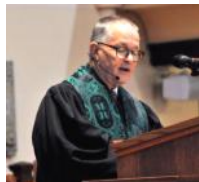




# THE LINK

## St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church



Advent is here. By the time you read this we will have celebrated our 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Advent. It is beginning to look and feel a lot like Christmas. The stores, sales campaigns, Christmas cards are way ahead of most of us and begging us to catch up with the idea that Christmas is here. But it's not.

Advent is here. It brings to us the deeply spiritual lesson found in the power of learning to wait. As Mary waited for the promise made that the life within her be birthed, she teaches us again what we already know; that we are not good at waiting.

It feels like most everyone I know is exhausted, and on the surface it can be blamed on the pandemic. "When will life return to NORMAL?" Welcome Advent: a time of expectation toward a future that is coming to us. It's not a time of looking beyond or around our present to the future, but rather a time of looking through our present to the future.

Advent is a time of honest expectation for God to act on God's promises precisely because we need God to act. Advent is a time of courageous realism about the brokenness of the world. Advent is a time to let the rough edges of the world tenderize our hearts so that they might be ready and open to God's birth again in our hearts and lives. Advent asks us to be honest about being human in a world where being human is hard.

I wonder if this Advent season, can we be honest? Can we be honest about all that we've lost in the last two years? Can we be honest about the grief we've experienced, the trauma we've known, the relationships that have fallen away? Can we be honest that everything feels exhausting, and nothing feels normal?

Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote, "Who among us will celebrate Christmas correctly? Whoever finally lays down all power, all honour, all reputation, all vanity, all arrogance, all individualism beside the manger; whoever remains lowly and lets God alone be high; whoever looks at the child in the manger and sees the glory of God precisely in his lowliness."

Advent invites us to look at the world and all that is happening, and then at ourselves and admit that we are at a loss. We don't know what to do. We don't know how to respond. We hardly know how to process our experiences of the last two years. Somehow, hopefully during the wait that is Advent, we realize that we can't fix it. We can't be what everyone needs us to be. When we are honest, we are forced to admit that someone besides us needs to save the world. Maybe that's what Advent is all about.

A blessed Advent to us all!  
**Pastor Mitch**

### December 2021

Share the Joy 2

Search Process 3

Stella Grace! 4

That's the way... 6

Session Update 8-9

St. Andrew's Gift  
Christmas Music 14

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[thelink@shaw.ca](mailto:thelink@shaw.ca)

**Victoria, BC**

## Share the Joy of Christmas Update



'Share the Joy' Hamper Tree

Thank you to everyone who has responded to **Share the Joy of Christmas** so far this year. We have received enough money for eight-and-a-half hampers for needy families in Greater Victoria. Our goal is 15 hampers. It costs \$147 to fill each hamper.

These hampers, through donations from the good people at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, are put together by the Mustard Seed to provide a joyful Christmas for low-income individuals, couples with children and multi-adult families in our community. The families receive a turkey or grocery gift card, fresh produce, milk, eggs, bakery items, treats, cereal and a variety of other foods. They will also receive a few special gifts for each child and stocking stuffers. Adults are blessed with a few goodies like warm stockings, chocolates and a new toque along with the food. This way we try to touch each person's heart with the joy, peace and hope of the season.

There are many ways you can donate to **Share the Joy of Christmas**. Go to St. Andrew's, Victoria website:

[standrewsvictoria.ca](http://standrewsvictoria.ca), and click the **Donate** tab at the top of the page. There are instructions there to help you donate by e-transfer. Indicate that your donation is for **Share the Joy**.

You can also donate via your church envelope. Write "Share the Joy" on the line where you enter the amount of your donation. As you come into the narthex of the church off Douglas Street, there are white steel boxes marked 'Offering' where you can deposit your envelope. (The ushers are not collecting the offering during the Sunday service because of Covid-19 restrictions.)

To mail in your donation, send it to  
c/o Treasurer,  
St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church,  
680 Courtney St,  
Victoria, BC, V8W 1C1

If you have any questions about our **Share the Joy of Christmas** campaign, please call  
**Debra Verwey** at 250-383-1009



## An Update on the Search Process for Calling a Minister to St. Andrew's by Rev. Wayne Stretch, Interim Moderator

It is the cliché of all clichés to say that the COVID-19 pandemic has changed things.

