



April 2026

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Victoria, BC

THE LINK

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church

A few years ago, on a trip to the UK, I visited Anglesey Abbey and Gardens with my daughter and grandchildren. Lord Fairhaven bought Anglesey Abbey and the accompanying 114 acres of land in 1926, and upon his death in 1966, he gifted it to the National Trust. Now his home and gardens are open to the public.

While my daughter and granddaughter toured Lord Fairhaven's home, my grandson Jude and I explored the nearby Hoe Fen Wildlife Discovery Area, a place for children to play and learn about the world of nature so abundantly present in the gardens. One particular activity immediately caught the attention of my grandson – building a fort!

We found ourselves in a lightly wooded meadow, the ground littered with large tree branches. The idea was to take these large branches, placing them up against a nearby tree in a semicircle to create a “den.”

Jude and I spent a happy hour working on this project. When we finished, we had not just completed a crude lean-to of branches and sticks. Jude stood proudly in the doorway of his fort ... his castle ... his palace!

When his sister and mother rejoined us, Jude enthusiastically showed off our creation, insisting that we join him on the inside where we gathered around the tree trunk to eat our lunch. In our modern world, the childlike sense of wonder and mystery is all too quickly lost. What seems so magical to a five-year-old can become ordinary and dull in the minds of older children. We all too quickly grow “worldly wise,” unable to be astonished or enchanted by the miracles in the world all around us.

In the Gospels, Jesus often spoke of the contrast between blindness and seeing. At one point Jesus said, “I came into this world, so that those who do not see may see, and that those who see may become blind” (John 9:39).

Jesus possessed the gift of being able to tease the faithful imagination into existence. Could it be necessary for us to possess a certain fullness of imagination and sense of enchantment in order to experience the presence of God in our lives and in our world? If we are blind to wonder and beauty, how can we possibly see God?

My grandson Jude looked at a pile of sticks leaning up against a tree trunk ... and saw a castle! In the Easter Day story describing the encounter of two disciples with the risen Christ on the road to Emmaus, it says, “then their eyes were opened and they recognized Him.”

May God open our eyes, so that we can see the universe not as empty, boring and dull, but overflowing with the magic and magnificence of the living God.

Rev. Wes Denyer

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Session Report

Meeting by Zoom on March 18, 2026, Session received notification of our office administrator, Shannon's resignation as of the beginning of September. We will seek to fill this position after we clarify the sharing of administrative functions with our sister Presbyterian churches in Victoria.

The search committee for a new minister is continuing to evaluate applicants according to a devised matrix. They are still in early stages and are still receiving inquiries from potential candidates.

Session received a letter from the Activity Group which wants to hold a "Jumble and Jewellery Sale" in the fall to get rid of some accumulated "de-cluttered" items.

The Presbytery of Vancouver Island has passed a remit using section 213.4.1 under the Barrier Act, approving the idea of having active elders commissioned as 'Interim Moderator Assistants'. At present, only certified clergy can moderate a session or general meeting. This has caused considerable concern in some far-flung presbyteries where there are few clergy, either active or retired. The shortage puts strain on the ministers who do try to fill the vacant charges. The intent of the remit is that, in those cases, a Presbytery can commission an assistant, who has been trained, to carry out the role and enable a session and congregation to function, while searching for a minister. Certain roles remain the responsibility of the Interim Moderator.

Session continues the search for someone to take on the role of creating a newsletter, in whatever format and published at intervals which are comfortable for them, beginning in September. The current editors of the Link are retiring at the end of June. This search has become more important with the resignation of Shannon and the possible demise of TWASA.

Rev. Wes Denyer will be away on April 19. Rev. Cathy Victor will fill the pulpit that day.

Jerry Verwey
Session Clerk

Holy Week Services

Good Friday: Friday, April 2, 2026, 10:30am

Easter Sunday: Sunday, April 5, 10:30 am

Search Committee Update

Of the five received applications that we reported on in the Search's Committee last update, one has accepted another position. We have since received an additional application which has been distributed to the Search Committee.

We met near the end of February as a committee with our Interim Moderator focusing on criteria in relation to the Church profile. A summary of the criteria could be described as:

Pastoral, caring, able to relate to all ages, experience with all ages, work with the congregation to foster vision, experienced leader, good communicator/listener, understands a downtown church, experience in community outreach, enjoys people and inspires enthusiasm.

