



April 2025

THE LINK

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church



It's interesting to read the Gospel accounts of the first Easter Sunday. There are so many ways they could have told the story. They could have glossed over or ignored the problems and challenges of faith, but instead their accounts of the resurrection of Jesus recognize and speak to our doubts and our questions.

I think this is because we all have struggles and doubts.

Faith is not about scientific proof or absolute certainty ... faith is about our hope and our trust in the promises of God.

Session Report 2

Christine Purvis 4

We know ourselves as special and unique individuals, more than just a hodge podge of cells, nerve connections and chemical processes. We have a sense of ourselves as both body and spirit. We feel joy and sorrow, elation and despair. We experience love and loyalty towards one another, and towards God.

Choral Scholars 5

In fact, isn't it the case, that what is most important to us, is not simply the satisfaction of bodily needs, but our relationships, person to person, soul to soul - one to another ... and one to God?

Concert Photos 7

Is it possible for us to affirm within ourselves that feeling of our own immortality, the indestructibility of the human soul, and the ultimate meaning and purpose of a life that goes on beyond the pale of earthly existence?

Maria Smyth 9

Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God, came to affirm that feeling. To proclaim this Good News to frightened and doubtful people: "Death shall be no more."

When did humanity become filled with such unimaginative, cold and analytical cynics, that we want to dispel every thought of beauty and wonder, romance and love, faith and hope? What is it within us that desires to reduce everything to the most base and wretched level?

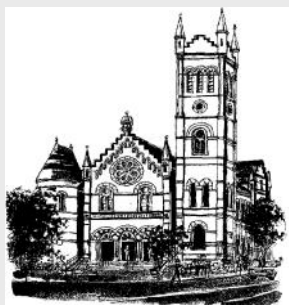
Intl Organ Day 11

In my mind ... it is a choice.

It is the choice of our attitude towards life and our understanding of our place in this universe - and God's place in the universe.

I choose to reject the acceptance of the universe at the lowest common denominator. I choose to be on the side of beauty and meaning and faith. I choose for life and hope ... and this Easter, I invite you to do the same.

Rev. Wes Denyer
Guest Minister



Victoria, BC

In order to respect the privacy of our contributors, no articles or photos may be

Session Report

On March 10, Rev. Laura Kavanagh, St. Andrew's interim moderator, led the session meeting and provided us with a schedule of guest ministers until the end of August. This included Rev. Wes Denyer who will be doing the bulk of the Sunday supply as well as two students from VST. The principal of Vancouver School of Theology, Rev. Dr Richard Topping will cover Apr. 27 and Aug. 3. Dr. Ross Lockhart, dean of St. Andrew's Hall, will preach on July 6.

The schedule had the 4th of May unfilled, but now the retired padre of the Canadian Scottish Regiment will fill the pulpit on that date which is auspicious, because it is the Sunday closest to the 80th anniversary of the end of World War II in Europe (May 8th). The Regimental association, under the leadership of Retired Colonel Talbot, will acquaint us with the historical connection between St. Andrew's and the Regiment. The late Rev. Dr. Lewis McLean, St. Andrew's minister at the time, was a regimental padre during the war. Our stained-glass memorial windows will be rededicated during this service. Most of the regiment will be in Holland for the Victory Europe remembrance celebration, but those members not travelling abroad, will attend the special service at St. Andrew's.

It was reported that St. Andrew's had three well-attended UVic School of Music concerts..

C. Titus reported that we have interim organists arranged for after the retirement of Christine Purvis on Easter Sunday. Two very capable organists will fill the position of organist three weeks at a time starting with Steve Benson, who has substituted for Christine before, and Norma Butler who has also played at St. Andrew's during our Halloween concerts. Darby Howard, one of our choral scholars, will be filling the roll as choir director until the end of August.

At the meeting on March 10, we welcomed Rev. Dale Woods via Zoom. He led us through a discernment of our vitalities and arranged further meetings with us where the elders will look at a number of different elements through the use of videos over Zoom. It was also arranged that we meet in person on March 27 to further discuss our vision and why we had difficulty conceiving it.

