



January 2025

# THE LINK

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church



## In This Issue

<b>Delivery to CRW</b>	3
<b>Sunday in Urnäsch</b>	4
<b>Budget Meeting</b>	5
<b>Women's Book Discussion</b>	5
<b>Core Values</b>	6-8
<b>Carol Sing</b>	10
<b>Share the Joy</b>	12

## New Beginnings

When you read this, Linda and I will be spending the holidays with our daughter and family, Margaret, Brad, Malachi and Stella. We will have celebrated Christmas, New Year, and the belated birthdays of Malachi and Stella!

As we prepare to return home to Victoria after the 1<sup>st</sup>, I am aware that my time left with you will be short. Only a few weeks will be left before I offer a closing blessing and prayer for you: "May the Lord Christ be over you, watching, calling, guiding, challenging now and forever more."

These past six years have been life changing. They have introduced us to our new home. We survived the pandemic together. While we were not able to take the formative steps to call your next minister, I know that you are more than ready for a new beginning.

John O'Donohue is an Irish priest and poet whose poetry speaks to our distinct paths ahead and about the possibility of a new beginning. I am ready for "new ground". "Your destination is not yet clear". For each of us, I pray that we can indeed and will "unfurl ourselves into the grace of beginning". May it be so!

**Rev. Coggin**

## For A New Beginning

In out-of-the-way places of the heart,  
Where your thoughts never think to wander,  
This beginning has been quietly forming,  
Waiting until you were ready to emerge.

For a long time it has watched your desire,  
Feeling the emptiness growing inside you,  
Noticing how you willed yourself on,  
Still unable to leave what you had outgrown.

It watched you play with the seduction of safety,  
And the gray promises that sameness whispered,  
Heard the waves of turmoil rise and relent,  
Wondered would you always live like this.

*(Continued on page 3)*



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*.

## Session Clerk Report

Session received the Treasurer's proposed budget for 2025. He indicated that there were many unknown variables in the proposed budget. Not the least of these is the clergy's salary and benefits because of the end of Mitch Coggin's contract.

Unknown at this time is the cost of insurance, for which the Property Committee has not yet received a quote. It was reported that the increase could be anywhere from 3 -13%. The insurance agent hopes to have a quote available by the middle of January. With that in mind, the Treasurer will be able to give the congregation an updated budget in April and later in the year if necessary.

Property committee reported on the grant application from the Victoria Heritage Trust. Because our last application was made within the last ten years, we will not be able to make a definitive application for the grant until January 2025. The committee will pursue the application at that time with the hope that both grant applications from the heritage trust and the parapet fund will be approved and can be coordinated.

We received notice from Knox Session about its recommendation to their congregation that:

*...the Session of Knox Church recommends to the congregation that the merger with St. Andrew's not be further pursued.*

This recommendation was voted on by the congregation of Knox on December 22<sup>nd</sup>. The congregation of Knox Presbyterian concurred with their session. Therefore the plan to merge has ended. We will continue to collaborate in various areas as we have in past years.

Our congregational round table discussions resulted in a lot of information which the committee distilled down to three congregational core values:

- Community
- Worship
- Mission and Outreach.

Session, in their round table discussions in August, came up with three core values:

- Spiritual formation and growth
- Music and Worship
- Mission and outreach, witness.

Considering what the individual perception of the words might mean, the core values of the congregation and session are not very far apart.

Mark your calendars for **January 26<sup>th</sup>** for our Congregational Budget Meeting.

**Jerry Verwey**  
Session Clerk



## In Loving Memory

John J. Wigle - November 22, 2024

*(Continued from page 1)*

Then the delight, when your courage kindled,  
 And out you stepped onto new ground,  
 Your eyes young again with energy and dream,  
 A path of plenitude opening before you.

Though your destination is not yet clear  
 You can trust the promise of this opening;  
 Unfurl yourself into the grace of beginning  
 That is at one with your life's desire.