Eighteen months ago, St. Andrew's was being led through a healthful time of transition. Under the guidance of Interim Moderator, Rev. Vincent Tan, and Transitional Minister, Rev. Mitch Coggin, the session was also beginning the preparation of a congregational profile in anticipation of session appointing a search committee for the purpose of calling a new minister.

The pandemic's effect on our life and worship together has demanded a narrowing of priorities... just as it has with all faith communities everywhere. One consequence is that our search process has not progressed as we expected. Now, as we emerge from the strictest constraints the pandemic has imposed upon us, it is time to re-prioritize the search process.

As Interim Moderator for this renewed process, I've been asked to look ahead to the early months of the new year and outline for the congregation what are the next steps in our search process.

There are 3 main aspects to the call process:

1. Providing for the ongoing pastoral care and worship life of the church during the vacancy.
2. Preparing a congregational profile and a position description - including church demographic data and financial information, our pastoral needs and priorities, and the ministry goals of the congregation.
3. Forming a search committee and conducting a ministry search.

**Briefly, let me outline the next steps in each aspect of the process leading to the call of a minister:**

### **Providing ongoing ministry during the vacancy:**

The Vancouver Island Presbytery and the session of St. Andrew's have extended the contract with Rev. Mitch Coggin to serve as Transitional Minister. We are very grateful that Mitch has agreed to continue to provide worship leadership and ongoing pastoral care to the congregation until the arrival of a permanent minister is imminent.

**Preparing a Congregational Profile and position description:** (Much of this work has been done prior to and during the extended pandemic hiatus.)

1. With the beginning of the new year, demographic and financial information will be reviewed and

updated by the session in conjunction with the church treasurer. This includes setting stipend and benefits and reviewing the housing allowance.

2. Congregational participation in a visioning process to identify the present and emerging mission and ministry goals of the congregation.

The work of congregational analysis, visioning and goal setting will rely heavily upon continuing the work done through town hall meetings, focus groups and congregational surveys. In the first months of 2022, the session will focus attention upon furthering and completing information gathering through these avenues. The participation and input of all groups and ministries at St. Andrew's will be of great importance to the session as they identify our strengths and challenges, our potential as an agency in the mission of Christ, what new opportunities for service, fellowship and worship are identified, and what change can we make to meet new opportunities.

### **Forming a Search Committee**

The session is responsible for establishing the search committee and for determining the committee's size and the method of appointing members. The search committee should have representatives from the session and other congregational groups and should reflect the age, gender balance and ethnic mix of the congregation.

The search committee will study the current and long-term goals and needs of the congregation, send the congregational profile to the PCC's Ministry and Church Vocations office, and begin the process of preparing a list of potential candidates to be considered.

Once the search committee is convened, it will make regular progress reports to the session. The session will be responsible for regular reporting to the congregation either during worship or through *The Link* newsletter.

As Interim Moderator, I will serve the presbytery and the church by providing oversight and prayerful guidance to each aspect of the calling of a minister to St. Andrew's, including the issuing of the call, arranging the service of induction, and providing orientation and mentoring support for the new minister.

As in all our work and worship at St. Andrew's, we are grateful to God for the assurance of His loving presence and participation with us, and we will do everything in thankful obedience to our Lord Jesus Christ.

## Stories from the B.C. Legislative Library.

(Free) ZOOM Classes for you:

During COVID time, the Parliamentary Education Office and the BC Legislative Library has provided free learning opportunities for BC residents. These 'classes' continue and we can attend them in the comfort of our own home.

An interesting program will soon be coming up. Are you a Charles Dickens fan? Well, here is your opportunity to have an enjoyable one-hour class/session and learn more about Charles Dickens.

### *Politics and Holidays of Charles Dickens*

Wednesday, December 15. 2:00 pm  
45 minutes Cost is FREE.

Discover first-edition printings of Dickens' best known works, and learn how his career as a novelist and parliamentary reporter introduced ideas that changed Britain and Canada.

### Registration Information:

To register, please email [tours@leg.bc.ca](mailto:tours@leg.bc.ca)

Once confirmed, you will receive additional information on how to join the zoom session.

Submitted by  
**Dorothy Reimer**

### Property Committee

Many thanks to **Arthur Marcellus** for his tireless help in preparing the balcony to welcome visitors and members.

There was:

vacuuming,  
cleaning,  
repairing the walls,  
pews,  
cushions,  
and floor.

**The Phantom Crew**

## Welcome Stella Grace!



**Stella Grace Yochum**, born November 19,  
7 lbs, 13 ounces, 20.5 inches long.

Parents are Brad and Margaret (Coggin) Yochum  
who live in Columbus, Ohio.

