



# THE LINK

## St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church

February 2026

### In This Issue

<b>Thursdays!</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pipe Organ</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Search Committee</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Music Cleanout</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>The Elixir Of Song</b>	<b>9</b>

A few months ago, we were invited by friends for dinner. At that dinner I had the opportunity to meet some American relatives of our host. As is often the case, the discussion rolled around to recent American politics and Donald Trump.

Not knowing how they might feel about President Trump, I made a fairly innocuous, but I will admit, critical comment about him.

That received a frosty reception ...

He said to me, "Trump is a great president! He's closed the border, lowered prices, and like he says, America is now the hottest country in the world. Promises made ... promises kept!"

I should have kept quiet, but I felt compelled to reply, "The problem is, he's not doing a lot of good for Canada."

With barely controlled anger, he said to me, "You know what the problem is here. The media is twisting reality ... fake news! They're out to get President Trump. The media is out of control!"

I decided it was time to simply be silent rather than engage any further on this topic. I had much more to say but decided it was better left unsaid, because I was quite convinced, no matter what I said, his opinion was totally fixed in concrete.

And so, I nodded my head thoughtfully, let a few moments of silence pass and then, changing the topic, I said to him, "You know, on that trip to Australia you had last year, did you get a chance to see the Great Barrier Reef?"

The conversation moved smoothly on to other topics ...

To be honest, what bothered me more than anything else about that little altercation, was not his opinion of Donald Trump, it was that we couldn't even discuss the issues. I would have been interested in hearing what he had to say – in having a conversation about American politics, and how politicians exercise their authority. Unfortunately, that conversation did not seem possible.

One of my favourite authors is theologian Paul Tillich. His writings helped me to understand what might be happening in situations like this.

Tillich suggests that all of us create an individual identity: "a self." That "self" becomes solidified as we come to identify with certain beliefs and a particular way of understanding our relationship to people, politics, the world, and our place in the universe.

For some people, that "self" is fluid, changing with new experiences and new ways of apprehending and understanding the world. Other people develop a "self," and once

*(Continued on page 2)*



Victoria, BC

## Report from Session January 2026

Over \$4000 was donated to Share the Joy during our Christmas drive and the money was forwarded to Mustard Seed Food Bank.

Mission and Outreach reported that in February we will concentrate on the work of PWS&D in Somalia and Sudan.

Two candidates have been nominated to become members of session. and Their names were provided to the congregation for approval at our budget meeting held on January 18th. The deadline for ballots is the last week of January.

The Administration and Communication committee is collating the annual reports from committees for the **AGM scheduled for March 8th.**

The search committee has received a number of applications. Each candidate will be assessed keeping in mind the criteria of our congregational profile.

Session is also looking at purging the roll for an accurate membership.

Our next communion date is scheduled for March 1st.

**Jerry Verwey**  
Session Clerk

*(Continued from page 1)*

having developed it, refuse to change. They reject opinions, experience and evidence that may contradict what they have come to believe or that may contradict their world view.

In fact, I believe this is what Jesus of Nazareth encountered in his ministry, people who were set in their ways and refused to consider alternative approaches to the understanding of God, and God's relationship with humanity. The response of those who opposed Jesus, was to kill him. What they hoped was that in doing so, they could forever silence his new conception of faith.

It didn't work. It still doesn't.

Rather than being stagnant and closed, God invites us to live with the doors and windows of our lives wide open, always ready to discover what new ideas and understandings God may bring our way.

**Rev. Wes Denyer**

## What's up on Thursdays?

**For February and March** the Activity Group will be collecting the following items:

- Men's neckties
- Men's dress shirts
- Belts
- Wallets
- Change or coin purses
- Bars of soap
- Small containers of lotion
- Towels - bath, hand or washcloths/dishcloths
- Spools of sewing thread - new or partially used
- Toothpaste & toothbrushes
- Scissors (small)
- Coloring books, activity books, puzzle books.

Compassionate Resource Warehouse will be shipping several containers in the coming months and our assistance in filling the needs would be greatly appreciated. If, as you sort through your "stuff" you come across something not on the list but you think might be useful, please let us know and we can find out for you. Donations can be brought in on a Sunday or Thursday or left at the office.

