# THE LINK



# May 2022

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Victoria, BC

# St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church



I recently came close to finishing the eighteen books in the William Kent Krueger mystery series set near the Ojibwe Iron Lake Reservation near Aurora, MN. The series tells the story of Sheriff Cork O'Connor, sheriff of Tamarack County. The most formative book for me was *Ordinary Grace*, the story of the Rev. Frank Drum

family who through several tragedies deals with the "awful grace of God." I was sorry to have finished this series.

Currently, I am working through the mystery series written by the well-known Canadian author, Louise Penny, a former CBC radio journalist. Her series revolve around Chief Inspector Armand Gamache of Sûreté du Québec, the provincial police force of Quebec. Gamache investigates the murders of various people in the quaint village of Twin Pines. The native French speaker Gamache speaks English with a British accent. The books have been described as "character-driven" mysteries that show the personalities and backgrounds of those who have made their way to reside in Twin Pines.

As I make my way through the challenging French personalities, I have enjoyed Armand Gamache's unfashionable beliefs. Penny explains her lead character, "He believed the light would banish the shadows, that kindness was more powerful than cruelty, and that goodness existed, even in the most desperate places. He believed that evil had its limits."

Gamache gave himself this advice at the beginning of his career: "Before speaking ... you might want to ask yourself three questions... Is it true? Is it kind? Does it need to be said?" Imagine the world if we adopted the practice of asking ourselves these kinds of questions regularly!

Like *Ordinary Grace* in the previous series that packed a theological punch, so does the Louise Penny series in which Gamache tells new detectives joining his team "four sayings that can lead to wisdom: I was wrong. I'm sorry. I don't know. I need help." Simple yet profound. How often have we made any of these assertions of late?

Whether we learn profound lessons by reading a novel, watching a movie, or paying attention to the astute wisdom of our elders, statements such as those made by Inspector Gamache have a way of teaching us what really matters in life and in relationships. "I was wrong. I'm sorry. I don't know. I need help." How might we create a regular practice of asking ourselves these kinds of powerful questions and allowing God to guide us to a deeper and more profound faith?

What are you reading that is teaching you new ways to explore faith and faithful living?

Blessings to you all, **Pastor Mitch** 

# **Session Update**

We came together for the monthly meeting aware of the challenges before us and also the good things that are happening.

Pastor Coggin, Rev. Laura Kavanagh (Knox) and Rev. Cathy Victor (Trinity) shared in the planning, preparation and presentation at the worship services during Holy Week. This was an opportunity for us all to share in and experience different ways of worship. Elders will be invited to join in the continuing consideration of partnership in ministry. We are not talking about amalgamation but about sharing resources, sharing strengths and assisting each other in our weaknesses. Each congregation faces challenges of age and budget. The Chinese Presbyterian and Knox (Sooke) Churches have been invited to join these discussions. We ask for prayers and hopefulness as we continue to explore the possibilities of shared partnerships.

## Visioning

Pastor Coggin and Rev. Wayne Stretch shared thoughts on the visioning process so far, identifying assets and deficits. (See **Visioning** on page 9.)

# Roger Bernard

It is with sadness and regret that we accepted Roger Bernard's resignation. Roger has been an elder for 30 years on the session of St. Andrew's. We thank him for his commitment, hard work and the wisdom that he has shared over many years. We are pleased to know that we will continue to see Roger and Moira on Sunday mornings. We wish Roger well in his well-earned retirement as an active elder.

# **Property**

Is our building a hindrance or a help? The session expresses its thanks and appreciation to David Garson for the detailed and thorough report outlining his concerns about the significant repairs and maintenance required in both of our church buildings. Some of the repairs are urgent and expensive. This report is very timely. Our church buildings are both an asset (location, beautiful, windows, organ) and also a deficit (the magnitude of both time and money to repair and maintain). This report is an excellent starting point. The session will be seeking the appropriate professional inspections and assessments to gain a clear understanding of the relative assets and deficits associated with the property.

As we continue discussions with Presbytery about

earthquake insurance, we need to have a clear understanding of where liability rests if there is an earthquake or if someone is injured by falling brickwork.

# Worship

You can read about the recommendations for further changes in Covid related protocols for in-person worship in the Worship Report (page 12).

