



January 2024

THE LINK

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church

The Year in Review...The Year Ahead

Lenten
Reader 3

Sunday Classical
Music Series 4

Thank-you 5

Gift of Christmas
Music 6

Property
Committee 8

2023 presented us with challenges, opportunities, and open doors. What has been the most memorable event(s) for you? What solidified St. Andrew's in your mind/heart as your spiritual caregiver? There are too many significant milestones to name them all, but perhaps you cherished some of the following:

- ~ The Lenten Study with Knox, Trinity, and St. Andrew's from the movie, *Chocolat*.
- ~ The Spring Market and Silent Auction.
- ~ Each of the UVic Concerts, The Gift of Christmas Music, the Rubidoux Chamber Choir from Juripa Valley, CA or the Gaelic Choir hosting the Robbie Burns Tea.
- ~ The Asset Mapping exercise and groups that have continued the work of sharing muffins with the AA groups and the Lecture Hall renovation in process.
- ~ Collaborative Conversations with our sister Presbyterian churches that have helped us envision "Who might we become as we share our individual resources and dream beyond our own limited vision?" We came together to share worship during Holy Week, Picnic in the Park, and joint worship services in October.
- ~ Weekly Open Church, Meditation Hour and prayer services for those affected by wildfires throughout Canada provided many an opportunity to visit and pray.

These are but a few. Why not make your own list and think about the events from 2023 that you consider most significant?

2024 lies ahead likewise with challenge, opportunities, and an open door. How will you prepare your heart and mind to embrace the possibilities that God has in store for St. Andrew's during the coming year?

There is no greater opportunity than your own spiritual preparation during the coming year. Certainly, weekly worship is key in maintaining your faith journey. If you have allowed weekly worship to slip from your priorities, why not re-commit yourself to joining us each Sunday at 10:30 am?

Beyond public worship is an opportunity of private worship. Let me briefly describe St. Ignatius Prayer of Examen that invites us to practice a deep inward reflection each day. This is an exercise in noticing the movement of God, our connectedness to God throughout the day, and learning to discern the will of God. Why not consider implementing the practice of examen in your own private space? Find a quiet place and

(Continued on page 2)



Victoria, BC

In order to respect the privacy of our contributors, no articles or photos may be reproduced without the express written consent of the editors of *The Link*.

(Continued from page 1)

turn off your phone and any other distractions.

1. Become aware of God's presence. Look back on the events of the day. Ask God to bring clarity and understanding.

2. Review the day with gratitude. Gratitude is the foundation of our relationship with God. Remember your day and note the celebrations. Remember the people you interacted with. What did you receive from these people? What did you give them? Pay attention to small things—the food you ate, the sights you saw, and other seemingly small pleasures. God is in the details.

3. Pay attention to your emotions. One of St. Ignatius's great insights was that we detect the presence of the Spirit of God in the movements of our emotions. Reflect on the feelings you experienced during the day. Boredom? Elation? Resentment? Compassion? Anger? Confidence? What might God be saying through these feelings?

4. Choose one feature of the day and pray from it. Ask the Holy Spirit to direct you to something during the day that God thinks is particularly important. It may involve a feeling—positive or negative. It may be a significant encounter with another person or a vivid moment of pleasure or peace. Or it may be something that seems rather insignificant. Pray about it and allow the prayer to arise spontaneously.

5. Look toward tomorrow. Ask God to give you insight for tomorrow's challenges. Pay attention to the feelings that surface as you survey what's coming up. Are you doubtful? Cheerful? Apprehensive? Full of delighted anticipation? Allow these feelings to turn into prayer. Ask for God's help and understanding. Pray for hope. End the Daily Examen with the Lord's Prayer.

Be intentional in making 2024 an opportunity of spiritual growth.

A blessed New Year to all.

Mitch

Session Report

Session met in December and wishes to report that we are looking for a second or third counting team to alternate with the current team on a rotational basis. If you are able to help, please contact Saul Preston at 250-661-3315, voice or text.

Session recommends to the congregation that:

the **Annual Budget Meeting**
will be held on
January 21st

and

the **Annual General Meeting**
will be held on
February 25th

Both meetings will be held following the service.

Jerry Verwey
Session Clerk

In Loving Memory

Rev. David Stewart ~ January 1, 2024



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....

Revelations 21:4

Lent is a journey. Traditionally, these 40 days before Easter are a time of self-examination, letting go of the old, and readying ourselves for something new.

