaging in the search process for a new minister at St. Andrew's.

A summary of In-Person Worship and Virtual Worship

Attendance in the sanctuary averages 35; the highest attendance was 45.

Most attendees follow the protocols.

Approximately half register prior to Sunday.

Approximately 13 households watch live-stream at 10:30 on a Sunday morning.

Between 40-60 households watch the service some time during the week.

For a variety of reasons, there are more individuals participating in virtual worship than in the sanctuary on a Sunday morning. These numbers show that the live-stream service provides an important and valid form of worship service for many people: those who are not able or choose not to attend, those who are on vacation, and those who do not live in Victoria.

We are the church of St. Andrew's. We all know how hard it is to be apart from each other. Just as Paul wrote to the Church in Thessalonica, we encourage each and every one to "Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus". 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

Colina Titus
Session Clerk

Deadline for the November *Link* is
October 31 - Scary!

Remember to send your articles to
thelink@shaw.ca

(Continued from page 1)

the coming days. Some of the questions that I will ask you to consider are: Who is God calling St. Andrew's to be in the coming year(s)? Who is our "neighbour"? What is your idea for how St. Andrew's must care for him/her?

I invite you to a first conversation via a Zoom call on Sunday, October 3 at 3:00 pm. From there we can discuss how best to meet in person – in private conversations and in public (physically distanced) venues. Interested in helping? I hope so because we need to hear from many of you regarding your thoughts and dreams for your church. The Zoom link for October 3 is below. Thank you for your help in this important work.

Fondest Blessings,
Mitch

JOIN US ON SUNDAY, October 3 at 3:00 pm.
Mitchell Coggin is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: The Mission of St. Andrew's
Time: Oct 3, 2021 3:00 pm Pacific Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86845192924>
Meeting ID: 868 4519 2924



Election Day—September 20

Nine polls were set up in the Kirk Hall gym. The election officials were very pleased with the co-operation of our people, and our facility. Special thanks to Paul of Ballet Victoria who met the elections people at 5:30 am to let them in, and to Grant who was about the place most of the day to answer any questions and help with clean-up. COVID protocols dictated that we have a separate exit from the entrance and this was set up.

Submitted by
David McLean

2021 Thanksgiving Donations Mustard Seed Street Church

With the postponement of our monthly Saturday Breakfast, the Mission and Outreach Committee considered how St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church could continue to serve people in need in Victoria. We looked at where we would be most effective in sharing our gifts with the community while keeping everyone involved safe during this fourth wave of the COVID-19 pandemic. This deep exploration of different church-based charities (Our Place, Mustard Seed Street Church, and Salvation Army) led us to submit a motion to Session in September that St. Andrew's redirect its donations from Our Place to the Mustard Seed Street Church in general and our Thanksgiving donations and Share the Joy of Christmas funds in particular. Session passed the motion on September 21st.

Chief among the reasons for this recommendation was Our Place's high public profile which helps provide its funding from government, corporate and public donations. Its main mission is to the homeless persons in Greater Victoria. Our Place, which had a connection to the Presbyterian Church in Canada in its early days through Reverend David Stewart, is not aligned with any denomination now.

Mustard Seed Street Church is a smaller sized charity which provides for the working poor and their families, as well as persons who are homeless. It tries to build a church community for these people also.

In its 2018 report, the analytical group, Charity Intelligence, states that for every dollar given to Mustard Seed Street Church, 88 cents goes to its programs, versus 74 cents of each dollar donated to Our Place.

Quoting from Charity Intelligence:

"Founded in 1975, Mustard Seed Street Church works to fight hunger and restore faith to people living in greater Victoria. Mustard Seed runs Vancouver Island's largest food bank, a family shelter, hospitality programs, and addictions recovery at Hope Farm Healing Centre. It also runs traditional church services at the Street Church. Mustard Seed reports that it positively impacts an average of 5,000 individuals per month.

Mustard Seed Street Church's food security and hospitality programs delivered a total of 3,755 meals, 3,365 food hampers, and 9,000 cups of coffee in F2018. In the spring of 2017, Mustard Seed took on an additional 13,500 square foot location, The Food Security Distribution Centre, which will be used to store non-perishable food, and sort and clean rescued perishable food from grocers and large retailers. Through the food rescue project, Mustard Seed takes in more than 4,000 pounds of produce and dairy products six days a week."

With this in mind, **the Mission and Outreach Committee encourages all members and adherents of St. Andrew's to remember those who are hungry and homeless in Victoria this Thanksgiving by making a donation through Mustard Seed Street Church.** Because of the scourge of the fourth wave of COVID-19, we are not collecting food items this Thanksgiving but we recommend that cash donations to the Mustard Seed can be put in your church envelopes and deposited in the collection boxes in the church narthex. Please write the amount of your donation and "Mustard Seed" on the blank line on your envelope. Donations can also be dropped off at the church office or by using one of the donation methods available on the church's website:

standrewsvictoria.ca. Just remember to indicate that your donation is for the Mustard Seed.