### Remits adopted 2021

These remits were adopted by the Presbyterian Church in 2021 and are now part of the PCC Polity, the laws of the church:

Remit B, 2019 Re Definition of Marriage The Presbyterian Church in Canada holds two parallel definitions of marriage and recognizes that faithful, Holy Spirit filled, Christ centred, God honouring people can understand marriage as a covenant relationship between a man and a woman or as a covenant relationship between two adult persons. That congregations, sessions, ruling and teaching elders be granted liberty of conscience and action on marriage.

Remit C, 2019 Re Ordination of LGBTQI Persons (Married or Single) That congregations and presbyteries may call and ordain as ministers and elect and ordain as ruling elders LGBTQI persons (married or single) with the provision that liberty of conscience and action regarding participation in ordinations, inductions and installations be granted to ministers and ruling elders.

Church Polity states that it is the responsibility of the session to decide how St. Andrew's will live with and implement these laws. Session will be meeting in the next few weeks and will communicate further as decisions are made.

# May Day Parade (Monday, May 23)

Session is pleased to have the church open for visitors during the May Day Parade. There will be many people on the streets downtown and this is a good opportunity for us to 'open the doors'. Please talk to any elder if you could help to welcome people.

Pastor Coggin offered words of encouragement and challenge at the end of a long meeting. We must come together as a team. Each of us needs to respond and do what God is calling us to do and be the people he wants us to be. We are important - and we need each other. There is a wonderful passage in Corinthians often titled "One body, many parts": "You are the body of Christ. Each one of you is a part of it". (1 Corinthians 12: 27)

Colina Titus, Session Clerk

# Music & Dance

St. Andrew's was filled with music and dance on Sunday, April 3, 2022.

In the Sanctuary, a Spring Classical Music Concert took place, featuring UVic School of Music students who had an opportunity to play their instruments before a live audience after two years. Both St. Andrew's and the Victoria Foundation sponsored the event with UVic. We were treated to amazing talent and the culmination of hard work resulting in wonderful classical music. (Even with masks on you could tell

people were smiling!)



Six violinists

(each accompanied by a different pianist) from the studio of Ann Elliott-Goldschmid, performed selections from Mendelssohn, Mozart, Glazunov, Beethoven, Lalo, von Gluck, and Debussy. It was wonderful to sit back and be surrounded by such talent and sound in a beautiful, peaceful space.

In a transformed Kirk Hall, Ballet Victoria held a performance called *Revelations of Two Ballerinas* with Artistic Director, Andrea Bayne. The photo on

the right is of Andrea Bayne performing in the *Dying Swan*.

The dancers were coached by

Evelyn Hart, famed Canadian ballerina and former Principal Dancer with the Royal Winnipeg Ballet. The photo below is of the dancers with Evelyn Hart in the centre.



Watch for further Victoria Ballet performances this Spring.

The next UVIC music students'

**concert is Sunday, May 1**st **at 2:00 pm** in the Sanctuary. Entrance on Douglas Street.

Jean Marcellus, Photographer, Recital Chair Dawn McLean, Concert Coordinator

# Sock Drive extended until mid-May!

Thanks so much to everyone who has donated socks for the St. Andrew's Spring Sock Drive.

All socks will be delivered to the Mustard Seed Street outreach program.

The sock drive has been extended to mid-May so there is still time to donate more new socks.

Donations can be placed in the basket in the narthex any Sunday or dropped off at the office on Wednesdays or Thursdays.

**Patti Jackson**Mission and Outreach



You are welcome to join the virtual book club of *God Walk* by Mark Buchanan.

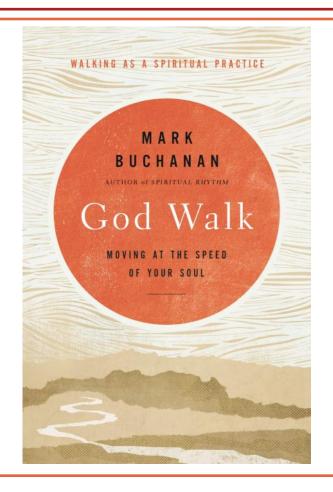
When:

Every Wednesday until June 1st, 7:00pm - 8:00pm Zoom link:

https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83419017582

For the week of May 4th, we will discuss chapters 9, 10 & 11, which look at walking as prayer, as attentiveness, and as remembering.

For more information, please email Sabine Teetzel (steetzel@telus.net).