Awaken your spirit to adventure;  
 Hold nothing back, learn to find ease in risk;  
 Soon you will be home in a new rhythm,  
 For your soul senses the world that awaits you.

John O'Donohue



Blue Christmas Service at Trinity Presbyterian Church held on December 15, 2024 and attended by Saanich Peninsula, Knox, Trinity and St. Andrew's.



Skill Development Sewing Centre in Ghana

### Hope, Peace, Joy and Love ~ Symbols of Advent in Action

Just in time for a Christmas shipment, we delivered 15 bags and boxes of sewing, knitting and crafting supplies to Compassionate Resource Warehouse. St. Andrew's donations became part of a shipment sent to a new Skill Development Sewing Centre in Ghana.

For several weeks St. Andrew's Activity Group has been collecting and sorting all the wonderful donations of thread, trim, yarn, fabric, knitting needles, crochet hooks, rug hooks, scissors, tape measures, needles, pins and much more.

Thank you to all who sorted through their own supplies and shared with us for this project.



On January 9th, the Activity Group will resume meeting on Thursday at 10:30 am in the Gathering Room.

**We welcome all - men and women!**

Join us for a coffee or tea, treats and a chat.

Do you have a great idea for a new project for 2025? Maybe we can help. We'll continue some of our ongoing outreach projects. Who knows you just might be able to help!

**Sheelagh Garson**

## Sunday in Urnäsch, Switzerland

Urnäsch is a small town in Canton Appenzell Ausserrhoden in the northeast part of Switzerland. I have visited there nearly every year for thirty years. The attraction for me has been the “**Alpabfahrt**” (cows coming down from the summer pastures in the Alps.) This festive event takes place in early September with many cows, bells, yodeling cattlemen and a very busy farmers’ market. This usually occurs on a Saturday and attracts both Swiss and international visitors.



Sunday begins on Saturday evening at 6 pm when the bells in the church clock tower ring for about ten minutes. The next morning at 8:30 the same

bells ring for another ten minutes to announce that the church service will begin in an hour. At 9:30 the bells again ring for ten minutes while people make their way to the church, being greeted at the door by the minister. When the bells stop, the organist plays a short prelude and the service starts.

On this occasion there was a special choir of 10-12 singers because of a family gathering of about 18-20 for a baptism, along with the rest of the congregation making about 50 people in total. There was also communion where the whole congregation gathered around the communion table while the minister and two assistants served each person. Throughout the service the guest choir sang three times. Some of the hymns have familiar tunes which I can read with the text in German, which I do not speak.



Urnäsch, Switzerland

Sometimes we sit to sing and stand to pray. Sitting and standing does not appear to be consistent. I found the Lord’s Prayer, “Unser Vater” in the hymnbook which I follow along in German. No offering is taken but there is a box at the door to support the mission of the day. In Switzerland, the church is state supported. The church in Urnäsch is Protestant (Evangelisch-Reformiertes) whose reform leader was Ulrich Zwingli (1484-1531). He was in Zurich about a generation before Calvin (1508-1564) was in Geneva.

*(Continued on page 5)*

When the service is over, the tower bells ring again for several minutes. Over the years I have met several ministers since it is often a holiday time for the incumbent. Regular attendance is often quite small, sometimes fewer than ten. Special events bring more congregants.

A few words about bells in Switzerland may be in order. I have often said that the first thing I miss when returning to Canada is the sound of bells. Nearly all the churches have a clock tower with the accompanying bells which ring the hours as well as the quarter- and the half-hours plus extra ringing for various events. It is thrilling to be in a large town with several churches on a Saturday evening when the announcing of the coming Sunday is celebrated with all the bells ringing!

Added to church bells are those worn by animals. Small high pitched ones for goats and varying sizes of larger bells are worn by the cattle. When herds are moving from one place to another, the bells are ringing. When they are grazing in pastures night and day, the bells are ringing. Who needs a lullaby if you can hear cattle bells outside your window?