Thank you very much in advance for your generosity for those struggling with food insecurity in Victoria!

Submitted by
Debra Verwey

Praying About Cars?

At the end of October I plan on moving, with my granddaughter, into a house in Colwood with a very small garage. Since I want to park my car in the garage, I found myself looking at smaller cars.

My needs have changed - I no longer live on the Malahat, so don't need AWD. I no longer have chickens, goats and two dogs, am not hauling bales of hay, large sacks of animal food, etc. so don't need a lot room in the back of an SUV. However, my daughter in Fort St. John lives with severe winter conditions. She has an old car and would love to buy my much newer Subaru AWD Forester with heated seats!

I never had to worry about anything to do with vehicles when Kellie, my late husband, was alive. His first career was as an auto mechanic so he just did his 'magic' in our garage and I didn't have to think about it. So now, with his wise mechanic words in my head, I consulted my sons, read Consumer Reports, used the "Build & Price" feature on multiple car websites and debated and prayed.

My sons thought I should get a Mazda. I like to choose by colour.... then reliability, etc. but should I spend a bit more to get the colour I want? OK - I parted with the down payment and ordered a white Mazda - not exciting but it would be a great car.

More Prayer. Did I do the right thing? Would this be the 'right' car?

Mazda called, "Sorry - we can't supply the car you ordered." And they returned my deposit.

OK - next choice. I again parted with a down payment and ordered a white Hyundai - not the exact one I really wanted, but a bit cheaper. It would be fine.

The Hyundai rep called, "Sorry - my salesman didn't know that we already sold that car. Can you come in to discuss options?"

I then met two long-time Christian friends for lunch and asked what to do. They both said, "Absolutely get the car you really want!"

I ordered the one I really wanted - it will take about six months to arrive, but NOW I am excited. I must confess that I didn't really expect God to be interested in my car dilemma. Maybe Kellie was advising...

Ardath Shand

"To everything there is a season": changes in Mission and Outreach activities

This well-known biblical passage on change is filled with timeless wisdom expressed through poetry (Ecclesiastes 3:1-8). How true it is that "the only constant in life is change" (Heraclitus, ca. 500 BCE)! The congregation of St. Andrew's has always both cared for people in need, and reached out to those around us, but the activities have evolved as life in the downtown core has evolved: the gym was once the only place for public badminton and basketball; line-ups for an annual turkey dinner were reputed to extend around the block; the Thrift Shop was once a thriving concern but is now closed; the number of guests at monthly Saturday breakfasts declined over the years by about half before the pandemic; we no longer host Alpha courses. Conversely, new initiatives have begun in recent years, such as the annual Christmas Sing-Along, lunch-time recitals, and ESL conversations for newcomers to the church.

Two articles in this issue give more details on the evolution of a greater emphasis on Cedar Tree Ministries, and a transition of donations from Our Place to the Mustard Seed Street Church. Both these reflect the changing context around us: the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission require continued active response by individuals and by churches, and the pandemic has accelerated change in the context for serving those in need in the downtown core, both in funding to existing agencies and the creation of transitional housing.

And there will be more change in the future. While the monthly Saturday Breakfast team imaginatively moved to serving take-away breakfasts, very low numbers by the end of the summer led to a decision to postpone breakfasts for the moment. After consultation with the treasurer, session allocated breakfast funds to Cedar Tree Ministries until breakfasts resume. As this is temporary, rebalancing of fundraising between Cedar Tree Ministries and the Mustard Seed will be required once breakfasts begin again.

But is God calling us to even greater change in our mission and outreach to those around us? Our pastor's title, "transitional minister", is a constant reminder that this is a season of visioning, re-imagining, conversations – and listening for the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The work the congregation does under the auspices of the Mission and Outreach Committee is only a small part of who we are and what we do as a church. What are your dreams and thoughts? Are there ideas, articles, books and resources on the web that you would like to share with the Mission and Outreach committee, or issues that you are passionate about? Please speak to any of us, or your elder, as we'd love to hear from you. May God grant us eyes to see and ears to hear what the Holy Spirit is saying to us during a season of change!

Brian Titus

Mission & Outreach Committee

Feeding those in need through Cedar Tree Ministries

Volunteers worked hard to adapt the monthly Saturday Breakfast to take-out meals for those in need during the pandemic, but the number of meals served dwindled until postponement seemed the most reasonable option. After considering alternatives, the Mission and Outreach



Committee consulted with the treasurer and recommended to session that St. Andrew's donate the balance of remaining breakfasts funds for 2021 to the [Cedar Tree Ministries](#) food bank, prorated to a monthly amount until the end of the year or the re-start of breakfasts, whichever comes first. These recommendations were accepted at the September session meeting.