Proud grandparents are **Mitch and Linda Coggin**.

Stella was welcomed by big brother Malachi,  
who will be 3 on December 19!





## News from the Worship Committee

Advent has begun, with the lighting of the first Advent Candle on Sunday – and singing, at last! To help keep people safe, please sing in a normal voice, no matter how joyful and exuberant you feel! It may be hard to do, but it reduces aerosol production. Masks are needed to come into the building, and we strongly recommend a three-layered cloth mask (i.e., with a filter) or a medical mask. Please also continue to be aware and considerate of those around you regarding distancing.

In the hopes that it will help people feel safe enough to return to in-person worship (and singing) through Advent, greeters are now asking for proof of vaccination at the door (with photo ID for people not known to them). The greeters will make a note of those who have been checked, so that this will only have to be done once per person – which we hope will reduce inconvenience for regular worshippers, and delays for people entering the building. Also, please only use the Broughton St. door to enter and leave if you need the ramp – again, to help reduce delays, especially with the choir now using the area.

We all want a return to the worship we enjoyed before the pandemic. What we do and how we do it will change as conditions change. While BC now has a 91% vaccination rate, we monitor the latest BC situation and Dr. Henry's comments and guidance, especially now that the new omicron variant has been found in Canada.

And some good news, thanks to volunteers who have stepped forward! - we now have enough ushers for a 7:00 PM Christmas Eve service; however, we only have enough to open the ground floor for 70 people. If a few more volunteers offer, we may be able to open the gallery – please let Bruce Wasylik ([bwasylik@shaw.ca](mailto:bwasylik@shaw.ca)) know if you can assist! This is usually a popular service, and advance registration (starting Friday, Dec. 10<sup>th</sup>) is strongly advised. See TWASA for more news on this, and for any changes in safety protocols.

We welcomed Rev. Cathy Victor for the first Sunday of Advent, and Rev. Wayne Stretch on Dec. 5<sup>th</sup> (when communion will be served). Both are kindly filling in while the Coggins enjoy a well-earned break.

Finally, a huge thanks to all those – both visible and invisible! – who undertake the myriad of small and large tasks that go into making worship possible, especially in a season like Advent and Christmas – thank you!

**Brian Titus**  
for Worship Committee

The November Link contained an article called **The Blessing Box** with a list of what some people were thankful for.

One of the things listed was - **A Comfy Bed** and it was noted that there were **20** people who were thankful for their comfy beds. This was a typo! (Yes, we who work on *The Link*, make lots of mistakes).

In order to ensure that we are not inundated by the media and individuals across Canada (do we dare say that our readership reaches across Canada – next the world!) with requests to find out what kind of beds we have in Victoria that would produce such a degree of thankfulness, we thought it best to correct our mistake and note that it was merely 2 people who were grateful for their beds.

It may be that there are many others who are also grateful, for we know what a blessing it is at the end of the day to be able to crawl into a warm, comfy bed.



## In Loving Memory



**Doreen Macadam**

**And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain....**

**Revelation 21:4**

**That's the way we have always done it...**

At recent Sunday services, Reverend Mitch presented food for thought around the message of "that's the way we have always done it". Many organizations fall into a similar "trap" and often times people don't like to be challenged when asked the question "why?". The following is taken from the web page [www.frankbuck.org](http://www.frankbuck.org) and is copied with permission. Having said that, Frank does not claim to be the original author.

When you or I question a practice that seems to defy logic, the answer is likely to be, "That's the way we've always done it." The response shifts whatever blame there may be to some unnamed person at some unnamed time in the past. The response also indicates no thinking is going to go into whether or not what has been done in the past is the best course for the future.

At best, "That's the way we've always done it" is only partially true. Consider the story of the young girl helping her mother prepare Easter dinner.

**Before placing the ham in the oven...**

Before placing the ham in the oven for baking, the mother cut off both ends. "Why did you cut off the ends of the ham?" asked the daughter.

"That's the way my mother always did it," was the reply.

The daughter quickly vanished. In moments, she was on the telephone to the grandmother verifying whether or not what she had been told was true. The grandmother replied that she did, indeed, always cut the ends off the ham.

When asked why, the grandmother replied, "That's the way my mother always did it."

As fate would have it, the next week brought about a visit from great-grandmother. Overcome with curiosity, as young children often are, nothing would do but to pose this same question.