Submitted by **George Smith**



## **A LOOK at the BUDGET**

**St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church  
Annual Budget Meeting  
January 26, 2025  
12:00 pm.**

### **Women's Book Discussion *An Altar in the World***

Weekly on Wednesdays,  
January 15 - February 4  
5:30 - 7:00 at 982 Linkleas Ave  
(in-person and Zoom option available)

Women's Book Discussion:  
*An Altar in the World*  
by Barbara Brown Taylor

The front flap of this book, *An Altar in the World*, says that the book "reveals meaningful ways to discover the sacred in the small things we do and see." However, I believe there is something more to gain. I looked up the word "altar" because I wondered how an altar was an everyday thing. I was surprised at what I found and chose the definition that fit my sense of the book: an altar is prominent in the Bible as "God's table," a sacred place for sacrifices and gifts offered up to God. What a wonderful idea that our everyday practices can become places we meet God.

For me, sharing food, whether it is baking muffins or picking up groceries for a friend, is an act I consciously offer in God's love. In this book, we are invited to consider the physical ways, like walking, eating, and getting lost, where we encounter and learn God's ways. Taylor asks us to ignore the distinctions between the secular and the sacred and trust that "there is no way to God apart from real life in the real world."

I know that meeting every week is asking a lot. But, it's winter and we will meet in a relaxed atmosphere to share our impressions of the book and our own experience. Even if you can come only once or don't read the chapters for the week, I am sure you will benefit and contribute with what *you are able* to do. Please consider this opportunity for offering and receiving wisdom from one another.

Christian Education has books available and I will get one to you before we begin.

If you have questions or suggestions or would like more information, contact Linda Coggin at [lindacoggin@gmail.com](mailto:lindacoggin@gmail.com) or 880-0932.



## Core Values Exercise

On Sunday, December 8, members of the congregation gathered for a discussion about the values that we consider to be important in our church family. There was a Zoom group discussion for those unable to attend in person.

### Why?

Mission and Vision can only be determined once we understand the core values of the congregation. Core values answer the questions ‘Who are we?’ ‘What defines us?’ ‘What is really important to us?’ ‘What are non-negotiables?’ Core values guide our identity, theology, and our activity.

We need to understand our mission and vision in order to complete the Congregational Profile prior to calling a minister.

- Vision statement (the desired end state)
- Mission statement (what we do)

We need to ask: “Does our current mission statement (written more than 20 years ago) reflect the St. Andrew’s of today?”.

This core values exercise is the first step.

### Step 1

‘What St. Andrew’s does’ are indications of the values that we hold. The things we do tell us what is important to us. Participants were invited to brainstorm a list of ‘what does St Andrew’s do?’ creating a list of the activities and actions that we think are important.

What we do that is important
Christmas Singalong
Choir
Coffee hour
Offer use of the kitchen
Friendly greeting at the front door
Welcome congregants from the GVRD
Be in our building for the community- open doors
Be a Christian presence in the downtown core
We worship with specific classical music
Fundraising for the local and wider community (Mustard Seed, PWS&D)
Bible study
Activity group
Church controls the use of the building
Provide support, encouragement and venue for young musicians (Choristers, UVic)
We have a depth of cerebral/scriptural preaching
Worship: music, preaching, scripture
We have a spacious sanctuary
We offer friendship and community

Provide a safe space for AA and OA
Maintain support for our mission statement (budget)
Offer opportunity for quiet meditation in a busy downtown
Providing a safe and inclusive place
Offer opportunities for volunteering
Offer affordable space for non-profits e.g. 3 choirs
Offer worship for a range of ages and backgrounds
Need to be a presence in the community
Worship and Education
We share space with Ballet Victoria
Our location makes us a destination: tourists and visiting Presbyterians
Our elder districts provide an important connection for those not able to attend
Audio Visual system to connect people to worship who cannot attend in person
Communication: <i>The Link</i> , TWASA and Website to reach out to the community

## Step 2

Referring to the preceding list, participants identified a list of values behind the things that we do. (example: Christmas hampers for Mustard Seed reflects care for those less fortunate in our community, stewardship of our finances)  
Each participant was given 3 sticky dots to vote for their top 3 values.