At the March 27 meeting, Dr. Dale Woods recognized that Session indeed does have a vision and mission but had failed to perceive it. Now we must find a common

ground with the congregation which we hope to achieve at a congregational lunch and discussion scheduled for April 27 after the service. From all those discussions both past and future, we hope and pray that, as a congregation, we can have the Church Profile completed to present to Vancouver Island Presbytery at its June meeting. This presentation to Presbytery is necessary before St. Andrew's can advertise and call a new minister. The profile will be available, once completed, to the congregation.

Session agreed to once again provide a watering station during the Victoria Pride Parade with J. Ferguson taking the lead and looking for assistance and volunteers to help that day. The Church will also be open during the Victoria Day Parade to welcome visitors and assist when needed.

A reminder that April 21, Easter Monday, is the 164th anniversary of the first Presbyterian worship service on Vancouver Island, led by Rev. Hall from Ireland.

Submitted by **Jerry Verwey**
Session Clerk

Special Easter Services

Maundy Thursday

A shared service with members from Knox, Trinity, and St. Andrew's on Thursday, April 17 at Knox Presbyterian Church at 7:00 pm.
St. Andrew's choir practice is cancelled this evening to allow choir members a chance to attend!

Good Friday

A shared service with members from Knox, Trinity, and St. Andrew's on Friday, April 18 at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church at 10:30 am.

Easter Sunday

Regular service on Sunday, April 20 at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church at 10:30 am.





Gaza Response Continues

With the uncertainty and continuing conflict in Gaza, the cost to human lives grows higher and higher. The lack of important infrastructure grows, impacting access to clean water and food security for many. The collapse of the healthcare system has left many Palestinians in desperate need of immediate intervention and protection.

The Department of Service to Palestinian Refugees (DSPR), part of the Middle East Council of Churches, has served 20,994 people since the beginning of the war

with life-saving support. With so much devastation around them, people have found support for basic wound care, psychosocial support, treatment of acute and chronic illnesses and support for babies, to name a few.

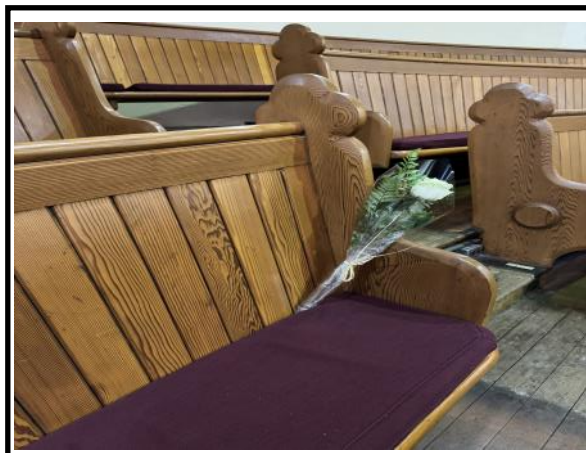
Many hospitals have been tragically turned into rubble. Health access for those in greatest need has had to be adapted and health care teams are persevering to provide care, often in makeshift tents due to destroyed infrastructure.

DSPR is also providing lifesaving services to those most vulnerable through some mobile clinics. They are hoping to establish a fixed clinic, with more services, to provide much needed care to those enduring terrible hardships. As people of faith, we continue to pray for the difficult and ongoing situation in Gaza and pray for peace and an end to the conflict. Mission & Outreach wishes to thank the St. Andrew's community for their continued prayers for Presbyterian World Service & Development and our brothers and sisters living in challenging situations throughout our world.

Thank you for your financial contributions during PWS&D month in the amount of \$210.

To learn more about the situation in Gaza go to <https://presbyterian.ca>

**Patti Jackson,
Mission & Outreach**



In Loving Memory

Lillian Droppo - February 27

Patricia (Pat) Brown - March 3

Guy Stewart - March 26

Celebrate Music at St. Andrew's

Please join us on Sunday April 6th, for a special Coffee Hour after the worship service in the Kirk Hall for a celebration of music at St Andrew's.