The last two years, St. Andrews folk shared their faith through brief reflections that were a source of inspiration and encouragement during the season of Lent. This year, we hope to compile reflections from our shared Presbyterian community into a Lenten Reader for 2024.

Henri Nouwen writes,

When we are rooted in prayer and solitude and part of a community of faith...the books we read, the nature we enjoy, the people we meet, and the events we experience contain within themselves signs of God's presence and guidance day by day.

In that spirit, we invite you to share a story, a scripture, an experience that has shaped your life of faith. This might be something you do regularly like taking a walk or gardening or a life-changing circumstance that has taught you about God's presence or provision in our everyday lives. We are not asking for your perfection, we are asking you to share a bit of your unique faith journey.

We will create a "Lenten Reader" for all to use during Lent. Describe your experience in any way that you choose: a description, an example, a story, a song, poem, or artwork (photo or drawing). There is not a specific format, just a few guidelines:

Suggested length for the submission is ½ to 1 typed page (handwritten is accepted!)

Please submit by Sunday, February 4, 2024. Send to lindacoggin@gmail.com or office@standrewsvictoria.ca or drop your submission to the church.

If you have a question or need assistance in **any** way, please contact **Linda Coggin** by email lindacoggin@gmail.com or phone 250-880-0932.

PWS&D Presentation Nov. 30th

On November 30, Guy Smagghe (Director of PWS&D) was the guest speaker at an afternoon event, organized by St. Andrew's, Knox, and Trinity. The event was held at Knox Victoria and was attended by people from St. Andrew's, Knox, Trinity, Saanich Peninsula and St. Andrew's Duncan.

Guy Smagghe began his talk with a PowerPoint presentation that explained how and where PWS&D works with local partners in response to disasters such as earthquakes, tsunamis, droughts, and floods. When there are specific appeals, Presbyterians donate generously to PWS&D. PWS&D has many programs such as using different modes of agriculture for sustainable development and education retraining to help women run small businesses. A question and answer session followed Guy's interesting presentation. Light refreshments were served.

Patti Jackson
Mission & Outreach

Baby Grand Piano Wanted for St. Andrew's Sanctuary

If you or someone you know is downsizing or disposing of a baby grand piano in good working order, please consider lending or giving it to St. Andrew's for use in the sanctuary. The piano will be used during different music events, concerts and services.

If we could have the use of such a piano, it would be very much appreciated. Please contact the church office if you can help.



Sunday Classical Music Series - December 3, 2023



The Sunday Classical Music series, featuring viola students from the class of Joanna Hood, Associate Professor, UVic School of Music, continued at St. Andrew's on December 3 at 2:00 pm. Patti Jackson, Convenor of Mission and Outreach at St. Andrew's welcomed the audience to this afternoon concert. Nine students performed various classical music selections as soloists, a duet, and a string quintet comprised of two violins, a viola and two cellists.

The Sunday afternoon concert series is supported by St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, the Victoria Foundation, and the UVic School of Music. The next concert in this series will be held Sunday, March 10 and April 7 at 2:00 pm in the sanctuary and featuring UVic students from the classes of Pam Highbaugh Aloni and Ann Elliott-Goldschmidt.



Another concert to watch for is the Curore Piano Trio who will perform February 27 at 2:30 pm in St. Andrew's sanctuary. The Curore Piano Trio is a young group from Poland visiting Canada and touring British Columbia. Members of Victoria's Polish community have been invited to attend. Please come and welcome this visiting group on Tuesday, February 27 at 2:30 pm.

Dawn McLean

A Somber Christmas in Bethlehem

Amid the Israel-Hamas War and the devastating destruction in Gaza, patriarchs and heads of the churches in Jerusalem issued a statement that called upon congregations to stand in solidarity with those affected by such terrible afflictions by forgoing any unnecessary festive Christmas activities this year. Roman Catholic Churches in Galilee and the Council of Local Evangelical Churches in the Holy Land requested the same. As a result, festivities such as public tree lighting, parades and Christmas markets were canceled. Religious services were to continue. The statement said that this is a year marked by the devastating loss of so many lives. Many are in mourning from the loss of their loved ones, loss of their homes and the destruction of hospitals, schools and places of worship. So many are suffering. The statement also encouraged the faithful to advocate, pray and contribute as they are able for the victims of this war. A prayer and the statement can be read on the PCC website <https://presbyterian.ca>

Patti Jackson
Mission & Outreach

**Thank you! Thank you!
Thank you! Thank you!**

Yes! Four times thank you to St. Andrew's staff.