We are not in a position to provide any evaluation of the merits of the candidates we have in front of us at this moment.

We appreciate the ongoing support of the congregation of St. Andrew's as this process continues.

Patti Jackson & Jim Ferguson
(Co-Chairs)

PWS&D Helps to Transform Lives in Sudan

South Sudan continues to face a prolonged humanitarian crisis caused by severe food insecurity, economic instability and security issues. In addition, this situation has intensified due to the arrival of South Sudanese nationals who had fled to neighbouring Sudan to find safety.

One of those affected is Nyibol Dut Majak, an 18-year-old who assumed responsibilities as the eldest of her six siblings. The children lost their only remaining parent to a terminal illness in 2025. When Nyibol's mother was ill, Nyibol was forced to give up her education to look after her mother and siblings and to take menial jobs to try and provide some basic needs for their family.

Nyibol's family was identified by local chiefs as one of the families most in need of food assistance. Through a food assistance project initiated by Tearfund South Sudan, the family received food rations monthly for 3 months. Nyibol was supplied with 105 kilograms of sorghum, 11 kilograms of beans, 6 kilograms of oil and 1 kilogram of salt. She divided this into 3 parts: one for home use, one for sale to cover school fees and one for future use.

This food aid has allowed Nyibol to return to school to take adult learning sessions and also balance her home responsibilities. Nyibol is thankful to be back at school. Today, Nyibol is about to sit her 8 primary exams, a milestone that she thought was impossible to attain.

Nyibol's story is just one of the 1,335 households who have received support. Through this aid, families like Nyibol's are helped not only to survive but also begin rebuilding their futures. The situation in South Sudan does remain dire, but support from PWS&D really helps.

Thank you to the folks at St. Andrew's who continue to support Presbyterian World Service and Development, which makes a difference in the lives of our global brothers and sisters.

Patti Jackson
Mission and Outreach

St. Andrew's, You Have Done It Again!

2026 has started out to be a very busy year for Compassionate Resource Warehouse and we, at St. Andrew's are pleased to support its initiatives in many ways.

A few weeks ago, the Activity Group gave the congregation a list of things needed by the Warehouse and many of you set about contributing those things! Thank you to all who dropped off items!

Shipments have already gone, or will soon go, to Sierra Leone, Kenya and Ethiopia. When we get the list of "needs", it usually contains of a great variety of items. Each shipment contains things for immediate use and also things to support new programs. Sometimes the list of "needs" may not seem to make sense to us but to those people waiting patiently for the supplies, it is truly a blessing for which they are very grateful.

Now that spring is here, the Activity Group will be planting our Laneway Vegetable Garden again. Last year was our first attempt at container gardening and we were blessed with an abundance of produce which we delivered weekly to James Bay New Horizons. This year we will once again donate our garden's produce as part of New Horizons food security programs.

St. Andrew's Activity Group thanks everyone for their ongoing support for local and international initiatives.

Sheelagh Garson



Some of the items donated to St. Andrew's in February and March for Compassionate Resource Warehouse.

Choosing Hymns or Why are we singing This Dirge again! (Part 1)

Have you ever wondered who chooses the hymns for the Sunday service and what is involved? Currently, the music director is choosing the hymns, but the Minister has the last word.

Every hymn choosing session starts with me reading the bible passages for that particular service as chosen either by the Minister or following the 3-year lectionary cycle as given online by the Presbyterian Church Worship planners. I love it when I receive the readings for an entire liturgical season together and 2 months ahead of time (thank you Wes!), as I like to choose hymns that are in the same season, for example Advent/Christmas/Epiphany; Lent/Holy Week; Easter 2-Ascension-Pentecost-Trinity.

For a regular Sunday I need to choose four hymns (Opening, Hymn after the Gospel reading; Offertory Hymn; Closing hymn). The resources available are the Presbyterian Hymn book that is in our pews, hymns that are in public domain (in other hymn books), hymns listed online as part of the Presbyterian Church of Canada's Worship planner for a particular Sunday that follows the 3-year lectionary cycle, any songs that are covered by the CCLI license but not in our hymn book (which takes care of the live-stream aspect of communal hymn singing) by living composers or those who have passed in the last 70 years. I strive to leave an interval of at least 3 months before you get the same hymn again.

