



THE LINK

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church

June 2025

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Bible Wrestling

I love the church: the familiarity – the routines – the music – the people. But more than that I love coming together in God's name to hear and grapple with scripture – to try to articulate what the message of our Creator is to us, to imagine how we are to live as followers of Jesus in this time and in this place. I probably get to do this more than the average person because I am called to share that wrestling in a sermon each week.

However, as I offer the message, I am also trying to encourage those listening to engage in their own wrestling – their own study – in the hope that everyone will get a little more out of reading the Bible or hearing the scripture read on a Sunday morning. After preaching on Bible passages for more the twenty years, scripture has not stopped surprising me – helping me to understand God, the world, and the nature of human beings – comforting, challenging, stretching, and holding me.

To that end, I want to share with you some tips for studying scripture that I recently received from a colleague. He had used it in a workshop with members of his congregation and the group added to the list. In addition to offering these pointers my colleague also encouraged not only thoughtfulness but imagination in our approach to scripture. I couldn't agree more!

The Bible is translated across language, culture, and millennia so it takes some imagining to place ourselves in a world very different from our own. We need to be open to the Holy Spirit communicating through scripture and our imaginations - hopefully confident that as we wrestle, God is at work in and through us.

Obviously, there could be even more pointers or tips, and many of these just scratch the surface, but I thought it would be fun to share and perhaps get you thinking. Do you have any tips for imaginative interpretation of the Bible that you want to share?

13 Pointers for Interpreting Biblical Texts:

(From *Imaginative Interpretations* by Matt Brough - mattbrough.substack.com)

Ask questions of the text—Write down as many questions as you can about a particular text. As you reflect on the questions, begin by imagining for yourself what the possible answers might be. Allow for multiple answers. You might consult commentaries or study notes. Even when you do, don't settle for the easy or first answer right away.

Place yourself inside the text—This is especially great for stories when you can pretend to be a character but can also work in other forms too.

(Continued on page 3)



Victoria, BC

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Session Report

Session received a very generous offer for accommodation for our student minister pulpit supply. Mark Alchuk, a recent new member, offered his residence as he will be away for the summer.

Our regular attendance maintains in the neighbourhood of 55-60 with 107 attending our Easter service.

Our re-dedication service was well attended with 107 watching online. Normal online attendance, over a week after the service, is in the 60-70 range.

St. Andrew's will be participating in a joint picnic/service in Esquimalt Gorge Park on July 20th.

The Congregational Vitality meeting with Rev. Dale Woods on Sunday, April 27th heard from all who attended, that the music ministry is vital to the congregation. Because of that, session task force met with the concerned parties and concluded that the search for a music director should go ahead and interview candidates, but that any contract would contain a clause indicating that it was subject to the expected Presbytery approval of the Congregational Profile.

Session had the final meeting with the Rev. Dale Woods on May 16th, and is in the final stages of completing the congregational profile for presentation to Presbytery on June 17th.

Our next Communion service will be held on June 15th.

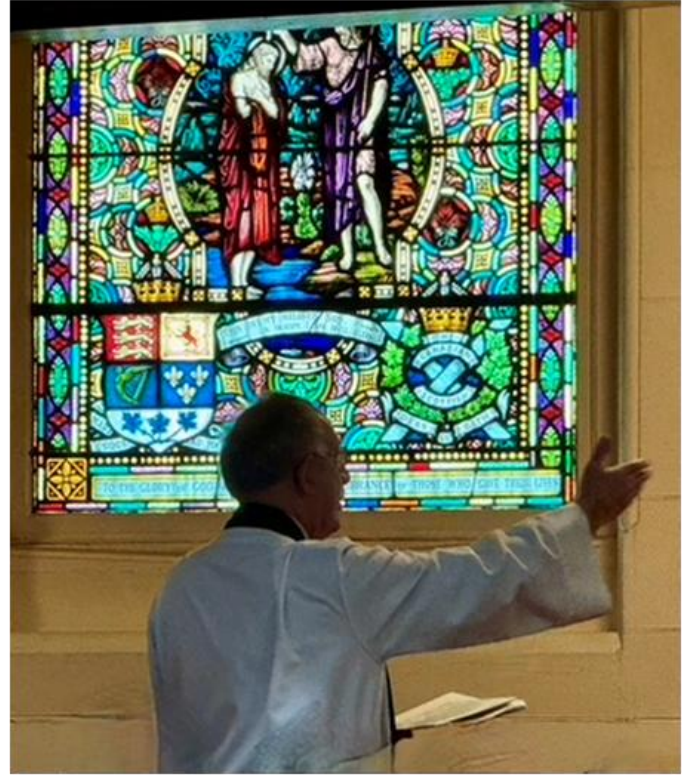
Session has struck a task group to consider possible new locations for a minister's study taking into consideration the noisy ballet practise lessons outside the present office. The task group will report to session with their recommendations in September.