This increases our support – at least for a few months – for Cedar Tree Ministries. (In 2019, following session approval, we redirected our Thanksgiving and narthex food donations from our traditional recipients to them.) [The Rev. Joey Cho](#) was very touched and

grateful that St. Andrew's would temporarily increase our support for their food bank, which operates out of Grace Church, Duncan. As is evident from local news items, the pandemic has not been easy financially, socially or emotionally for First Nations people in the Cowichan Valley during the pandemic, who are isolated because of their susceptibility to disease, and the object of racist accusations at times. Grace Church is closed, and Joey Cho cannot travel to the four other First Nations he serves amongst the [Malahat](#) (in Mill Bay), the [Stz'uminus](#) (in Ladysmith), the [Huu-ay-aht](#) (in Bamfield), and the [Pacheedaht](#) (in Port Renfrew) peoples. The funds we send will be used to buy gift cards for the Super Saver store in Duncan, which Joey Cho gives to five elders in Grace Church. When the elders hear of people in need, they go with them to buy food items and pay using the gift cards.

Quite apart from helping feed people in need, it is also hoped that our gift is seen as tangible evidence of St. Andrew's concern for our brothers and sisters in Grace Church, and that we are serious about reconciliation with them and their people – "reconciliation and healing of broken relationships" lies at the heart of Cedar Tree Ministries.

But why Cedar Tree Ministries? Regrettably, we have no connection with the local First Nations, but Cedar Tree Ministries has a vision of serving all First Nations on Vancouver Island. Their growth has been remarkable. Having started in Duncan, and then initiating a group in Mill Bay, other First Nations began to hear about the good work they were doing, and three others have invited them to come and work with them. In a day and age when churches are burnt or painted with graffiti because of residential schools that damaged or destroyed their cultural, social and family lives, it is surely a sign of God's grace that this ministry of the Presbyterian Church in Canada finds favour amongst First Nation communities on the island. Perhaps a day will come when Cedar Tree Ministries will be invited to visit local First Nations – will St. Andrew's be ready to serve them, when this comes to pass?

Brian Titus

for Mission and Outreach Committee

Thrift Shop



The Thrift Shop rooms are now cleared!

A once full Thrift Shop is now virtually empty, thanks to the hard work of at least 10 volunteers over the past months who sorted, packed and moved boxes and bags of items to their next

ports of call. And a special thanks to Grant Shepard, who “broke the back” of the job by steadily working away at it over the months, to the point that a floor finally appeared, which he has just buffed to a high polish as he and the Property Committee prepare the space for new occupants!

What happened to everything donated to the Thrift Shop? First, local charities who could visit the shop came for items they could use (Compassionate Warehouse, Habitat for Humanity); secondly, we packed and delivered items for charities with specific needs who could not visit because of COVID (Our Place) and the remainder was delivered to the Salvation Army and (latterly, for efficiency) Value Village.

It is poignant to see the end of a service for people too familiar with frugality or doing without, but it is also energizing to imagine the new things that can happen through transition in use of space in the Kirk Hall.

Mission and Outreach Committee

fotosbyBrianTitus





SYNOD 2021

CHANGE IN DATE

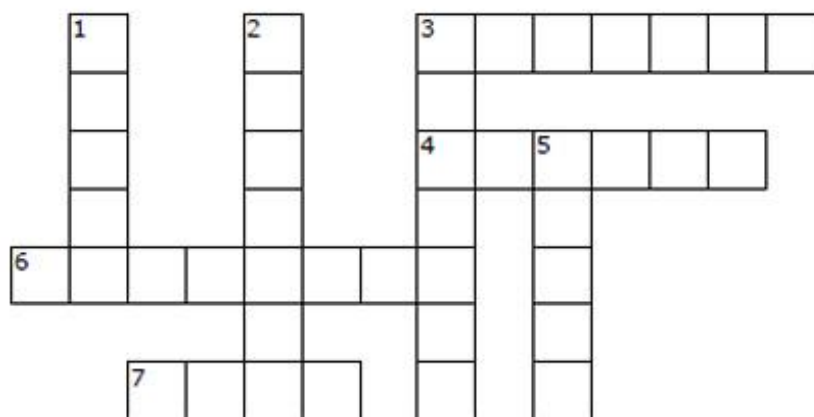
Saturday, October 16

**Pre-Recorded Worship - 9AM
Zoom Meeting - 10AM
Register - www.pccweb.ca/bcsynod/**

Interested in hearing what God is doing through the Presbyterian churches of British Columbia?
Register on-line to participate in a Zoom meeting of the General Synod at 10 AM on Saturday October 10th!
(All are invited to attend.) <https://pccweb.ca/bcsynod/resources/>

Let the Children Come

He said to them, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. Mark 10:14b (NIV)



ACROSS

3. Bringing happiness, pleasure, or contentment to someone
4. Small in size
6. Sons and daughters, young people
7. The parts of the body which connect the hands to the shoulders

DOWN

1. A statement accepted as fact
2. A country or territory ruled by a king or queen
3. To be a member of a group, such as a club or organization
5. To come in contact with or to feel with your fingers

LITTLE
CHILDREN

TOUCH
TRUTH

KINGDOM
BELONGS

BLESSED
ARMS