<b>VALUES indicated by what we do</b>	<b># votes</b>
Christian faith & belief	13
Accepting and non-judgemental	11
Outreach	9
Care for each other	5
Traditional worship	5
Teaching, growth, learning from the Bible	4
Communicating	4
Build community and friendship	4
Hospitality	3
Loving, caring, thinking of others	3
Mission in action	3
Connect with others through volunteering	3
Generosity and stewardship	2
Generosity and stewardship of the building	1
Reaching and valuing all who cannot attend in person	0

(Continued on page 8)

**Step 3**

Core values answer the question ‘Who are we?’ ‘What defines us?’ ‘What is really important to us?’ ‘What are non-negotiables?’ Core values guide our identity, theology and our activity.

The list of values had significant overlap. To create a list of core values, they were consolidated to reflect the original scoring to create this ranked list:

<b>CORE VALUES</b>	<b># votes</b>
<b>OUR COMMUNITY</b> Loving, caring, thinking of others Build community and friendship. Hospitality Care for each other. Connect with others through volunteering. Accepting and non-judgemental	<b>40</b>
<b>OUTREACH</b> Outreach Mission in action	<b>12</b>
<b>WORSHIP</b> Traditional worship Teaching, growth, learning from the Bible. Christian faith & belief	<b>11</b>
<b>STEWARDSHIP</b> Generosity and stewardship Fundraising Generosity and stewardship of the building	<b>3</b>
<b>COMMUNICATION</b> Reaching and valuing all who cannot attend in person. Communicating	<b>4</b>

Thank you to everyone who contributed to this exercise. These are important and essential steps as we seek to determine our mission for the coming years.

**Patti Jackson & Colina Titus**

## UVic School of Music Concert - December 1, 2024



UVic School of Music students from the classes of Joanna Hood, Associate Professor, performed solos and in chamber groups on December 1, in St. Andrew's sanctuary.

**The next UVic concert** is Sunday, February 9, 2025 at 2pm in the sanctuary. This concert will feature guitar students and chamber groups from the class of Simon Farintosh, UVic Guitar Instructor and VP of the Victoria Guitar Society.



## Carol Sing - Thursday, December 2024



Close to 300 people sang carols and listened to three beautiful solo performances in the Sanctuary Thursday, December 12 at noon.

Dorothy Reimer graciously welcomed everyone and introduced St. Andrew's choral singers, Eva Smith and Dylan Syrnyk who led the audience in choosing and singing carols. Christine Purvis, St. Andrew's Music Director, accompanied on the organ.

David Barss - trumpet, Eva Smith - vocal, *O Holy Night*, and Mahtab Saadatmand - cello performed between carol singing. Jany Lu from the UVic School of Music and the Victoria Conservatory, accompanied Eva and Mahtab on the piano.