Property Committee reported to session that they are still waiting for approval of the grant applications made for the tower project approved by the congregation last October. The Heritage Committee that supplies the grants is waiting for funding from the city.

Session is pleased to report that Knox Sooke will be welcoming a new minister, Rev. Jacqueline Cleland, a recent graduate, who will be inducted on June 8th at 4pm in Knox Sooke. All are welcome to attend. This is good news for our presbytery.

Jerry Verwey
Session Clerk

Rededication of the Memorial Windows May 4, 2025



(Continued from page 1)

Take the time to read a passage multiple times—This requires patience!

Consider your location—Where do you best “ponder?” Sometimes where you are or what you are doing makes a difference (walking, driving, coffee shop, outside in nature, visiting certain parts of town, taking a shower). Or, what if your location or experience matches with what you are reading? If you have lived through a flood, reading the story of Noah, or the parting of the Red Sea might change how you hear the story.

Notice and understand form—Reading a poem is different than reading a letter, which is different than a parable, which is different from narrative, which is different from a law code, etc.

What is the story behind a text?—Often a commentary or a good study Bible can help provide historical context. Consider the world of the text, the world of the author and original readers, Christian history (traditional interpretations are often helpful but not always), your current context. This can also become a huge amount of work.

Try reading against the text (*not for the faint of heart!*)—This isn't about undermining scripture, but about being truly honest with your reactions, particularly if the passage in question is saying something that severely challenges your worldview. Question everything. Try reading for what is not there like marginalized characters and women. Sometimes new dimensions of understanding open up when you push back on a text.

Try reading naively.—Pretend you don't know anything about the Bible, that you've never heard any of the stories. How would you respond to a text if you had absolutely no background?

Consider the literary context—Read passages on either side of the passage you are reading to help understand the flow of what is going on. For example, if you are reading the Beatitudes which are at the beginning of Matthew 5, it is helpful to know that the Beatitudes (Blessed are the poor, etc.) is actually just the opening of Jesus' famous Sermon on the Mount which goes all the way to the end of Matthew chapter 7. You might also want to go back and read Matthew 3 and 4 to see how the gospel writer sets up the occasion for Jesus' teaching.

Pay attention to literary devices—Watch for repetition, unique words, strange phrasing, names (especially name changes), titles (e.g. Son of Man), numbers and symbolism.

Compare English translations—[Bible Gateway](#) is a great way to do this. Often, if I read a phrasing that seems a bit odd, I'll check other translations. I almost always start with the New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition (NRSV). I often look at *The Message* for creative phrasing, the *New Living Translation* for a simplified version, and the *King James Version* for its classic poetic rendering. Sometimes the RSV (rather than the NRSV) is a better rendering.

Use an interlinear Bible—An interlinear Bible has the original language with a corresponding word for word translation. The one on [BibleHub](#) is pretty easy to use. Just search for the verse you are interested in.

Pay attention to the verbs—This is such a great tip for any text. Paying attention to the action words really helps you know what a text is driving at.

Pay attention to your emotions- What comes up for you emotionally as you read a text? We often stay “in our heads,” especially when we call it Bible Study. You might want to pay particular attention to which personal relationships or stories come to mind after reading a particular text and then wonder why you made those connections.