- We will recognize and celebrate the hard work and great joy that Christine has brought to St. Andrew's over the years. We will wish Christine a happy retirement!
- It will be an 'early thank you and goodbye', Christine will be with us until Sunday, April 20.
- It will be a time to celebrate graduation from UVic for Eva, Noah and Darby.
- Together we can express our appreciation for the four choral scholars and our choir members who contribute so much to our weekly worship service.

The Easter Service on Sunday, April 20th will be Christine Purvis' final day with us as Director of Music Ministry at St. Andrew's.

Two local organists, Steven Benson (DC, B.Sc) and Norma Kobald (B.Mus.) will be our interim Sunday organists through to the end of August, possibly longer. Steven and Norma will play the organ for the prelude, the hymns, and the postlude and will accompany the choir anthems. They will not be responsible for leading the choir. Darby is excited to become our interim choir director. She will lead Thursday choir practices and select the music in collaboration with our guest ministers. Our four choral scholars Darby Howard, Eva Smith, Noah Mellemstrand and Dylan Syrnyk will continue to sing in the choir. The church choir will continue through June and then, as they did last year, the choral scholars will lead the congregation's hymn singing during the summer months.

Colina Titus

Thank you, Christine!

We will miss you.



Christine Purvis, our organist and choir director for many years, is retiring on Easter Sunday, April 27.

She moved to Victoria in 2013 and became Director of Music Ministries at St. Andrew's in 2017. During this time she also held the office of President of the Victoria Royal Canadian College of Organists for 5 years. Prior to coming to Victoria, Christine held similar posts in Penticton and Courtenay.

An accomplished teacher and performer on organ, piano, harpsichord and voice, Christine began playing piano at the age of five and went on to obtain university degrees from McGill University in Montreal and the University of British Columbia and continued advanced studies in London, England, including harpsichord with Trevor Pinnock.

Christine has performed organ recitals in Canada and Scotland, including a memorable performance in Peebles, Scotland at the church where her grandfather had been the organist. Christine is retiring from St. Andrew's and, with her husband Richard, is looking forward to moving to Langley, BC, where they will be closer to family – especially their precious granddaughter.



Darby Howard grew up in Chilliwack and has been singing for longer than she could speak. She first started university in 2017 at the University of Northern British Columbia before moving to Kwantlen Polytechnic University in 2018 to start studying music. In 2020 Darby moved to Victoria to

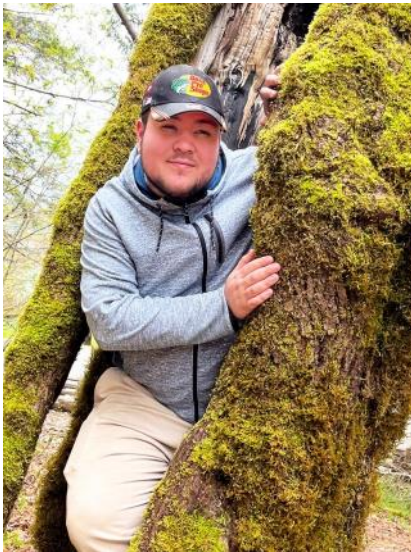
continue studying music education focusing on choirs and voice. She graduated with her Bachelor of Music from the University of Victoria in 2023 and has spent the last two years working at St. Andrew's and getting her teaching certification. She obtained her Bachelor of Education in December 2024 and will graduate from the University of Victoria in April 2025.

Darby's future includes becoming an elementary educator, reading an exorbitant amount of books, and travelling.

Noah Mellemstrand is currently at the University of Victoria continuing and completing my undergraduate studies in Music Education with a focus on Strings, and Choir. Along with his enjoyable studies he is hard at work participating in a few ensembles attached to or outside the University. He has loved his time in UVic's Chamber Singers and UVic Vocal Jazz, singing excellent music. He has also been thrilled to be a part of the Greater Victoria Youth Orchestra where he is currently Concertmaster. With graduation coming this June his current goals are to prepare for his recital on April 5th, travel to Japan, and finish writing his book .