# Worship Committee

With more detail on COVID protocols on page 12.

April has been a busy month!

You will have noticed a change at the front door. Bruce Wasylik and Arthur Marcellus have taken over from Roger Bernard and Sheelagh Garson, who stepped down after 9 months of duty since we opened for inperson worship in July, and also worked on the team that developed COVID protocols for re-entry into the sanctuary. Those who serve at the doors and as ushers play an important role in welcoming members and especially visitors as they come through the doors for worship – thank you!

Jerry Verwey and Jack Reimer continue to work to improve our AV system, especially for on-line worship. Two omni-directional microphones have been ordered and will greatly improve the sound quality of the organ and the choir for on-line worship. Cables have arrived for hanging the new microphones from a central point in the ceiling, and installation is progressing.

Session approved further changes to COVID protocols at its April meeting. Masks, social distancing and ventilation remain as key protections but starting on Sunday May 8th we will move from "proof of vaccination" to "trust" that people attending are fully vaccinated and boosted to protect other worshipers. Children under 5 will now be welcomed, under the same premise: we trust parents and grandparents to consider the children's daily routines and potential exposure to COVID before attending. A section of pews in the gallery that are closest to the tower doors will be reserved for families with young children so that they are "downwind" of everyone else, and alternate pews in the gallery will be closed to increase spacing between worshipers. (See more on p.12.)

We have heard very little from members about the spiritual content of *TWASA* and the *Companion to Worship* video: Do you find them helpful in your daily

life? Do they help prepare you for Sunday worship and thus make it more meaningful? Do they help you feel connected to St. Andrew's community? What would you miss about them if they were no longer produced, especially the *Companion to Worship*? Each of these communication tools take time to produce, and it is important that limited staff and volunteer time be used effectively. Please send comments to the church administrator or the chair of Worship Committee (bdtitus@gmail.com).

While we hope to open the Sanctuary for private prayer and meditation at noon on Wednesdays for an hour, we require more volunteers to help Elizabeth Gichimu. If you can assist, please contact Elizabeth, Sabine or Brian.

Holy Week provided an opportunity for joint worship at Trinity (Maundy Thursday), Knox (Good Friday) and St. Andrew's (Easter) – with more intentional shared leadership, worship, and attendance than in past years, as the PCC congregations in the Victoria area begin to explore collaborative opportunities for working together. The welcoming and open atmospheres at each of them bodes well for future shared initiatives. For Easter Sunday, our thanks to all those that made this such a celebratory worship service! – about 130 people attended, including the choir, ushers, and others helping with the service.

Worship Committee is always happy to hear from people – please get in touch if there is anything that you would like to discuss, or if you would like to assist in any way!

**Brian Titus**Worship Committee



# KNOX COLLEGE

59 St. George Street, Toronto, Ontario M5S 2E6 CANADA tel 416.978.4500 fax 416.971.2133 knox.utoronto.ca

March 25, 2022

Ms Colina Titus St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Victoria 680 Courtney Street Victoria BC V8W 1C1

Some of the most important moments of my life and ministry have occurred at Knox College: worshiping in the Chapel, studying in the Caven Library, living in the residence, listening to lectures in the classrooms, and talking with fellow students and faculty in the lounge. The same might be true for you.

While these buildings have significant emotional ties, they also carry some practical challenges. I'm writing today to let you know that Knox College has reached an agreement with the University of Toronto that will unlock the value of our properties and ensure the success of the College in the future.

We have signed a Letter of Intent (LOI) in which the University of Toronto will acquire the Knox College properties for \$45 million and lease back to Knox College the academic wing (on King's College Circle) for the continuing operation of a theological school for The Presbyterian Church in Canada, for 40 years. This frees us from the responsibility of owning and operating the whole building and allows us to focus our efforts and resources on our programs and mission.

The unanimous decision of the Knox Board to approve this LOI followed a careful assessment of Knox's mission and the resources required to fulfil that mission in service to the Church. The Strategic Plan, adopted in 2019, calls for Knox "to optimize the use of our current and future facilities to support our mission in theological education." Our properties' deferred maintenance costs have grown beyond our ability to manage in the longer term. After careful consideration we have determined that selling the properties will best position the College for success.

This decision has also been approved by the Assembly Council and the Trustee Board of The Presbyterian Church in Canada.

