



March 2026

# THE LINK

## St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church

To some it may sound morbid, but I have a fascination for the expression, *memento mori* in visual arts. Memento mori is a Latin phrase meaning “remember that you must die,” and serves as a reminder of mortality and the transient nature of life.

Memento mori is often depicted in art through symbols such as skulls, hourglasses, and wilting flowers, which signify the inevitability of death. These motifs encourage viewers to contemplate their own mortality and the importance of living a life aligned with their values.

This practice is not meant to induce fear, but to encourage individuals to prioritize what truly matters and to disengage from trivial concerns.

Ash Wednesday, which was commemorated this year on February 18<sup>th</sup>, has a similar meaning in the Christian life. The imposition of ashes on the forehead with the sign of the cross, signifies repentance as we enter the season of Lent, and it also reminds us “*that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.*”

Even for those who live into their twilight years, life is such a brief thing from birth ‘til death. What are we going to do with it? What am I going to do with the rest of my life?

When the time comes, perhaps a minister may say some nice things about us - the good things we did, the love we shared, who we helped, and what we did in the community, but I’m asking, “What is my life about? In sum, have I decided my life will have integrity? Will my words and actions flow from that personal authenticity, and faith in God, that demonstrates the care I offer my fellow human beings?”

Perhaps this can be an aspect of our life during the Season of Lent: “How can I live with faith and integrity as a Christian?”

So, I offer this invitation for the forty days of Lent, the opportunity to reflect on these questions of meaning ... “What is my life? What am I all about? How may I express my faith, this day, in the way I live, act and speak?”

**Rev. Wes Denyer**



Victoria, BC

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## Session Report

Session welcomed two new members of session, Mark Alchuk and Sheelagh Garson.

Because of the heavy rains in December and January which caused many leaks in the Kirk Hall, the Property Committee decided that it will look into replacing the roof. The committee is now obtaining quotes for the replacement of the roof membrane. Hopefully, the actual work can be scheduled during a dry spell.

Property also reported that the planned re-pointing of the chimes tower is still waiting for funding from the Victoria Heritage Trust.

The Search Committee is evaluating the three applications received to date. Rev. Cunningham, our interim moderator, has reported that there has been a number of inquiries.

A report from Vancouver Island Presbytery was received noting that the national church's Intercultural Office is instituting a pilot project with the Presbyteries of Vancouver Island and Westminster to study how newcomers from different cultural backgrounds can be made welcome and how to integrate them into our church communities. One of our elders has volunteered to participate in the study and is seeking to add three more persons to that study team. The study starts in the fall with two in-person sessions at St. Andrew's Hall in Vancouver and two zoom sessions over a six-month period.

Mark Alchuk will start assisting our Treasurer to learn the intricacies of St. Andrew's financial system.

The agenda for the Annual General Meeting, scheduled for March 8, was approved for distribution.

**Jerry Verwey**  
Session Clerk



## Health and Wellness

### FIRST AID KITS FOR ST. ANDREW'S

The Health and Wellness Group took on a project together with the Activity Group to examine and refurbish the First Aid Kits in the church building and bring them up to date to meet the standards set out by Work Safe BC, the Provincial Guide, which is mandatory for all employers in BC to have for their employees.

St. Andrew's employs four staff members and in addition, hundreds of people come through this space every week therefore it is mandatory to be up to date with all provincial health policies.

Over the course of five meetings with 11 people giving us help and input, we have completed the project. and we feel that our church is very well equipped to meet the standards set out by Work Safe BC.

Using Work Safe BC Standards as our guide, we examined the locations, contents and necessary items needed for First Aid Kits at St. Andrew's.

Our work sessions included the evaluation and assessment of the old kits, determining what items we now need, discarding old items, repurposing other items that could still be used by the Compassionate Warehouse, replenishing items and distributing each Kit to an appropriate area, and methods to document monthly checking or any accidents incurred by employees or attendees.

#### Location of New Kits

All kits are in plain view, easily accessible, identified by red marking—either a red bag or a red container, and contain all necessary equipment needed for minor to major first aid treatment or a more serious health event.

Instead of ten previous kits, there are now seven kits in these places:

Narthex, the Gathering Room, Nursery, Grant's office, church office, kitchen, AA Room, and the Naloxone kit cupboard in the Kirk Hall entrance.

We have two extra kits which can be used as necessary or borrowed for camping events or annual summer picnics, youth groups or sports events. Extra supplies for the kits are kept in the nursery to replenish the kits.