Meet our Choral Scholars!



Dylan Syrnyk, born and raised in Coquitlam BC is currently studying Music Education at the University of Victoria. He aspires to be a music teacher who inspires youth by creating a safe and inclusive environment where music can be created and appreciated. Dylan studies classical double bass

under Malcolm Armstrong and is a part of the UVIC orchestra and has also sung for the UVIC Vocal Jazz ensemble. Dylan loves to camp in the summer time and takes time to enjoy the earth around him. He also takes time to learn new skills such as fixing cars and building computers.

Eva Smith is a singer, conductor, and educator who enjoys being involved in a wide variety of musical activities in Victoria. She holds a Bachelor of Music from the University of Victoria, where she specialized in choral music education.

Currently, she enjoys teaching young children through Music Together Victoria, as well as working with several voice students and local choirs including Linden Singers and the Victoria Harmony Choir. She is also part of the Emerging Artists program with the Ensemble Laude treble choir. Eva has been a choral scholar at St. Andrew's since September 2022, and enjoys making music and having a great deal of fun with the choir!



Welcome to Baby Tatum!



Jean and Arthur Marcellus welcomed a grandson, Tatum Garrett Marcellus, born on February 23, 2025, weighing 9 pounds 2 ounces. Tatum’s parents are Ryan Marcellus and Kelsey Johnson. Ryan grew up attending St. Andrew’s, going through our Sunday School and youth group programs.

**CAMP VIP
2025**

*Little Qualicum River Provincial park
Mid week Escape - June 9th- 13th
self registration @ BCparks
Host site 50 & 51- Seniors rate Applies
\$30 donation to cover program & supplies.
Jerry Verwey Registrar @ jermareng@outlook.com*



New Donation Box

If you have attended one of our three UVic School of Music concerts in March, you have seen our new donation box. You may even have tucked some money in it as a donation!

Patricia Shuckburgh’s husband, Michael, crafted this **beautiful box from fir and plexiglass and attached brass hinges and a lock.** It is truly a thing of beauty! Thank you so much, Michael!

March UVic School of Music Concerts

In March, St. Andrew's hosted three Sunday afternoon concerts in the Sanctuary where students from the UVIC School of Music shared their musical talents. Musicians featured included the Junebug Brass Quintet, cellists from the studio of Pam Highbaugh Aloni and Chamber groups from the classes of Joanna Hood. UVIC students will perform in June at Quartet Fest West to be held in the Sanctuary as the downtown venue for strings students from across Canada.