This LOI provides a solid basis for the continuing and uninterrupted work of Knox College on the University of Toronto campus in partnership with the Toronto School of Theology. It also creates the conditions for a robust and sustainable future.

While I understand how difficult it is for some o see the Knox College building sold, I remind myself that the mission of Knox and the PCC is eve more important to sustain. That will be the important result of this change. What's more, we will remain in the space for years to come, as we continue to educate people of faith for ministry and service.

For more information, please find a news release, Board Statement, and FAQ online at **knox.utoronto.ca/property**. If you wish to attend a Zoom meeting on April 6 at 7pm EDT on this topic, register at **bit.ly/April6Knox**.

Warmly in faith,

John Vissers

**Knox College Principal** 

Joh A. Vines

# Easter Sunday, April 17, 2022

The Sanctuary was filled with music and many worshippers on Easter Sunday. We shared our service with Knox Presbyterian Church. Unfortunately, Rev. Laura couldn't be with us due to ill health. Here are some glimpses of Easter Sunday.

Welcome to Worship and to the Sacrament of Holy Communion by Pastor Mitch.



Our Easter Readers from St. Andrew's and Knox Presbyterian







We were treated to joyous Easter music by our own organist and choir with Lauren Steinman, soloist and David Barss on trumpet.







# You and St. Andrew's kitchen!

For most folks at St. Andrew's it has been many months since you have worked in our kitchen and, quite frankly, you have probably given little thought to it. Now, as health guidelines have eased up, our Sunday coffees have begun again and very likely more events will be planned which may include the use of the kitchen.

Please think back to pre-Covid and remember that our kitchen is used by many of us from St. Andrew's but also by others who may be using our facilities now and again.

The rules are pretty simple:

- a. Leave the kitchen neat and tidy when you are done.
- b. Put things back where you found them.
- c. The fridge is used by many so don't use what is not yours.
- d. Clearly label any things left in the fridge, or freezer.
- e. If you find a problem, let Grant, or me, know so we can try to resolve it.
- f. If you notice some of our supplies getting low, please tell me so I can replenish what needs to be purchased.
- g. Towels, cloths and tablecloths are for use but **please take laundry home to wash** (iron or bleach if necessary) and **return it** as soon as possible to the kitchen.

At present, we have not returned to using our previous composting system but this will likely happen as activities increase. When that begins again, we will be separating out what we can for compost so that we can reduce the amount of "garbage" we create. We'll let you know when that restarts.

Please don't hesitate to let me know if you have comments or concerns regarding the kitchen.

### Sheelagh Garson

Maintaining our kitchen by working together!



Our first Coffee Hour since March 8, 2020 held on April 10, 2022! It was a much welcomed addition to our Sunday Service.

# Visioning: Progress to date - what next?

The summary includes input as follows:

- Town Hall meeting November 2019;
- Visioning process began with session in January 2020;
- 24 participants in 5 focus groups via Zoom;
- Elders and a number of other church leaders were invited to prioritize/make comments and additions to the summary of visioning comments as presented in February 2022.

The following summary of assets and deficits is prioritized (top to bottom) according to the comments most frequently offered.

### **ASSETS:**

- We are a community of faith;
- Our location provides us with a wide variety of 'neighbours' (workers, visitors, local residents, First Nations, tenants, friends of the congregation);
- We have articulated an awareness of the unchurched around us, we are a community who wants to reach out;
- · We have strong relationships within our church family, caring for each other;
- We welcome and are hospitable to newcomers who walk into our church;
- · Learning to adapt e.g., on-line worship;
- Beautiful building, good organ, prime location, more than a historic edifice;
- Highly skilled, competent, creative people;
- Body of Christ in worship is the main calling;
- As a congregation we have a long history.

### **DEFICITS:**

(Recognition of deficits is also an asset - it shows honesty.)

- We are grumpy, critical and fractious, likely due to the cumulative effects of Covid and the past;
- The lack of trust surfacing among the leadership: expressed towards those who speak too much, and also expressed toward those who speak too little or don't speak at all;
- Ageing congregation;
- Potential barriers to newcomers could be our theology, lifestyle, sexuality;
- We have a narrow socioeconomic and cultural demographic;
- The building is sick and dying.

Pastor Coggin and Rev. Stretch shared thoughts on the visioning process so far with reference to the assets and deficits.