Did you know that there is a section at the back of the Presbyterian hymn book that lists hymns that correspond with selected passages from the bible? That is another resource we use, albeit with varying success due to copy right laws and live-streaming issues. One big caveat: just because a piece of music is included in a hymnbook or covered on-line doesn't mean it's theologically sound (times have changed!) or musically interesting. What do you think makes a good hymn or contemporary song? Let's consider the following:

Text: is it still appropriate, does it use inclusive/contemporary language, or a modern worship chorus (i.e. the same line over and over and over again, but musically uninteresting). Are

there a lot of Thee's and Thou's (which some folks are not fans of)? Is there rhyme or free verse? Is the structure trophic or verse with refrain?

Mood: depressing dirge or soul-searching song? Meaningful and inspiring or (as sometimes is the case) so gloomy that it warrants an "argh" response?

Musical issues: too high for some, too low for most? Helpful accompaniment or confusing layout? Exciting rhythm or boring harmonies? Easy to pick up by ear or weekly practice sessions required?

Once I've done a first draft of hymns or songs that I think work with that Sunday's readings, the next step is to assign each hymn its proper place in the service. The Opening and Closing Hymns set the tone of the service. The Second Hymn often comments on the sermon, and the Offertory Hymn needs to be long enough to allow for the collection to happen. Some traditional hymns are too long so we sometimes leave out specific verses to cut down on the length of the hymn.

My preferred lead time to choose hymns is an entire season ahead (start choosing hymns for Lent and Holy Week at the beginning of the Epiphany season). Planning ahead is absolutely crucial! If you have a hymn "request", do talk to me! Unfortunately, my hands are tied if the words or music of your favourite hymn is not in public domain and/or not covered by our live-streaming license! Here ends part 1 – more on choosing hymns in May!

Susanne Reul-Zastre



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

Wanderlust

Sequoia Vocal Ensemble, a group of women who love to sing a capella

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

**Photos from The Elixir of Song
Workshop**

On March 7, 2026, over 200 singers from choirs all over Greater Victoria, Sooke, Duncan and the Gulf Islands attended a workshop "for the aging voice." The Royal Canadian College of Organists (Victoria) and St. Andrew's Music Outreach program sponsored the event.



Dr. Kathryn Whitney, demonstrating breath control by blowing through a metal straw.



Cello Recital, March 8, 2026
Students of Pamela Highbaugh Aloni



Guitar Recital, March 15, 2026
Students of Simon Farintosh

Four Sunday afternoons in March, St. Andrew's hosted a UVIC School of Music's string recital in the Sanctuary. Cello, viola, violin, and guitar students performed solos, duets and in chamber groups. Audience members commented, "The students were excellent." Congratulations to the professors and students. Thank you to St. Andrew's staff and music outreach volunteers. Support from the Victoria Foundation and St. Andrew's made the March Spring Series a great success.



Chamber and Viola Recital, March 22, 2026
Students of Joanna Hood



Violin Recital, March 29, 2026
Students of Ann Elliott-Goldschmid

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

WANDERLUST



SUNDAY
APRIL 19, 2026
AT 2:00 PM

The Sequoia Vocal Ensemble is a small, local a cappella choir directed by Eva Smith, St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church's Choral Scholar.

Join us for 'Wanderlust', an afternoon of choral music on the theme of wandering.

**ST. ANDREW'S
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH**

924 Douglas Street
250-384-5734
office@standrewsvictoria.ca
www.standrewsvictoria.ca

**DONATIONS
APPRECIATED**

Support our music program
and young musicians!

FREE PARKING

Sundays and holidays
745 Broughton Parkade
next to the Greater
Victoria Public Library.



Handbell Ringers at St. Andrew's

St. Andrew's has a rich musical heritage, much of it recorded in *The Kirk that Faith Built* (1989). Alongside the organ and choirs, our three-octave set of Malmark English handbells (37 bells), gifted to the church in 1979 by George Kilgour, holds a special place in that history.

Handbell ringing is a musical art form that adds depth and colour to worship. Bells have been used for thousands of years across many cultures—for celebration, communication, and worship. English handbells, first crafted in the 17th century, grew in popularity and eventually became a recognized ensemble tradition in North America.

At St. Andrew's, handbells once played a vibrant role in worship and community outreach. However, in recent years, participation has declined due to the lack of a director and ringers.