The earthquake kit remains in the photocopy room .

Any health event that occurs to attendees should be reported. Paper work and documentation needs to be completed and reported for any work place injury to the office (Shannon). Forms to fill out for documentation are on the Kirk Hall bulletin board.

**Thanks**

Sincere thanks go to each person who helped with this project and especially to those who came weekly on Thursday mornings.

Submitted by  
**Dorothy Reimer**, Health and Wellness Committee  
**Sheelagh Garson**, Activity Room Co-ordinator  
February 2026



In the Narthex (on the right side)



Gathering Room - top of fridge



Kirk Hall kitchen - on top of shelf



Nursery



Nursery - extra kits and supplies



Naloxone and First Aid kits in Kirk Hall entrance - lower drawer

## Hymn Playing – How Hard Can That Be (You Ask)?

One bread-and-butter skill for a church organist to master is hymn playing. Did you know that the Royal Canadian College of Organists' exams for aspiring organists all include a hymn playing section? Fail that and you fail the entire exam!!! Seriously, you might think, how hard can it be playing 5 verses of the same hymn arrangement? Well, let's consider three helpful "rules" to successfully play a hymn on the organ (besides, of course, playing the correct notes in the correct rhythm at the appropriate tempo at the right time!).

Rule 1: The organist's hands have to "sing and breathe" with the congregation. What happens when the organist's hands and feet fail to do that? If the organist plays the last note of a phrase too long, the congregation will be ahead. Fail to give enough time, and the congregation will be behind half a bar. Start too fast at the beginning and they will never catch up. Slow down too much at the end of a phrase, and everyone will be ahead a bar. Play too loud, and people with hearing aids complain. Play too soft, and the singing goes downhill, because there's not enough support from the organ...

Rule 2: The hymn introduction has to make it obvious to the congregation what hymn they are going to sing. Again, how difficult can that be? Just play an entire verse of the hymn over once, and hope that'll do the trick. Hmm, technically that should work 100% of the time, but some organists often speed up or slow down during the "play-over", and then the congregation is confused in which tempo to start with in the first place. If the hymn is in a verse-refrain format, and the intro starts with the verse, some eager beavers start chiming in on the refrain, again too early. Or is there a honky-tonk accompaniment to a contemporary song intro that confuses people right off the bat? And if only the hymn's opening and closing phrases are played, not everyone will find their hymnbook and locate the hymn in time, and that's not ideal either ...

Rule 3: There needs to be a noticeable difference in how loud the introduction to the hymn and each of the verses are played, so that it's crystal clear when the intro is over, and it's the congregation's turn to start singing. If the introduction is too loud, some people think the hymn has already started and again start singing along too early. Playing each verse with the same registration (same organ stops pulled/sounding

the same for each verse) is really *boring* for both the organist and the congregation alike. Choosing the volume for a hymn and each of the verses all depend on the occasion and how many people are there! Is it Easter Sunday and is the church full? Or are there only a dozen people at a memorial service who might not be familiar with some of the hymns in the first place? The organist must take care choosing the correct volume for everyone to sing along.

With everything that *can* go wrong when playing a hymn, it takes a lot of multi-tasking, practice, preparation, as well as concentration for the organist to lead the congregation successfully. Let's raise the roof on Easter Sunday with some fabulous singing during every single hymn that morning!

**Susanne Reul-Zastre**

February 8, 2026



Mark Alchuk was ordained as an elder and welcomed as a member of session along with Sheelagh Garson who was welcomed back to session.

They were received with the right hand of fellowship.

**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's 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

**ChoirBurst**

Multiple choirs performing consecutively.

**Friday, May 15 and Saturday, May 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

**ANNUAL  
MEETING**



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



**Spring Forward**  
at 2 am  
On Sunday, March 8!

# Discovering Divine Words

## Word Search

Solve the puzzle with the word bank below. Puzzle based on Matthew 7:7-11

Y M G R L P A S K C V B H S  
S E E K N T J K Q F W X Z D  
U I O A E O P R S K C O N K  
T V G F I N D L M N Q Y C Z  
B H K J D F I U W X G I V E  
A E L P S L O V E M N T O R  
V D N E P O Q Z Y H G C J K  
F U W X I E A P R A Y B O N

**FIND   GIVE   ASK   SEEK   KNOCK**  
**LOVE   OPEN   PRAY**



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