

THE LINK

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church



June 2022

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Victoria, BC



The grief is overwhelming! Before Linda and I left to spend time with our grandchildren in the States, we said goodbye to a dear friend. Hunter was our 15-year Weimaraner that became ours full-time when he was only 6 months old. Piercing blue eyes eventually turned to a dark green before his first birthday. Short, stubby legs began to grow until he reached 27 kilograms. Hunter was our walking partner, our nap companion that we lovingly referred to as “Velcro dog” for his love to be near us at all times.

The average life span for a Weim is generally 12 years. Hunter had undergone major surgery to remove a tumour in his leg twice in the last 8 years. His cataracts diminished his sight and increasingly he seemed confused as to where he was. It was obvious that Hunter was in pain and had grown tired of life’s limitations.

The vet explained our options. He gave us time and space to make the decision that was right for us and for Hunter. Hunter looked at us with the utmost trust and with extreme exhaustion. I had watched him fall asleep thousands of times in those 15 years, and it seemed the same, but it was not, and I knew it. Coming home will never be the same, but I am glad that my friend is no longer in pain. I am blessed to have shared my life and home with such a loving companion. Thank you, Hunter. I love you and miss you terribly.



My grief is different from that which exploded in my heart a few days later when the worst mass school shooting in a decade occurred in south Texas. The horror is unspeakable! An 18-year-old gunman who legally purchased two semi-automatic weapons and 300 rounds of ammunition entered an elementary school and brutally murdered two teachers and 19 precious children. Politicians defend the right to “bear arms”. Questions such as “Why can an 18-year-old legally purchase a military grade weapon and yet cannot buy alcohol?” are ones that politicians refuse to answer.

America is sick. America has a gun fetish. 44% of Americans live in a household with a gun and Americans own 46% of the world’s civilian-owned weapons. Already in 2022, there have been over 200 mass murders in the States, with the latest in two 4th grade classrooms. My grief for the innocent lives taken by an 18-year-old madman is overwhelming. My anger over politicians who refuse to lift a finger to combat gun violence is livid. I grieve the loss of the “land of the free and the home of the brave.” Hunter showed us what it means to love another unselfishly. America is showing us the exact opposite. What will it take for sanity to prevail?

Blessings to you all,
Pastor Mitch

Session Update

We called an additional meeting to discuss how we will move forward with the remits passed at the General Assembly in 2021. Although there is no timeline set by the PCC, it is important that as a congregation we progress in our understanding of our response to these remits prior to searching for a new minister. You will all have received a letter about St. Andrew's response to the remits. (Page 6) The letter will also be posted on the website.

This decision is really about the wider question: How can we be 'open and welcoming to all', including those who are marginalized?

The following agenda items were discussed at our regular monthly meeting:

Communication: We continue to work to improve communication. You can read an update about communication as it relates to event planning and advertising. (Page 9)

Webmaster: Martin Perez continues doing great work keeping our website current. Martin had a one-year contract that ends on June 30. We are pleased that Martin has agreed to continue in the position. The terms of the new contract are open-ended and includes modified terms for resignation/termination.

Envelope Secretary: Leona Johns has faithfully served as the Envelope Secretary for many years and retires at the end of May. Leona kindly gave 7 months notice. We have not been able to find a volunteer to take on this task. As is the practice of a number of churches, we are adding the tasks of envelope secretary to the responsibilities of Whitney Hanna, Office Administrator. This is intended as a temporary appointment until we find a church volunteer. Whitney has graciously agreed to this addition to her responsibilities.

Remits: As we continue to consider the implications of the session decision regarding the remits, we are reminded:

- To be open to listening to each other, to hear the depths of people's concerns and encourage everyone that we can walk forward together even if we are not in agreement.
- To encourage people to take time and not be hasty in their response. We want everyone to remain and yet stay true to what they believe to be true.

- That we are all on our own spiritual journey, at our own pace.
- We are a reformed church, which means we are a church that is continuing to reform.