The arrival of our bells in 1979 coincided with a pivotal moment in the church's musical life. Following the sudden loss of a beloved organist and choir director in 1978, the music program faced significant challenges. In response, Session appointed Kathleen Jennings as organist and choir director. Her leadership brought renewed energy and direction to the music ministry. In 1981, Mrs. Jennings formed St. Andrew's first handbell choir, which she led until 1991. Her detailed records show a committed and active group: more than 20 people participated, with regular Saturday rehearsals and monthly performances. The choir also shared

music in nursing homes and at special events. Her final entry, in May 1991, marks the end of a remarkable decade of dedication.

The tradition continued under subsequent music leaders, including Stephen Shields, Douglas Hodgkinson, and later Cathy Lylock, who led a small group from approximately 2015 to 2020. The COVID-19 pandemic brought regular ringing to a halt, and activity has since been limited.

Today, the same beautiful set of Malmark bells—made of 80% copper and 20% tin—remains with us. Though they have been used less frequently in recent years, they are far from forgotten.

We are pleased to share that a small group of seven ringers has begun rehearsing again, with plans to play for Easter Sunday. We hope this marks the beginning of renewed interest in this unique ministry.

If you are curious about handbell ringing, we warmly invite you to join us. It is both enjoyable and rewarding, and no prior experience is necessary. Please speak with Susanne or Dorothy for more information. There is also a local Guild of Handbell Ringers in Victoria for those wishing to explore further.

Dorothy Reimer

Sources: The Kirk that Faith Built (Session of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church); Bell Choir records of Kathleen Jennings; The Handbell Curriculum (Valey & Berry)



Choir ringing bells, Easter 2024



VANCOUVER ISLAND PRESBYTERY SUMMER CAMP 2026

LITTLE QUALICUM FALLS PROVINCIAL PARK

DATE: June 8 - June 12 (four nights)

COST: \$30 four nights

CAMP: Register at BC Parks <https://bcparks.ca/little-qualicum-falls-park/> near campsites 50 or 51.

Seniors should apply for a senior rate when booking.

RATHREVOR PROVINCIAL PARK

DATE: July 25 - July 30 (five nights)

COST: \$190 five nights or \$45 per night

DATE: JULY 30 - AUGUST 3 (four nights)

COST: \$150 four nights or \$45 per night

FOR MORE INFORMATION

REGISTRAR: jermareng@gmail.com

WEBSITE: <https://vipresbytery.net/>



The Presbyterian Church in Canada

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

CHOIRBURST



FRI & SAT
MAY 15 & 16
10 AM - 6 PM

Local and visiting choirs & singing groups will share their music with the Victoria community! Each group will sing for 20 minutes in St. Andrew's Sanctuary, creating a vibrant showcase of voices throughout the day. A performance schedule is available at podium2026.ca

**ST. ANDREW'S
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**DONATIONS
APPRECIATED**

Support our music program
and young musicians!

NEARBY PARKING

745 Broughton Parkade
next to the Greater
Victoria Public Library.



Help Needed for ChoirBurst

ChoirBurst is a special PODIUM 2026 event providing local and visiting choirs/singing groups the opportunity to share their music with the Victoria community from 10 am - 6 pm on Friday, May 15 and Saturday, May 16, 2026.

St. Andrew's is hosting this festival in the sanctuary and will be open to the public to see these performances. St. Andrew's Music Outreach Program will help to coordinate the performances of more than 30 choirs! Performances will take place every half hour - a marathon of choral music.

During each performance, featured groups will have a designated space to display a poster with their image or logo, along with a table for ticket sales, singer recruitment, information sharing, and CD sales.

As part of this event, St. Andrew's would like to offer snacks and drinks for sale. This sale would be from 11am - 3pm each day and would consist of prepackaged items and drinks in containers.

If you can help for an hour or two on either day, please contact Sheelagh, 250 385-5157 or leave a message at the office, 250 384-5734.



 THE ROYAL CANADIAN COLLEGE OF ORGANISTS
LE COLLÈGE ROYAL CANADIEN DES ORGANISTES

SECTION DE VICTORIA CENTRE

OUTREACH AND EDUCATION SERIES

FREE EVENT

TRY OUT THE PIPE ORGAN!

Intermediate to advanced piano students are invited to attend a morning of learning, sharing and inspiration with the largest tracker pipe organ in Western Canada, the Wolff organ. Space is limited!

SATURDAY, APRIL 25TH, 9AM - NOON

WITH DR MARK McDONALD

Pre-Registration is required by
Wednesday, April 22nd at:
www.rcco-victoria.org



CHRIST CHURCH CATHEDRAL (Quadra/Burdett)