Rev. Laura Kavanagh
Interim Moderator

Presbyterian World Service & Development (PWS&D) Updates

Myanmar Earthquake Response



On March 28, 2025, Myanmar and Thailand were struck by a devastating earthquake measuring a 7.7 magnitude. Entire communities were destroyed leaving hundreds of thousands without homes. In addition, the Myanmar communities affected by this earthquake were already sheltering a large number of people who had been displaced because of Myanmar's civil war. There is an urgent need for shelter, food, clean water, sanitation and hygiene support.

Food Assistance Brings Relief to Families in Afghanistan

In Afghanistan, Ali Mohammed's family was struggling with obtaining enough food. Often they were surviving on a diet of only wheat bread as Afghanistan continues to face an extreme hunger crisis. At 79, Ali is the sole provider for his wife, daughter and grandson. Sadly, their family has experienced significant loss with one son dying in a roadside bombing, a daughter-in-law dying during childbirth and another son leaving to find job opportunities in



Iran but who has not been heard from since. In their small village, job opportunities remain scarce. Ali's family was identified as being eligible for a food assistance program. This provides 5 months of cash assistance which was implemented by PWS&D's local partner. Life and circumstances have been difficult for Ali Mohammed and his family but thanks to the generosity of folks who support PWS&D the family has found much needed relief.

Patti Jackson
Mission & Outreach

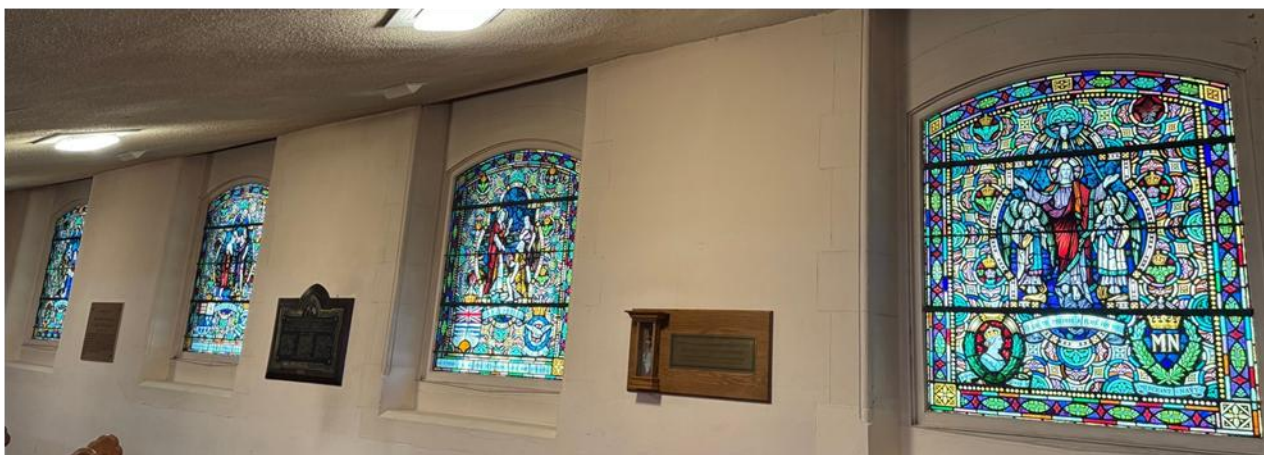
May 4 - Commemoration Service of the 80th Anniversary of Victory in Europe Day



Darby Howard singing *When the Pipers Play* accompanied by Major Roger McGuire on the bagpipes.



The singing of *O Canada* accompanied by David Barss on trumpet. Chaplain Andrew Gates officiating.



Memorial Windows:
Royal Canadian Navy, Canadian Scottish Regiment, Royal Canadian Air Force, Merchant Navy.

Seattle's Children's Chorus at St. Andrew's



Fifty singers from the **Seattle Children's Chorus** visited Victoria and performed during the May 25th Sunday service at St. Andrew's and then at a concert after church. Members of the public, St. Andrew's congregation and families visiting from Seattle attended the concert in the Sanctuary. This year's theme was 'Sing to the Earth' with the repertoire centred around the Sky, Sea and Land'. It was a wonderful event enjoyed by all.



l to r:
 Lisa Ecklund, Chair of the Seattle Children's Board of Directors
 Jean-Marie Kent, Director
 Darby Howard, St. Andrew's Interim Music Director



Vegetable Garden Update

With the support of blue skies, sunshine, water and a crew of “gardeners”, we’re happy to report that our laneway vegetable garden is growing by leaps and bounds.