What do we know about ourselves? We need to look at the deficits in the light of our assets. The deficits are concerning, in particular the trust issues. What do we need to do to trust one another? We are all on the same team.

There is a positive way forward: to try and understand who we are, discuss our deficits and to seek a remedy, to identify the challenges and set goals. Likely other congregations face many of the same issues. We can *not* do nothing.

Session plans to set aside time, outside of the monthly session meeting, to wrestle with the issues. This is important work before we can invite a minister to work with us.

Pastor Coggin, Rev. Stretch and the elders of session continue to invite suggestions and ideas as we continue with the visioning process.

# May Long Weekend...

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church is the only downtown Church on the main thoroughfare in Victoria. If you walk from City Hall at the corner of Pandora and Douglas Street to the Convention Centre at Humboldt, there is only one piece of green space between those two points and that is at our St. Andrew's.

At one of our pre-Covid Car-Free days, we welcomed over 750 people into our Sanctuary. We have welcomed visitors at our Open Church when the cruise ships visit our beautiful city. The May Long Weekend is another opportunity for us to share our pride of being a downtown Church to the outside world.

Laura Richards has agreed to be the designated point person for our Open Church on Monday May 23<sup>rd</sup>. I have offered to help Laura with this event and we are looking for more people who could serve as docents, hosts or greeters.

The plan is to have three team leads (Laura, Jim and one other – yet to volunteer) for a 3-hour shift each. I will lead the 8 to 11am opening, Laura will lead the 2 to 5pm shift. We need a volunteer to lead the team for the 11am to 2pm shift.

We will be meeting the week before to go through what is expected of our volunteers. We will have information sheets available with more detail than what might be provided in a quick visit.

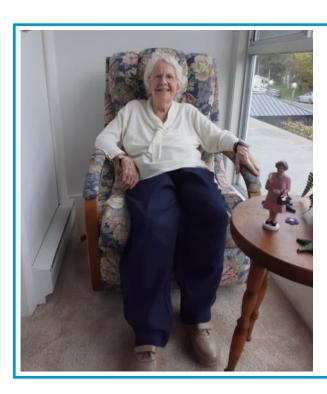
I have been downtown many times when people have stopped to take pictures of our beautiful church Other times people have walked up to the door and tried to open it – until they realize we don't have door handles on the front doors!

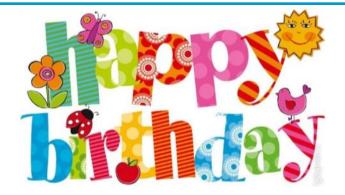
This is an opportunity for us at St. Andrew's to show that we are a welcoming Church, a place of refuge and a place where people can take a moment, collect their thoughts and perhaps reflect on 'is this a place where I would like to worship'.

It is up to us to use this opportunity. Will you join us? To help, please contact:

Laura Richards <u>lauraelsie@telus.net</u> 778-587-5637 Jim Ferguson <u>ipfergus@gmail.com</u> 250-415-3687.

Respectfully, **Jim Ferguson** 





What better way to celebrate your 99th birthday than receiving many birthday greetings from friends and family and relaxing in the sun, in a favourite chair on your deck! Stay well, **Betty**, hope to see you soon. (You'll note the Queen came to bring her greetings as their birthdays are quite close together!)

Sheelagh Garson

# Greater Victoria Coalition to end Homelessness BUSINESS DIALOGUE

A challenge for all downtown areas in all cities is homelessness. Those who are unhoused are homeless because of various issues such lack of access to affordable housing and mental health and addiction issues. Victoria, as we all know, is no exception to this situation. On April 13, there was an event at City Hall organized for businesses, organizations and neighbourhood associations in the downtown area to openly voice their concerns and hear what steps are being taken to help address these challenges. This meeting had representatives from the Greater Victoria Coalition to end Homelessness, Councillor Sarah Potts and the CEO from Canadian Mental Health Association. We learned more about the Peer Assisted Crisis Team which can respond to mental health crisis calls and wellness checks and is aimed at supporting community health, wellness and safety. This program has been successful in Oregon and on the North Shore. A version is now up and running in the City of Toronto.

What were some concerns that were voiced? Many business owners expressed their concern for their staff who must open up early in the morning when folks are camping out in their doorways. A representative from a downtown neighbourhood association voiced the concern on behalf of some of their members about feeling safe in parts of downtown, especially in the evening. Some business owners would like more tools and were especially interested in learning about crisis intervention and "de-escalation training" for their staff.