Junebug Brass Quintet, March 16 Concert



Brass Concert Musicians, March 16



String Quartet, Chamber Music Concert, March 30



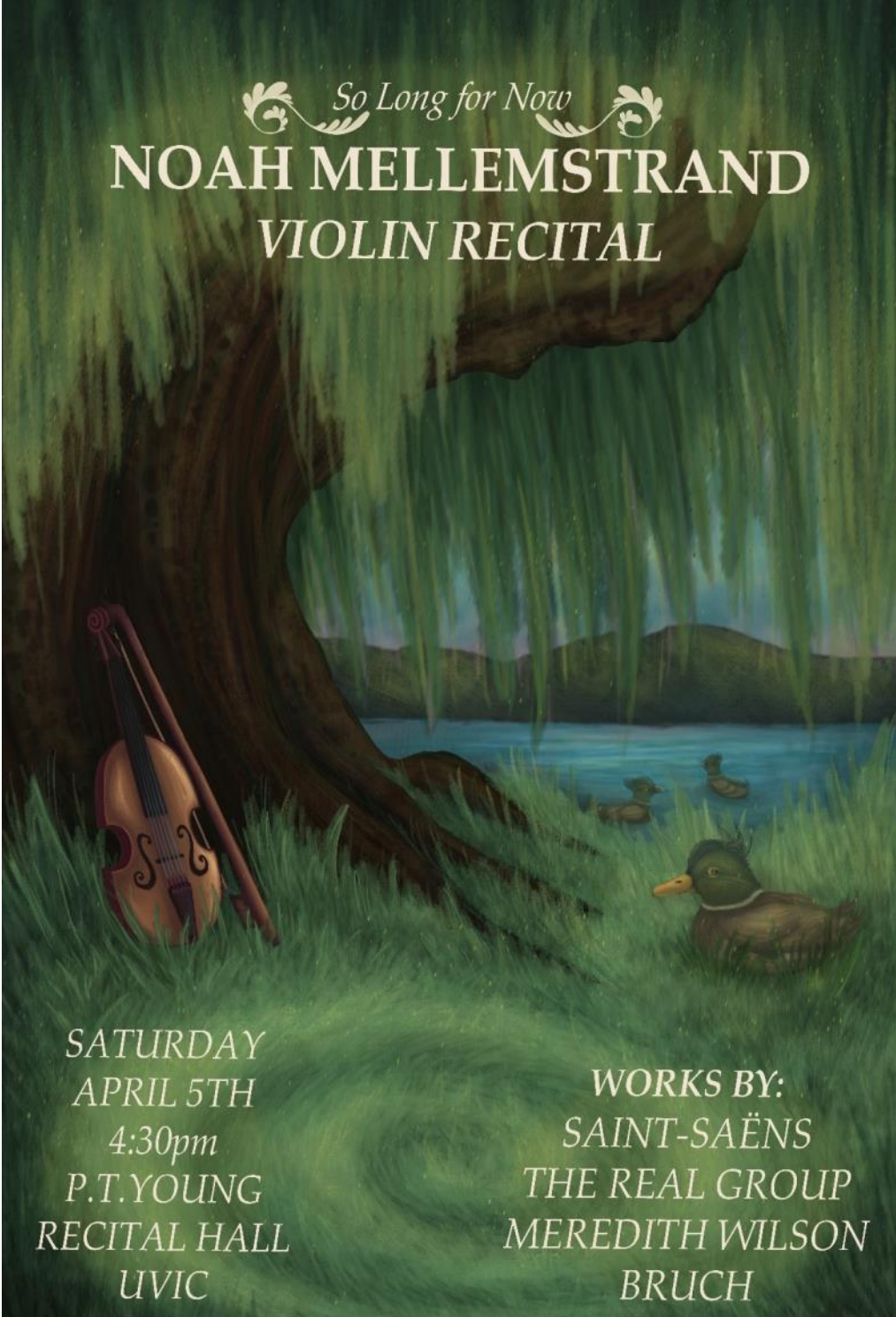
Chamber Musicians, March 30 Concert



Cello Concert Musicians, March 23



Choral Scholar, Dylan Symyk, on Bass (on the right)

A painting of a weeping willow tree by a lake with ducks and a violin. The scene is set in a lush green landscape with a blue lake in the background. A violin and bow are leaning against the base of the tree on the left. Several ducks are in the water and on the grass. The overall mood is serene and natural.

So Long for Now

NOAH MELLESTRAND
VIOLIN RECITAL

SATURDAY
APRIL 5TH
4:30pm
P.T. YOUNG
RECITAL HALL
UVIC

WORKS BY:
SAINT-SAËNS
THE REAL GROUP
MEREDITH WILSON
BRUCH

One of our choral scholars, Noah Mellemstrand, is performing his graduation recital on Saturday, April 5. You can attend this concert in person at the University of Victoria (details above) or you can livestream the program online at <https://finearts.uvic.ca/music/calendar/events/non-degree-recital-noah-mellemstrand-so-long-for-now/>

St. Andrew's Choir Winter 2025



Maria Smyth

The woman with the curly hair (second from the left in the photo above) is Maria Smyth. She and her husband, Rob, are from Edmonton and have been coming to Victoria as Snow Birds for three years now. 2025 was their second year of attending St. Andrew's. They were happy to find our church which they state is similar to the church they attend in Edmonton. All choir members have been delighted to have Maria sing with us in the alto section.