"Great Grandmother, Mommy always cuts the ends off her ham before she puts it in the oven. Mommy says she does it because that's the way Grandmother always did it. Grandmother says she did it because that's the way you always did it. Is it true, Great Grandmother? Did you always cut the ends off of the ham?"

"Yes, indeed, my child, I always cut the end off the ham" replied the elderly woman.

**But why?...**

"But why?" asked the young girl.

Holding her hands about 12 inches apart, she replied, "Because my pan was only this big."

Decades ago, Great Grandmother was confronted with a set of circumstances. Her pan was not large enough to accommodate the ham. She came up with procedures to handle those circumstances. She did the best she could with what she had.

What if we were to confront today's challenges the way Great Grandmother in the story confronted hers? What if we did the best we could with what we have? What we have keeps getting better, meaning what was "best" back then is far from "best" by today's standards.

**What if we re-framed the question?**

What if we re-framed "that's the way we've always done it" to embody a standard of quality rather than a particular act? I imagine we would spend more time challenging outdated practices, more time learning the tools at our disposal, and less time carrying on with practices which worked in a bygone era. Change can be hard.

If we look to the past for examples of doing the best they could with what they had, we also throw down the gauntlet to generations to come. We issue the challenge not to mindlessly carry on as we did, but to build on our accomplishments.

Our circumstances change. Our procedures must change with them. Our ancestors understood that. Do we?

If you don't like change, you're going to like irrelevance even less.

-General Eric Shinseki

Submitted by  
**Jim Ferguson**



A favourite seasonal show, **The Huron Carole**, is coming to Victoria, virtually, in December. From the comfort of your own home you will be entertained by Tom Jackson and a number of fellow musicians. The show will be held on Friday, December 10th at 7:00 pm through zoom. Show Tickets (\$15) include exclusive access to a wonderful 75 minute performance. The Huron Carole promises to be full of hope, promise, and the Christmas Spirit. *Proceeds will benefit The Mustard Seed*. For more information and tickets, please visit [huroncarole.ca](http://huroncarole.ca)

This year's theme is **Angels Without Wings** as we pay tribute to all the angels around us. "Sometimes they're invisible – just like you and me when we need help. So, if you're down and out and need help, find someone who needs it more than you. You'll feel much better."

Submitted by  
**Patti Jackson**



Live Streaming Techs, Neil Verwey and Adrian Leitch – November 28, 2021

## Session Update

This month we gathered via Zoom and Rev. Wayne Stretch opened the meeting with prayer.

### Finance

Jack Reimer, Treasurer, attended the meeting to present the proposed budget for 2022.

- The proposed budget is very similar to the budget for 2021 and includes Cost of Living increases for the employees.
- The greatest increase in costs from year to year continues to be insurance security of the facilities.
- It is anticipated that revenue from Ballet Victoria in 2022 will be approximately \$90,000. This is equivalent to the annual revenue that we could have anticipated from a rebuild of the Kirk Hall site. However, a rebuild would have incurred up-front investment of funds and then a considerable time for demolition, planning and building during which time we would have had no income.
- As with last year, it is a challenge to get the congregation together for a meeting. It is suggested that as last year, the Annual Meeting and Budget meeting be combined, and in a format that combines in-person and electronic participation. The proposed budget will be in effect as of January 1, 2022, until approved or modified as a result of the congregational meeting.
- Once a decision is made, a date for the combined meeting will be communicated.



Deadline for the January *Link* is  
December 26.

Remember to send your articles to  
[thelink@shaw.ca](mailto:thelink@shaw.ca)

- Session thanked Jack for his work and approved the proposed budget for presentation to the congregation.

### Districts

It had been identified that there were a few people without an elder. The Roll Clerk and the Session Clerk, in discussion with the elders of each district, have begun a review of the roll to ensure that all who wish, have an elder allocated to them. If we have missed you, or you would like to better understand the role of an elder in the Presbyterian Church, please speak with an elder or call the church office.

### Worship

We are all very keen to return to congregational singing. There was much discussion in the meeting about how we can sing and keep everyone safe. This summary may leave you with questions about the details, if so please ask an elder. Here is a brief summary of what was agreed:

- Worship Committee has assumed responsibility for making recommendations to session regarding any changes in COVID-related protocols and practices for in-person worship, and then implementing them.
- Masks will continue to be mandatory.