Takeaways? In spite of these challenges, the downtown business owners and organizations are empathetic to the non-housed in Victoria. Many have had their businesses downtown for a long time. There is an awareness that a doorway may be the only place out of the rain or cold at night for some folks. Not only is housing needed, but more importantly, the need is great for supportive housing to continue to address addiction and mental health issues. Dialogue and respect are needed on every side. A story was shared from the staff of the Great Victoria Coalition to end Homelessness about an unhoused gentleman who "adopted" a specific business doorway in downtown Victoria for a period of time. He called it 'his' door and was respectful of the business and his space.

Although this is not the end of this important and ongoing conversation, it is definitely a good beginning and the general sentiment from those in attendance was that there is reason to be hopeful.

Patti Jackson, Mission & Outreach





First Sunday After Easter - April 24, 2022

Our full choir performing magnificently on the first Sunday after Easter. Special thanks to soloist, Akina Kishiyama.

# Next Transition in COVID Protocols for Worship

(cross-referenced from Worship Committee article)

We take our next transitional step in COVID safety protocols for worship on Sunday May 8th. The guiding principle remains the same throughout the transitions: we abide by these protocols to keep those around us safe because of our love and commitment to them as fellow worshipers at St. Andrew's.

### Continuing:

- Wear an appropriate mask within the building, except when partaking of communion elements or leading worship.
- Maintain a respectful distance from others, mindful that they may want greater distancing that you.
- Avoid main floor pews that are roped off, or front pews with signs on them.
- Ventilation, using combinations of doors and fans, depending on the weather and number of people present.

### New:

- We respectfully request and trust that all those over five years of age who come to worship are fully vaccinated and boosted to help protect fellow worshipers. (Proof of vaccination no longer required.)
- Unvaccinated children under five are welcome, and their families are asked to please sit in the gallery in the reserved "family pews" immediately below the two tower doors. (These pews are closest to the doors through which air flows out of the sanctuary and up into the tower and vents to the outside.) Please enter the narthex, turn right, and take the stairs and ask an usher for directions if you need them.
- Every alternate pew in the gallery will be closed (as they are on the main floor).

Why move from "proof" to "trust"? At the outset of in-person worship in July 2021, session made the difficult decision to place a condition on those attending worship to help ensure the safety of all. This challenged our sense of what it means to be a welcoming community of faith under pandemic conditions and also excluded children too young to be vaccinated. We were the only congregation in Victoria we knew that did this, but congregations in mainstream denominations who rely on "trust" have not seemed to have suffered health challenges during the pandemic. Furthermore, government "proof" documents do not cover booster shots, which are important for reducing infectivity rates. Also, "proof" is no longer required by the government (with some health-care institute exceptions).

Are young children a risk? Families in the congregation that have young unvaccinated children have undoubtedly struggled with this question, and come to their own conclusions on how to minimize risk to others as part of their daily lives. Are the children mixing with a wide range of other children in day care, playschool or kindergarten through the week? Are they cared for at home by a family member or babysitter? Do they go to grandparents, a family friend, or a babysitter for the day? Have they had COVID recently and hence still have high immunity? All of these are factors that we trust will be considered by families bringing children to worship, as the family itself will know best how to weigh the risk factors. If you want to bring children to worship and have questions, please contact the pastor or an elder. We have reserved a place that we hope families will find comfortable, and which will help assure them that we value them, and miss them!

# ST. ANDREW'S PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH DIRECTORY

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# Spring Classical Music Concert

Featuring University of Victoria, School of Music Students

Sunday, May 1st at 2:00 pm

Aline Thévard, cellist and Isabel Stanyer, piano Solos and Duets

From the Studios of Pam Highbaugh-Aloni, Associate Professor, UVIC, Cellist Lafayette Quartet And Bruce Vogt, Professor of Piano

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church
Entrance: 924 Douglas Street
Downtown Victoria
Accessibility ramp at Broughton Street entrance

Admission by Donation

Information:

office@standrewsvictoria.ca

Telephone: 778-587-1227 or 250-384-5734

Website: standrewsvictoria.ca

https://www.facebook.com/StAndrewsPresbyterianVictoria/



Support from the Victoria Foundation's Covid Recovery Program and St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church