None of us could know and understand everything that each of our employees do for St. Andrew's week by week. But one thing is certain, if they were not here we would soon realize just how much they do to keep St. Andrew's functioning. We would miss them!

As we start a new year, I want to thank them for all their hard work throughout 2023. They are willing and cheerful as each of them goes 'the extra mile' to help as members of St. Andrew's team.

Christine, Grant, Martin, and Shannon, a sincere thank you from all of us.

Colina Titus
Personnel and Leading with Care

St. Andrew's Church Employees:

Grant Shepard - Church Officer
Shannon Cummings - Church Administrator
Christine Purvis - Music Director
Martin Perez - Webmaster

Share the Joy of Christmas 2023

Thank you to everyone who donated to St. Andrew's Share the Joy of Christmas 2023 campaign! On December 21st, our donation cheque of \$4,160.00 was delivered to the Mustard Seed Food Bank. This was more than enough money to fund 11 Christmas hampers for financially strapped families this holiday season!

The food hampers are put together by Mustard Seed Street Church, which runs a food bank and has commercial contacts that enable each dollar donated to be stretched to the max, to provide nutritious items for financially struggling families and individuals. Small Christmas gifts are included with each hamper along with enough food to feed a family of 4, at \$360 per hamper. Smaller baskets are also provided to couples and individuals.



So, doing the math (4 X 11) St. Andrew's Share the Joy campaign helped make Christmas brighter for 44 persons in Victoria this year. Thank you all again for your generosity and good will!

Debra Verwey

A Big "Thank You" to Sunday Scripture Readers

When you are in the forest, they say that you do not see the trees. In other words, one takes the trees for granted when they are part of the scenery.

Each Sunday, there are a group of volunteers in our congregation who provide an essential contribution to our worship service - our volunteer readers. I would like to thank them on behalf of the congregation and myself for "stepping up" each Sunday to open our service with prayer and a scripture reading. These persons willingly give of their time Sunday after Sunday, and as coordinator for Sunday readers, make my task so much easier.

Thank you to all our Sunday readers.

Moiria Bernard

If you would like to become a Sunday reader, please speak with me at church or phone me at 250-598-6861. We are always in need of new readers and I would be eternally grateful to hear from you. Moira

The Gift of Christmas Music and Carol Singing - December 14

St. Andrew's welcomed guest musicians on December 14 to our annual Christmas Music and Carol singing. This noon-hour concert has been held for over 15 years in the Sanctuary. The program was designed by Christine Purvis, Director of Music, and St. Andrew's volunteers worked together to make the event such a success. Dorothy Reimer graciously welcomed people to the concert and Rev. Coggin thanked everyone for coming and invited the audience to St. Andrew's Christmas Eve service.

This music performance provides an opportunity to sit and enjoy the sounds of Christmas music in the sanctuary and is a welcomed event for members of the community and friends and members of St. Andrew's.

Attendance estimates ranged from 200 downstairs and 40-45 in the balconies. The compliments and expressions of thanks from the audience were heart warming and donations were generous.

The beautiful music was performed by guest musicians:

David Barss (trumpet)

Kiara Hosie (oboe)

Darby Howard, Eva Smith, Lauren Steinmann (St. Andrew's Choral Scholars)

Tau Vannophat Kaploykeo (cello)

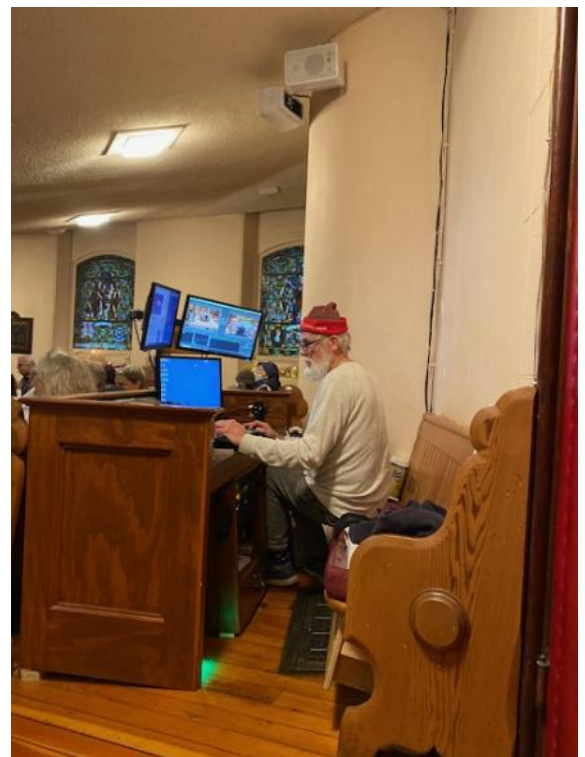
Sophia Camilla Kozlov (guitar)