If you look at the garden pictures from last month and then check out the changes that a month has brought you'll see how God has blessed us.

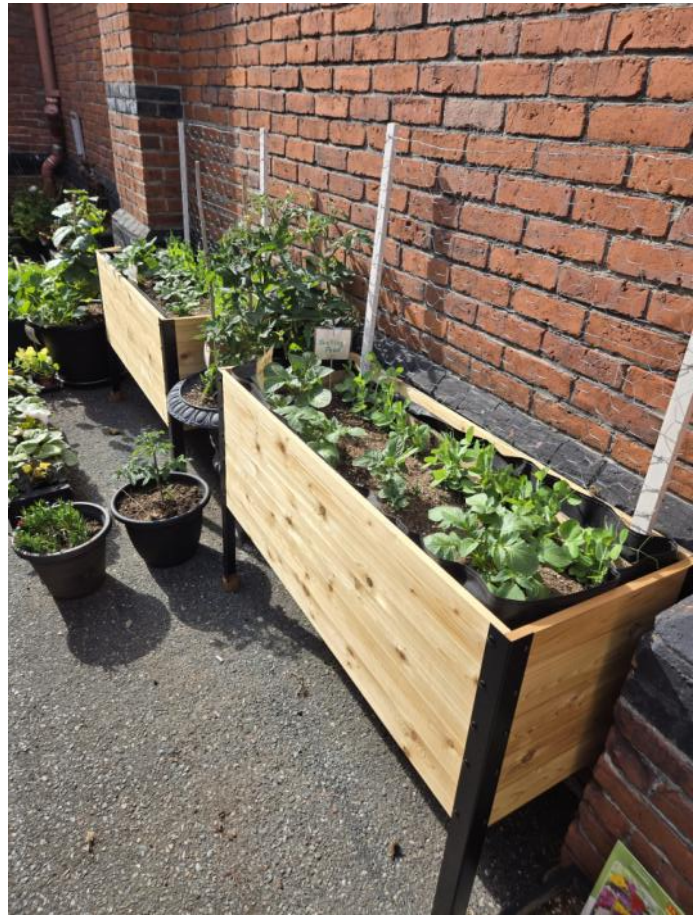
Potatoes, peas, carrots, squash, lettuce, Swiss chard, tomatoes, peppers, cabbage, cucumbers and pumpkins are getting bigger each day.

We’re excited that in a few weeks we’ll be able to start sharing the “crop”. We are making arrangements with James Bay New Horizons to share whatever is produced.

James Bay is a close neighbour to St. Andrew’s and has several food sharing programs for seniors. Check in over the summer and we’ll show you what’s growing.

The Activity Group meeting schedule may vary over the summer so check TWASA to see what changes may occur.

Sheelagh Garson



ST. ANDREW'S PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH'S
MUSIC OUTREACH PROGRAM PRESENTS

QUARTET FEST WEST CONCERT



**SATURDAY
JUNE 28, 2025
AT 1:00 PM**

Quartet Fest West is one of the finest chamber music programs in North America. Numerous QFW alumni have gone on to brilliant careers in chamber music—such as members of the Rocca, Katarina, Echea, Bellas Artes and Emily Carr Quartets as well as the brilliant Erlendis Guitar Quartet from Poland.

For more information go to
<https://lafayettestringquartet.ca/quartet-fest-west>

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**DONATIONS
APPRECIATED**
Support our music program
and young musicians!

FREE PARKING
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745 Broughton Parkade
next to the Greater Victoria
Public Library.






It is that time of year again when your *Link* editors are taking a well-deserved break for the summer. We trust that the congregation and other faithful readers have enjoyed the results of our putting together a monthly newsletter for St. Andrew's. We appreciate that many of the congregation have contributed articles, photographs and ideas. We thank you all.

We would ask that you collect any interesting items and photographs over the summer and provide them to the editors at the *Link* and we will do our best to incorporate them into the September issue (deadline August 31).

We wish all of you a very enjoyable summer filled with Christ's blessings!

The Editors