**In April** we will be organizing and planting our container vegetable garden in the laneway. We learned a lot from our first attempts last year and if others would like to help this year we would be pleased to have you join our efforts to "farm" in downtown Victoria. James Bay New Horizons is looking forward to our vegetable donations later in the summer.

If you have ideas for projects or events stop in and share your ideas.

Join us for a coffee or tea Thursday mornings in the Gathering Room.

Submitted by  
**Sheelagh Garson**

## More About Pipe Organs (and the People Who Play Them)

Pipe organs have been around since the Greeks invented the first water-powered or hydraulic organ (yes – just Google it!). But what makes the pipe organ truly unique, is its need for a steady air supply from an outside power source to have each individual pipe speak. When J.S. Bach was alive, it was the altar boys' job to go up to the organ loft and pump the bellows by hand to provide a steady airstream. The louder the organist wanted the pipe organ to sound, the harder the boys had to pump! Thankfully with the advent of electricity, the organ now has an ON button that will take care of getting the air flowing and the altar boys are off the hook!

Now some more organ building trivia: for a pipe to sound, the organist has to first pull out or push down a wooden or plastic knob or tab, to make the bottom of each pipe line up with a set of sliders. Those sliders have holes drilled that exactly match the opening at the bottom part of the pipe for the air to flow through the hole into the pipe to make it sound. Once the sliders are in position, the pipe is on "stand-by" and will sound only when the organist plays the respective key to activate the airflow. If the holes are not exactly positioned below each pipe or there's a speck of dust close by, or the calibration is off by a millimeter or two, the pipe's general tuning will deteriorate first, and later the pipe might stop speaking altogether or sound continuously (cipher).

You might already know that the person who plays the organ is called the organist who is the principal conductor and who chooses various orchestral colours to create certain moods (quiet, loud, sad, happy, etc.) because different occasions require different styles of music. It therefore makes sense that organ pipes come in various shapes, sizes, and material: they are either made of metal alloys or wood, can be tiny and delicate, or an unbelievable 32 feet long! Simple physics tells us, "The longer the pipe, the lower its sound" – but why does a 32-foot long pipe sometimes sound more like a vacuum cleaner? Because the human ear is able to pick up sounds more easily, if another pitch exactly 8 notes (octave) higher is played along at the same time. We make use of that tuning principle in all registers to allow the higher of the two notes to be amplified even more and thus add greatly to the very unique orchestral colour palette of the organ.

Were you also aware that organists read 3 systems of music simultaneously? One is for the notes in the right hand, the other for the left hand, and the third one just for the feet. Though knowing how to play the piano is a great prerequisite when a student starts organ lessons, how one presses down on a key and lifts up the finger properly to release the key cleanly (this is called touch or articulation) is completely different on an organ than on a piano. To play a piece on the organ successfully, beginner organists must first master the art of moving their fingers in a super "legato" articulation, where there is a seamlessly inaudible transition from one key to the next. The next skill then consists of learning how to silently change fingers while pressing down a key. After that, other articulations (slightly detached, deliberately separated etc.) are introduced, all of which are useful for playing hymns and organ repertoire from various centuries.

After the legato touch has been properly established on the manuals, it's time for the feet to get involved. Supple ankles are required to have either the toes or heels play the foot pedals. Left hand and pedal exercises seem to be especially challenging for right-handed players who find out in a hurry that an immense amount of hand-eye-and-foot coordination is necessary to conquer this task! Add to the mix the right hand on a separate manual, and you've got a "trio style" of playing.

That's one of the "bread-and-butter hymn" accompaniment styles you might hear your resident organist use every Sunday. More about hymn playing next month!

**Susanne Reul-Zastre**

## Search Committee Update - February 2026

In order to understand what is happening with respect to the search for our new minister by the Search Committee, it is important for the congregation to be familiar with the selection process.

Once the vacancy is posted on the National Church website, interested persons will submit an application. and then their application will be vetted. The vetting process includes a determination of various criteria established by the Presbyterian Church in Canada. Some of those criteria include education, pastoral experience (broad term) and perhaps other related qualifications eg. business, social, counselling, etc.