Visioning (continued):

How can we move forward together? The search process is an important part of our life together. If we do not move forward, we fall backwards. Out of the ongoing visioning process, we have identified 4 key areas for action, which can be undertaken concurrently:

1. Explore and pursue **Partnerships** with our sister Presbyterian congregations in Victoria.
 - Engage in open ended conversations, including lay people from each congregation. What might shared resources/shared leadership look like?
 - Invite Knox Victoria, Knox Sooke, Trinity, Chinese Presbyterian, Saanich Peninsula to the conversations.
 - We all need each other - this is a compelling and timely argument. We are at a tipping point. Currently 3 vacancies in the search process.
 - Session agreed to convene an initial meeting of ministers and lay leaders from each of our sister Presbyterian churches in Greater Victoria (6 churches) to explore the nature and extent of their desire for partnership, and the desired outcomes for such a partnership.
2. We need to add **people resources** and encourage and develop new leadership.
 - Address the significant gaps in leadership.
 - Can we 'hire' to fill for personnel for some tasks in order to free up time and energy to lead the life of the congregation?
3. Identify a long-term **financial plan** and resources for future ministry.
4. Address emerging **Church Building** issues. Secure professional building assessments to determine need for repair and maintenance and explore how these factors into the church's future ministry.

In closing, Pastor Coggin reminded us that there is much to do, and we are called with specific gifts.

For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Jeremiah 29:11

Wishing you a safe and blessed summer

Colina Titus,
Session Clerk



Welcome back Sonja and Kevin. We've missed you and we wish you were staying longer. Sonja and Kevin have not been able to come to Canada and visit us since the beginning of COVID. It's been way too long and we are glad you are here, even if for just a short while.



Sunday, May 15, 2022 – we were treated to an amazing anthem entitled '*African Psalm*' by Patrick Liebergen, with Brian on the penny whistle and Jorge with the maraca.

Camp VIP 2022

Mid Week Escape Little Qualicum Falls Provincial Park June 7th-10th	French Beach Provincial Park Mid Week Camp July 4th-8th
Cowichan River Provincial Park New Location Mid Week Camp July 25th-29th	Family Camp with Children's Program Goldstream Provincial Park August 25th-29th

All group camp sites have a 50 camper limit so book early.
 Email campvip@outlook.ca for more information and booking
 A program of the Presbyterian Church in Canada

Happy Birthday

Happy Birthday, Peter.

Peter Lewis turned 93 on May 11th and he is pictured here with his grandsons, Sawyer and Wyatt.



Fund-Raising Concert for PWS&D

You are invited to an evening of music at
Knox Presbyterian Church
2964 Richmond Rd. Victoria

A Balm In Gilead Band
Thursday, June 16th at 7:00 pm

The Big Band will be back and will perform
sacred songs that are enjoyed on both secular
and sacred stages.

Admission to the concert is by donation,
with proceeds going to Presbyterian World
Service and Development.

Patti Jackson
Mission & Outreach
(See poster on Page 5)



No 'stretch' here – Pastor Mitch is genuine in
his wish from on 'high', that Jerry has a safe
and joyful trip across Canada. Now, would you
consider that a 'tall' order?

Open Church

VICTORIA DAY PARADE MAY 23

We opened the Sanctuary for visitors at 9 am on May 23 during the Victoria Day Parade. There was a sign at the entrance encouraging visitors to wear a mask and all volunteers wore a mask. Even though the day was cool and damp, both sides of Douglas St. were crowded with spectators for the first parade in about 3 years.

The early morning crew had a few visitors (10 - 15) with two people new to Victoria saying they were looking for a church, so we will keep an eye out for them.

When the parade ended at 11:30 am we had several families (about 20 people) enter the sanctuary, many for the first time. Most wanted to know about the organ and the windows, and our volunteers provided them with several facts. We did realize that we had forgotten some of the historical information over the long time since our last open house, so we may need to review some of the facts. Someone remembered Jerry's historical briefings which would gain applause from those gathered to listen. The lights were on over the organ and choir loft and those entering off Douglas St. must have sensed a peace. Sheelagh kept the little ones happy with a bowl of lollypops and we all had a chuckle at Jim's humour telling us, "we had saved some bladders for all those who had a calling." Our last visitor was a little boy who had asked his father if they could visit our church which he called "the castle" and Sheelagh gave him one of her lollypops. We closed the doors at 1 pm and the castle said "Go in Peace".