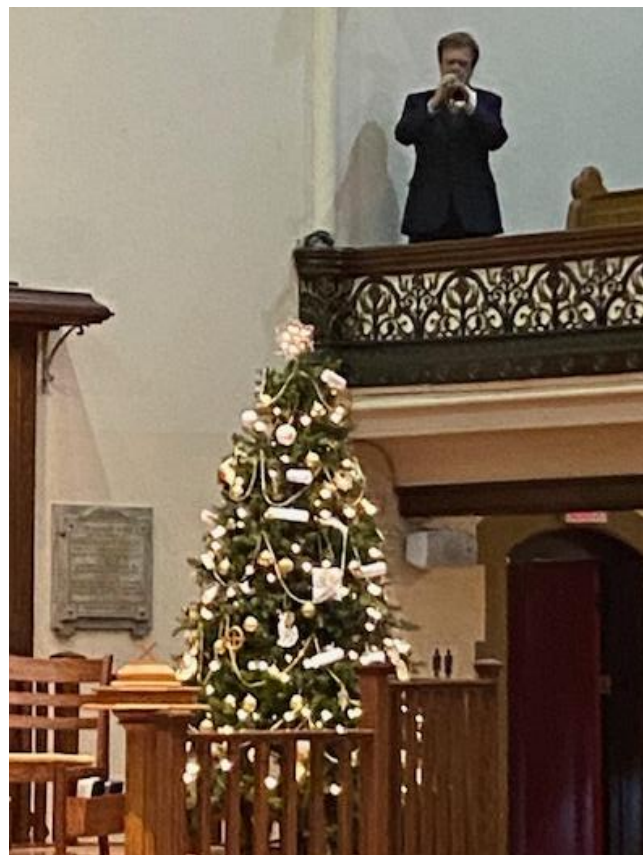
A special thank you to the Garson family for providing delicious refreshments and to Shannon, St. Andrew's administrator, and to all the many volunteers and staff who made the event such a success.

All money donated goes towards St. Andrew's Music Program and young musicians performing in the program. Thank you for your generosity.

We look forward to seeing you in 2025.

**Dawn McLean**







Christmas Eve Service—lighting the Christ Candle



On December 29, we welcomed Rev. Wes Denyer and his wife, Judy, to St. Andrew's. Wes served as our guest worship leader.

## Share the Joy of Christmas 2024

Thank you to everyone who donated to St. Andrew's Share the Joy of Christmas 2024 campaign!



On December 24, our donation cheque of \$3015.00 was delivered to Mustard Seed Food Bank. The money raised by St. Andrew's helped to deliver Christmas hampers to financially strapped families this holiday season, aiding in the fight against hunger and in restoring faith to people living in Greater Victoria.

The food hampers were 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.

Thank you all again for your generosity and good will!

## ACTIVITY GROUP



**THURSDAYS IN THE GATHERING ROOM**

**10:30 AM - 12:30 PM**

- Join us for tea, coffee, a visit, and conversation.
- Help with ongoing outreach projects.
- Bring a friend or make a new one.
- All are welcome!

### GAME DAY

Join us on the first Thursday of every month to play table top games!


For more information contact Sheelagh Garson at **250-385-5157**



ST. ANDREW'S PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
924 DOUGLAS STREET  
250-384-5734



## St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church — January 2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2	3	4
 <p>Confidential prayer requests can be sent to <a href="mailto:ryneveld@telus.net">ryneveld@telus.net</a>. If you need us, the prayer chain is here, ready and willing to pray with you or for you.</p>						
5 Choir 9:30 Worship 10:30 - Coffee Hour	6	7	8 Open Church 11:30 - 1:30 Meditation 4 - 5:30	9 Activity Group- 10:30 Gather Rm Choir Practice 7:15	10	11
12 Choir 9:30 Worship 10:30 Coffee Hour	13	14	15 Open Church 11:30 - 1:30 Meditation 4 - 5:30 Women's Book Group 5:30-7pm	16 Activity Group- 10:30 Gather Rm Choir Practice 7:15	17	18
19	20 Session Meeting	21	22 Presbytery Retreat Jan. 21 & 22 Open Church and Meditation Hour resumes on Jan. 29 Women's Book Group 5:30 - 7pm	23 Activity Group- 10:30 Gather Rm Choir Practice 7:15	24	25
26 Choir 9:30 Worship 10:30 Coffee Hour Robbie Burns Tea-2pm	27	28	29 Open Church 11:30 - 1:30 Meditation 4 - 5:30 Women's Book Group 5:30 - 7pm	30 Activity Group- 10:30 Gather Rm Choir Practice 7:15	31	
Choir 9:30 Worship 10:30 <b>Budget Meeting</b> Feb. Link deadline						

If you would like additions, updates or changes to this calendar, please submit that information to [thelink@shaw.ca](mailto:thelink@shaw.ca)