Ryan Qu (piano & organ)

Special thanks to the performers for sharing their musical gifts and also to Christine Purvis for a wonderful program, Shannon Cummings for office support, Jerry Verwey for technical expertise and Sheelagh Garson and family for the delicious muffins, hot chocolate and coffee for everyone. Happy New Year!

Dawn McLean







Communion Sunday, December 3, 2023



Nativity Scene



Recovery Christmas Dinner -
250 - 300 guests were expected.

Property Committee

Update: The lecture room kitchen will be dismantled shortly so new flooring can be laid in early February. New cabinets will be installed after that. Wall painting and repair will start after the removal of the kitchen so that the wall can be painted before the cabinet installation.

Jerry Verwey

Open Church

Though I was unable to have the church open as much as I wished, the days we were open saw a good number of visitors. It was interesting to note that we were visited by descendants of Robert Dunsmuir who were unaware of his memorial windows and glad to view them. Their young daughter was interested in the castle-like appearance of St. Andrew's which prompted them to enter our sanctuary. I was able to inform them of the church's connection to Dunsmuir.

Jerry Verwey



Christmas Eve Service



Noah Mellemstrand and Amanda Steinemann -
violinists



Annika Sauser - soloist
Jorge Carrizales - guitar

NEW YEAR - NEW LOOK



Faithful readers of *The Link* will notice a new look for the front page of our church newsletter. We hope that you approve of the new look. This is the launch of the new "Branding Logo" for St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Victoria. It took a lot of juggling and re-jigging to accommodate the recent design from the re-branding group onto the front page.

Session approved the formation of a branding task group in 2022 and we are grateful to Finlay Henderson, son of Susie and Angus Henderson, who actually designed the new logo. It was approved by Session in March of last year. Kudos to Jean Marcellus and the re-branding group for all their hard work in developing this new logo.


As we move forward seeking God's plan for our church and our community in the New Year, we hope that you will continue to support your church newsletter by contributing articles, photos and ideas.

Is Christmas Really Over?

Fill in the missing words from the word list. Check your answers in John 1:1-18 (NIV).



1. He _____ in the world, and though the world was made _____ him, the world did not recognize _____.
A. was B. him C. through
2. Yet to all who received him, to those who believed _____ his name, he gave the _____ to _____ children of God.
A. right B. become C. in
3. The Word _____ and _____ his dwelling among us.
A. became B. made C. flesh
4. We have seen _____ glory, the _____ of the One and _____, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.
A. his B. glory C. Only
5. No one has ever seen _____, but God the One and Only, _____ is at the Father's side, has _____ him known.
A. made B. God C. who

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3	4	5	6
			Open Church 11:30 - 1:30 Meditation 4:00-5:30	Choir 7:15		
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Choir 9:30 Worship 10:30 Coffee Hour		Session - 7:00	Open Church 11:30 - 1:30 Meditation 4:00-5:30	Choir 7:15		Ensemble Laude 'Visions' Sanctuary - 2:00
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Choir 9:30 Worship 10:30 Coffee Hour			Open Church 11:30 - 1:30 Meditation 4:00-5:30	Choir 7:15		
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
Choir 9:30 Worship 10:30 Annual Budget Meeting Robert Burns Memorial Concert Kirk Hall - 2:00			Open Church 11:30 - 1:30 Meditation 4:00-5:30	Choir 7:15		The Baltimore Consort Early Music Society Sanctuary - 7:30
28	29	30	31			
Choir 9:30 Worship 10:30 Coffee Hour Feb. Link Deadline			Open Church 11:30 - 1:30 Meditation 4:00-5:30			

If you would like additions, updates or changes to this calendar, please submit that information to thelink@shaw.ca