Respectfully submitted,
Laura Richards

A Balm In Gilead Band presents

SACRED POP

So, where were we? 🤔

Knox Presbyterian Church
2964 Richmond Road

Thursday, June 16, 7pm

Refreshments to follow

A Balm In Gilead Band
Steve Sturgess - guitar and vocal
Corrine Painter - trumpet and vocal
Ryan Tandy - bass
with
Connie Dunwoody - vocal
Brian Titus - vocal
Carolyn Hoekstra - piano
Geoff Mason - drums
Jonnie Bridgman - sax



The BIG Band is back with another collection of "sacred" songs that are equally at home on the sacred or secular stage. Songs with underlying theological tones and messages that relate to Christianity as well as universal spiritual values.

Admission by donation
Proceeds to support the relief efforts of PWS&D

Letter to the Congregation

(mailed to every household on 27 May 2022)

3490

Dear friends and congregational family,

We would like to personally communicate with you about the Remits that were passed at the 2021 General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Canada.

REMIT B: 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.

REMIT C: 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).

In the context of this report, a ‘remit’ can be understood as an action (eg adopting the definition of marriage as a covenant relationship between two adult persons) officially assigned to an organization (in this instance, all congregations within the Presbyterian Church in Canada)

These two remits are now included in the polity (laws) of the Presbyterian Church in Canada. This decision has been many years in the making, and it is the responsibility of the session to implement the implications of these significant decisions into the life of St Andrew’s.

The session recently met to share our own journeys and understanding of this significant decision that reflects a significant majority of the Presbyterian presbyteries across Canada. Listening thoughtfully to each other helped us in our own understanding. Here are a few of the thoughts shared:

- The remits are about what it means to value and respect all individuals, without regard to sexual orientation.
- How do we decide what Scripture says, when we view it through current culture? What does science say? Genetics? What is eternal truth? Difficult questions.
- Often words of scripture are hard to understand (one passage says one thing, another passage may seem to be in conflict). But what we do know is ‘the greatest of these is love’.
- Everyone needs to work out their own conscience, which is a continuing journey. Important that this journey is with love and without judgment
- Personal experience about a family member who is gay and coming to an overwhelming knowledge that God loves this person.
- Over the thirty years of discussion on the topic, after prayer, I come to the realization that it is time to let the younger people make decisions. I am now in favour of both remits.
- Personal stories of gratitude expressed by family members of LBGTQI persons upon hearing that a relative is fully welcome and included in the church.
- We are all made in the image of God.

What does this mean to us, here at St Andrew’s? It means that we welcome all people to our congregation regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, physical or mental ability, income, or

political beliefs. We can state that we are an affirming congregation.

What do we need to do? We need to reflect this in everything that we do and say. We need to fully include everyone in the life of our church. We need to intentionally reflect this in all of our communication: Facebook, TWASA, *The Link*, website, bulletins. This work needs to begin without delay.

What does this mean to you? Maybe you have concerns and difficulty with understanding and accepting these remits?

It is okay to have a hard time. These were decisions not taken lightly by individuals and by the governing bodies of the Presbyterian Church. Many of us may have struggled as we anticipated and grappled with issues implicated in these remits.

Maybe you want to read more, as you seek a greater understanding? Perhaps you may want to talk about how you are feeling. Here are a few suggestions:

- ❖ Talk to an elder
- ❖ Talk to Pastor Mitch Coggin (Transitional Minister) or Rev. Wayne Stretch (Interim Moderator)
- ❖ Refer to the Presbyterian Church in Canada website: <https://presbyterian.ca>
- ❖ In particular, the following might be helpful:
 - The Final Report of the Rainbow Communion (which can be accessed as a video, verbal or written presentation) sourced from the experiences of the storytellers: [Rainbow Communion: Special LGBTQI Listening Committee - The Presbyterian Church in Canada](#)
 - Bible study guide: "Thinking together about human sexuality and sexual orientation in The Presbyterian Church in Canada" [Resource Finder - The Presbyterian Church in Canada](#)
- ❖ Read websites of other Presbyterian Churches

On behalf of the Session of St. Andrew's,
Colina Titus
Session Clerk

*There is no longer Jew or Greek; there is no longer slave or free;
there is no longer male or female, for all of you are one in Christ Jesus. Galatians 3:28*



As **Debra** and **Jerry Verwey** prepare to leave on their cross Canada RVing trip, we wish them God's Blessings and God Speed. Don't forget to come back. You will be missed. *Mizpah* (May the Lord watch between you and me when we are absent one from the other – Genesis 31:49)

UVic Students Perform Classical Music



At the Spring Classical Music Concert in our sanctuary, we were again graced by the performance of the student musicians from UVic. Both St. Andrew's and the Victoria Foundation sponsored the event with the UVic School of Music.