Picture the different stages as gates. The first gate is to meet the National Church's criteria. The applications are then sent to our interim moderator, Reverend Irwin Cunningham who further reviews the applications. They are then forwarded to me (as co-chairman) and are then distributed to the other team members.

As of the end of January, we have received five applications with others in the stream. The applications are reviewed individually by each team member with a suggested 'criteria' list. We then meet as a group and have a conversation on the merits of each candidate and as a group determine which ones merit further consideration.

This is a slow process and one the Search Committee takes very seriously. It is our objective to identify a suitable candidate to present to the congregation who will help us to remain a viable and visible Presbyterian church in Victoria.

We will keep everyone informed as best we can, while keeping in mind the sensitivity of the process and respect for the confidentiality of the applicants.

**Jim Ferguson**  
Co-Chair Search Committee 2026



## Cedar Tree Ministries

Cedar Tree Ministries is an outreach program of the Vancouver Island Presbytery to Cowichan First Nations situated in Duncan. The ministry operates a church called Cowichan Grace Church under the direction of the Rev Yongwan (Joey) Cho. The outreach program is now over 18 years old with the establishment of Grace Church on the Cowichan reserve lands. They have also expanded their outreach to the Malahat Nation at Kulleet Bay.

Over the years they have held daily vacation bible school for aboriginal children in Ladysmith and also held services nearby.

The ministry runs a mini food bank and some services such as acupuncture, haircuts and child minding. Support is not only for its members but also community it serves.

To support Cedar Tree Ministries you can make donations through your church envelope or e-transfer indicating that it is for Cedar Tree Ministries. Food vouchers in \$10 or \$20 denominations from the Duncan Real Canadian Superstore can also be donated.

**Jerry Verwey**  
Presbytery Representative

# ANNUAL MEETING



**St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church**  
**Annual General Meeting**  
**March 8, 2026**

## Presbyterian World Service & Development (PWS&D) - Sudan and Somalia Emergency Relief for malnutrition

Presbyterian World Service & Development is responding to the current humanitarian situations in both Somalia and Sudan.

Sudan is currently facing a severe humanitarian crisis, with 24.8 million people in need of urgent aid, including 14 million children. Ongoing conflict has led to widespread displacement, food insecurity, and acute malnutrition, particularly among children and pregnant and nursing mothers. PWS&D in partnership with the Canadian Foodgrains Bank, Development and Peace and local partner Trocaire Sudan, is supporting an emergency project in South Kordofan. The initiative aims to treat children who are moderately malnourished through targeted supplementary feeding programs. Community health volunteers will be trained on integrated community case management so they can follow up with women and children in the nutrition programs in their homes to help them navigate the feeding program.

In Somalia, prolonged conflict and instability is unfortunately exacerbating an already existing humanitarian crisis. Almost 2 million children are suffering from acute malnutrition including half a million who are likely severely malnourished. PWS&D in partnership with Canadian Foodgrains Bank, Development and Peace and local partner Trocaire Somali, is implementing a project to prevent acute malnutrition in the Gedo region of Somalia. The project will provide treatment for acute malnutrition and implement community based activities. We pray for the tireless work of all who provide humanitarian work and assistance to those in need and we pray for peace and stability in those regions and throughout the world.

Donations to PWS&D can be made by cheque or cash or e-transfer indicating PWS&D. Each and every dollar donated does make a world of difference.

More information can be found @ <https://presbyterian.ca/pwsd/>

**Patti Jackson,**  
Mission & Outreach



## Music Ministry Clean-Out in January 2026

You might not know that the Music Ministry office was moved during Sandra Fletcher's tenure as Director of Music (2014-2016) from the second floor above the Kirk Hall to its current location across from the nursery. When Christine Purvis took over in 2017, it was not obvious that silverfish would adore this new location, and, in addition, there would be some water damage. It was therefore high time to address both issues!

On Tuesday, January 22, 2026, Darby Howard, Dorothy Reimer, Jack Reimer, and I spent a combined 25 hours on the music ministry office clean-out. First, every single last item of music, as well as storage boxes, files and hanging folders, that were located inside the office's wooden storage cupboards, metal filing cabinet and other surfaces, were moved to the Gathering Room. This made it possible for custodian Grant to clean the emptied-out office and deal with the silverfish.