Maria joined the Lenten Study Group and took an active part in our church.

Maria and Dorothy have gone out together for coffee every Friday afternoon, trying out different coffee shops here. Maria and Rob have loved Victoria and plan on coming back every year now.

You may remember the article in the Link last year about Maria's autobiography, *An Azorean Granddaughter...A Memoir*, about how her family moved from Portugal to Toronto approximately 60 years ago. Perhaps next year we can have a book discussion about her book. If you would like to read her book, please contact me at church.

Maria and Rob are presently attending First Baptist Church in Edmonton where she sings in the choir.



Dorothy Reimer



VANCOUVER ISLAND PRESBYTERY'S
WOMEN'S RETREAT

Camp Imadene
April 25-27, 2025

Located on beautiful Lake Mesachie, Camp Imadene is the perfect setting for a weekend away. There will be time to play (puzzles, canoes, hot tub, movie night and more) and times to rest and relax. We will enjoy worshipping together as we connect with each other, ourselves, and with Jesus.

Register before March 16 for \$230!
Register here: <https://tinyurl.com/29ndlyoy>

Rev. Dr. Monawill bespeaking about our daily habits. How do we make good habits? How do we keep good habits? Do our habits honour God? We will hear from Mona throughout the weekend about how we can form Holy habits.

For more information please contact
Camp Registrar Meredith Reems
(250) 668 3299
vipladiesretreat@gmail.com

Registration Forms for the Vancouver Island Presbytery's Women's Retreat are available on the table in the hallway outside the church office in the Kirk Hall.



2025 Vancouver Island Presbytery Summer Camps

(A program of the Presbyterian Church in Canada)

Location and Dates:

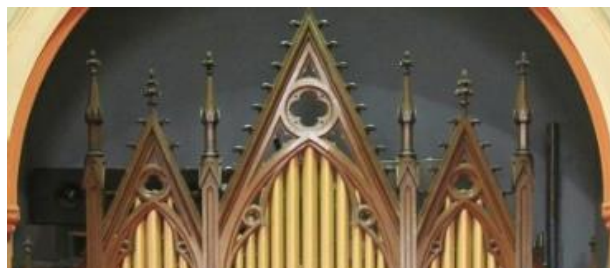
Little Qualicum Falls Provincial Park June 9th-13th

Goldstream Provincial Park July 3rd-7th

Rathtrevor Provincial Park August 11th-18th

For Enquiry Contact: Camp VIP
registrar.jermareng@outlook.com

Camp Website <https://vipresbytery.net>



International Organ Day

[The Royal Canadian College of Organists](#) aims to become the Pipe Organ Capital of Canada for 2025 by providing the public the rare opportunity to play many local organs in Greater Victoria.

On April 26th from 1 - 3pm in our Sanctuary, St. Andrew's will host one of these events! Professional pipe organists will be your guides to an afternoon of joyful learning and discovery. Norma Kobald, our interim organist, will be the host organist for the day at St. Andrew's.

We at St. Andrew's hope you take a bit of time this April 26th to show your appreciation for our historic pipe organ, for the people in our community with the skill to play it, and the people who maintain it for future generations to enjoy!



Zentangle Workshop

Thursday, April 24 Gathering Room 10:30 am

Come and learn the exciting and colourful art of Zentangle, a meditative art to create beautiful images with pen and paper.

I will guide you on a Zentangle art discovery by teaching you about the artists and how to do this paper art. You will be able to create your own images.

There is a small charge for this workshop. Paper and pencils will be provided, but if you wish to take full advantage of the art, the cost of a Zentangle pen, which you will keep, is \$5.00.

Please let the church office (or me) know if you would like to register for the class (for supply purposes). We will allot two hours for the full workshop.

Dorothy Reimer