The musicians were Aline Th  vard on cello and Isabel Stanyer on piano. Aline is from the studio of Pam Highbaugh Aloni, Associate Professor UVic and Cellist, LaFayette Quartet. Isabel is from the studio of Bruce Vogt, Professor of Piano, UVic.

We were treated to music from J.S. Bach, Franz Liszt, and Dmitri Shostakovich.



Smiling greeters welcomed visitors into our sanctuary and encouraged those walking by to join us at the Sunday afternoon concert.



From l to r: Pam Highbaugh Aloni, Aline Th  vard, Isabel Stanyer, & Cleo Yong

Cleo is a violinist at the UVic School of Music and was contracted by St. Andrew's to book students who practiced in the Sanctuary during the school terms this year.

Concerts and recitals will resume in September 2022.



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

Communication & Administration Committee

We continue to work to improve our communications, both with the congregation and the wider community. We want everyone to know what is happening!

Session has agreed that all events hosted in the sanctuary will be posted on the website under the 'Events' tab; this includes church events and also events hosted by renters.

Plans are underway for a better use of the notice boards, interior and exterior.

Do you have an idea for an event? To avoid conflicts of time and space, and to create effective communications, we are asking you to complete an 'Events Form'. You can get one from the Church Administrator or a Committee Chair.

Would you like some advertising done? Please follow this link <https://form.jotform.com/221176722328050> to request your posters or other advertising needs. Our Church Administrator is able to assist you.

If you are calling the Church Office and there is no answer, please call Whitney's office cell 778-587-1227 between 9:30 and 2:30 week days.

Jean Marcellus,
Communications & Administration

Steps required when making a booking for an upcoming event (this does not apply to repeat events)

- Church Office receives information/request about an upcoming event, at least three weeks (twenty-one days) in advance of event date.
- Church Office confirms location is available for 'idea'.
- Church Office provides person with the idea the "Event Planning Form for Congregational Events" to be completed and returned to the Church Office.
- Church Office forwards completed form to the appropriate Committee Chair.
- Committee Chair signs completed form or forwards completed form to Session for approval (if event does not fall under the auspices of any committee).
- Committee Chair forwards completed and approved form to the Church Office for retention.
- Church Office sends a copy of the completed and approved form to the Communications Chair.
- Church Office books space and discusses advertising needs with Committee Chair and/or representative – i.e. TWASA, Facebook, *The Link*, website.
- Committee Chair and/or representative complete the On-Line Form for Advertising Events (if required).
- Committee Chair communicates with Treasurer regarding budget.
- Committee Chair turns in receipts and reimbursement form to Church Office (not to Treasurer on a Sunday morning).

Cross Canada Trip 2022

Jerry and I are now two weeks into our cross Canada trip which we think will take about 5 months. We left on Tuesday, May 17th on an evening ferry sailing from Swartz Bay to Tsawwassen. The next day a fierce windstorm hit Victoria but by then we were heading up the north shore of the Fraser Valley. We have been following the Fraser north through the Canyon and up towards its tributaries.

Our goal is to see as much of northern Canada as possible, especially in the three western provinces. Last weekend we used Williams Lake as our base for several days. We hiked and biked several trails, doing some bird watching at the same time. Around 108 Mile House we saw glebe, ruddy ducks and white American pelicans on their migration north.

We spent a night in Bull Canyon on the banks of the Chilcotin River. This is one of the rivers which feeds the Fraser as it cuts through the Chilcotin Plateau. The Plateau is a high elevated grassland with many ranches and alpine forests. Another deep canyon that cuts into the plateau is Farwell Canyon with a spectacular gorge and natural sand dunes.