Before the big clean-out.

Then the REAL work started: I literally picked up and looked at all the music that Darby and Dorothy had already pre-sorted (talk about decision fatigue!) and then determined what to keep (material suitable for the choir, choral scholars and use during worship services), recycle (material in violation of current livestreaming and copyright laws), toss (silverfish and water damaged repertoire), and donate the rest. Can you believe that the number of reference music, a variety of different hymn books, sets of anthem books, music collections, octavos, printed anthem copies, reference materials, and materials from before COVID (which we cannot use anymore now due to new copyright laws that came into effect when St Andrew's started livestreaming and recording services) spread out over half a dozen tables?

Once we finished the de-cluttering process, Darby started an inventory excel spread sheet on their computer, listing the title, composer, number of copies we decided to keep of each piece of music or book, and - most importantly - where to find stuff in the now clean and empty music office once we returned everything. This meant creating brand-new labels for each of music storage boxes that hold the printed copies of sheet music (called octavos), and allocating space for those as well as the many music books of various kinds, either in the big wooden filing cupboards or the smaller metal filing cabinet.

Everything we wanted to keep fit nicely into the left wooden filing cupboard, and most of materials stored in the right cupboard can be donated.

It made sense to me to use one of the filing cabinet drawers for weekly solo repertoire for our choral scholars for easy access, having another drawer full of music that we can legally use with our CCLI-Livestreaming license that is not in our hymn book, and another drawer holding all the reference materials. The surfaces of the two desks are now neat and tidy, and therefore much more inviting to work on.

In conclusion, I cannot thank Darby, Dorothy, and Jack enough for their enthusiasm, and even more for their time and effort that made this extremely daunting task so much easier!

The before and after pictures tell how HARD we worked!!!

**Susanne Reul-Zastre**



All empty to tackle the silverfish.



Darby and Dorothy in the thick of sorting.



Music items returned to storage cupboards and filing cabinet.



All clean and tidy!

**The UVIC School of Music &  
St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church Music Outreach present:**

Strings performances: solos, duets, quartets

Sunday, March 8 at 3pm (doors open at 2:30) and Sundays, March 15, 22, and 29 at 2 pm

St. Andrew' Presbyterian Church Sanctuary - 924 Douglas Street

**Sequoia Vocal Ensemble**

Sequoia is a small a cappella vocal ensemble formed by a group of women who love to sing.

Sunday, April 19

Conducted by Eva Smith - St. Andrew's Choral Scholar  
St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church Sanctuary

**Choirfest:**

Multiple choirs performing consecutively.

May 14, 15, 16      10 am - 6 pm each day  
St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church Sanctuary

**Quartet Fest West: UVIC School of Music**

Featuring String Quartets from across Canada

Sunday, July 5 - 3pm  
St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church Sanctuary

**COMPUTER SCAM ALERT!**

Our webmaster, Martin Perez, has learned that fraudulent emails are circulating, with scammers impersonating church staff and asking for digital versions of our membership directory.

Please remember our directory contains private information and should **never** be distributed. Do not send electronic or physical copies to anyone under any circumstances. If you get any requests for the directory that appear questionable or out of the ordinary, ignore them and alert the office immediately.

We appreciate your cooperation in protecting our members' personal information.

**Communication Committee**



THE ROYAL CANADIAN COLLEGE OF ORGANISTS  
LE COLLÈGE ROYAL CANADIEN DES ORGANISTES-  
SECTION DE VICTORIA CENTRE

OUTREACH AND EDUCATION SERIES

FREE EVENT

# The Elixir of Song:

A Mini-Spa Afternoon for the Aging Voice

All are welcome for a time of vocal pampering to help improve tuning, breath control and vocal production.

**Saturday March 7, 2026, 1:00 - 4:00 PM**

**with Dr. KATHRYN WHITNEY**

Pre-Registration is required by:

Wednesday, March 4th at:

[www.rcco-victoria.org](http://www.rcco-victoria.org)



for more information

email: [rcco.victoria.news@gmail.com](mailto:rcco.victoria.news@gmail.com)

**ST. ANDREW'S PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (BROUGHTON/DOUGLAS)**

Wheelchair accessible