### Advent and Christmas

- Beginning in Advent everyone should wear masks appropriate for singing (3-layered cloth or medical).
- People are encouraged to register for worship (to ensure seating).
- Evidence of vaccination plus accompanying photo ID will be required of people entering for worship, which can include a vaccination card or passport.
- The choir will return to the loft and sing a piece to accompany the Lighting of the Advent Candles, which the congregation may be invited to sing with them.



- Two hymns per service will be sung by the congregation.
- Everyone is asked to continue to respect social distancing.

### Ongoing protocols

- Worship practices and safety protocols in place by Christmas Eve will continue until such a time as revisions are warranted in response to changes in overall context (e.g., pandemic conditions, government regulations/guidance, volunteer capacity, etc.), at which point recommendations for change will be brought to session for approval.
- Unexpected circumstances may arise that require changes to these protocols. If so, any changes will be communicated to the congregation through the weekly TWASA and posted on the website.

Thanks are expressed to all who have been responsible for creating and implementing current COVID-related protocols.

### Property

As we continue to reallocate space use, it has been agreed that the downstairs space used by AA (previously the Thrift Store) will be rented to Ballet Victoria from 1:30 pm onwards each day for an annual rental fee of \$1,000 per month. It was agreed that, on notice from the city, this space will be available for the Out of the Cold program.

### Visioning

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to the important ongoing visioning process whether through written responses or in a Zoom visioning group. A summary of input is in the process of being compiled.

### Pastor Coggin

It was with great pleasure that the session approved vacation time for Pastor Coggin to travel with Linda to travel to visit family from November 16 to December 9. Pastor Coggin arranged for

Elder Dirk Ryneveld, Rev. Cathy Victor and Rev. Wayne Stretch to lead worship services during his absence.

2021 has indeed been challenging. Yet as we enter the season of Advent, we know and rejoice that we travel this journey with our God and King. In the words of Charles Wesley:

Rejoice, the Lord is King!  
Your Lord and King adore!  
Mortals, give thanks and sing  
And triumph evermore.  
Lift up your heart! Lift up your voice!  
Rejoice, again I say, rejoice!  
Lift up your heart! Lift up your voice!  
Rejoice, again I say, rejoice!

Blessings of hope, peace, joy, and love  
from the elders of the session.

**Colina Titus,**  
Session Clerk





David Barss



November 7, 2021  
Remembrance Day Sunday



Sunday, November 21, 2021  
Christ the King Sunday  
Service led by Dirk Ryneveld



November 28, 2021  
First Sunday in Advent  
Guest preacher, Rev. Cathy Victor



Sunday, November 28, 2021  
Lighting the Candle of Hope  
Debra (missing from photo) and Jerry Verwey



Sunday, November 28, 2021  
The choir returns with bells and singing.

# Prepare the Way

- As is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet: "A voice of one calling in the desert, 'Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him.'" Luke 3:4 (NIV)

The activity is based on Luke 3:1-6



V S B F Z K T E U Q Y A X R A  
 V M O D E O U Y K R F W Z O X  
 K O A N C T B A L E P D H U F  
 X O I T G J R H C P L E N G L  
 S T Z C N S T D I E F S C H I  
 Z H C H E P K F B N A E O X P  
 P R E A C H I N G T S R I T I  
 F C L H K H D V D K T T L M S  
 P B A A K A Y A S F R F C M Y  
 G R V L M R Z L L O A F R B W  
 P W E J L F E L M R I I O V X  
 X Y F P O I Q E V G G W O J F  
 R A Q F A J N Y V I H V K C K  
 Z Q L V X R B G N V T W E P J  
 V W Y S D U E I N E S R D E Q

CALLING  
 VOICE  
 CROOKED

STRAIGHT  
 VALLEY  
 ROUGH

DESERT  
 PREPARE  
 SMOOTH

REPENT  
 FORGIVE  
 PREACHING



# The Gift of Christmas Music



Dr. Adam Jonathan Con  
Guest Organist

Featuring selections on the Harp,  
Piano, Accordion and Trumpet

**December 16th**  
**St Andrew's Presbyterian Church**

Doors open at 11:30 am  
Concert at 12 noon to 1:00 pm

Vaccine and ID checking  
Masks required  
Social distancing

Admission by Donation



*Corner of Douglas and Broughton Streets*  
*Accessibility Ramp at Broughton St Entrance*  
[standrewsvictoria.ca](http://standrewsvictoria.ca)



Service in the Heart of Victoria Since 1866