Our base for the past few days has been Prince George. Here we have hiked along the Nechako River which is the breeding ground of 25 percent of the salmon that supply the Fraser River (the world's greatest salmon resource.)

We took a side trip west along Highway 16, the Yellowhead, to Fort St. James. on Stuart Lake. Fort St. James was founded in 1806 by Simon Fraser, and his assistant, John Stuart, as a Northwest Trading Company post. In 1821, the fort came under the control of the Hudson's Bay Company and it subsequently became the administrative headquarters of the Company's vast New Caledonia District. The Stuart River which supplies Fort St. James with fresh water has one of the largest sockeye salmon runs in the world.

This coming week we are heading further north to Chetwynd and Dawson Creek for several days before we leave BC and go to Grand Prairie in Alberta.

We hope that everyone at St. Andrew's in Victoria has a wonderful summer with good health and good weather. We have been joining St. Andrew's Sunday service online each week. This is a wonderful way to keep in touch with our friends in Victoria.

Debra Verwey



Photos by the Verweys

This wily fox was the park ranger that we saw several times at Bull Canyon.



Farwell Canyon



A Ruddy duck that we saw near 108 Mile House



White American pelican on Sepa Lake, a stop over on its migration north.



Jerry stoking the campfire. It has been very chilly at times. I have been piling on the sweaters and wearing a winter hat and mittens!



Good-bye for the Summer!

The Link has always been a vital part of the communication network of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, especially now due to the fact that not everyone is attending church in person yet. Many in the congregation are still relying on live-streaming or other electronic means to participate in worship. That also means that not all of us are able to get together at coffee hour after the service. As a result, the Link has been a significant source of information about the lives of the congregation where we can share stories and events. The contributions from the congregation have been very important to the editors in order to produce the monthly newsletter of our church.

However, the time has come for the editors to take a well-deserved break for the summer. The June edition will be the last edition of the Link until September and the last day for contributions for the September 2022 Link will be August 28th.

That does not mean that you should not keep the Link in mind over the summer. We would ask that you send stories, photos and memorable events to the Link over the summer for publication in the September edition. We welcome your contributions and we will attempt to use as many of them as possible over the coming months. We hope to see many of you return to in-person worship during the summer as we appear to be returning to normal, but we must remain vigilant to ensure that we continue to be safe.

Blessings,
The Editors,

Leona, Deb, and Fiona

As the summer comes upon us, I am sure we look back with much gratitude and thanks for the church life we have been able to carry on safely at St. Andrew's. Whether it is that of just being content to come to a service, in person, or watch the service on-line/live broadcasts. For others, it is the gratefulness of being back in the choir and being able to sing our wonderful anthems that helps our hearts to lift up thanks to God. Coffee hour has just begun again and we can visit with friends and get caught up with each other.

Now, as we look forward to the summer and a bit more of a relaxed schedule, this might also be a time where we can spend a little bit of time and prayer and consider how we might all be able to do just ONE thing for our church. One thing each multiplied by many can make great changes. Perhaps a friendly phone call to see how people are doing. You might want to consider joining the "summer choir" where we will just lead the hymns with singing in the choir loft. No preparation necessary. You may hear of someone who might like a visit or help with grocery shopping. There might be a program that you would like to help with or sit on a committee to give ideas to Session. Talk to the Session members and see how each one of us can do ONE thing. Give feedback to the Session and see how you can help with just ONE thing. Another option is trying to help with summer coffee hour on Sundays. We are in great need of volunteers. Could you help for just ONE Sunday, just to set up, serve and clean up? And then, of course, maybe those who have been watching the service at home can think about coming back to the church on Sunday. We miss you and would like to see you again!

These are small challenges but each ONE can make a big difference. There are so many ways in which we can all help St. Andrew's to continue to grow but every one's help is needed and wanted.

Please think about it!
Dorothy Reimer



The Day of Pentecost

All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability. Acts 2:4 (NIV)

Based on Acts 2:1-21



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

SPEAK	LANGUAGE	PENTECOST	HEAVEN	BLOWING
SOUND	OTHER	HOLY	SPIRIT	HEAR
FILLED	WIND	FIRE	TONGUES	AMAZED