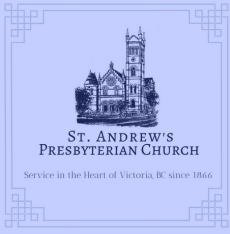




March 18, 2020



This week at St. Andrew's



standrewsvictoria.ca | 250-384-5734

Parable from the Pastor



Last night the Session of St. Andrew's made the difficult step to cancel worship services, Bible studies, and other church sponsored events until the health risks have been cleared. These are frightening, unprecedented times. When other natural disasters happened, people gathered in community. I remember as a pastor serving two congregations in Indiana during 911, our church and most others were filled. We need to be reminded that we are not alone in the most perilous of times. We want to hear the comforting words of scripture and lift prayers together assuring us that God has not abandoned us.

We are being asked to do just the opposite now which conflicts everything that our faith has always taught us. "No (man) one is an island." "Do not neglect the assembling of ourselves together." "I was glad when they said to me, 'Let us go to the house of the Lord.'" But now. Gathering together is actually the cause of the pandemic. Avoid crowds. Practice 'social distancing.'" It does not fit into any conceptual framework that "the assembling of ourselves" is in fact what is causing the virus to spread.

Perhaps in these challenging times, we can be awakened to new ways that the church is called to be the church. For the foreseeable future we need to pray at home. Our prayers will be spoken in our living rooms and around our kitchen tables rather than from a lectern. And our calls and letters to others in the St. Andrew's family are more important than at any other time in our history. We must be strengthened by the reminder that "God is bigger than a pandemic." St. Andrew's belongs to God and we belong to God. The church is not a building, but the people. We will emerge from this, together.



The church office at 680 Courtney Street is currently closed. Whitney is working from home and her cat is very happy about it! Please contact the church office via email at this time.



Mitch and Linda's dog, Hunter, loves that "his people" are social distancing with him!



Whitney and Adam's cat, Max, is feeling very content.

Rev. Coggin is also working from home. You can reach him via email: pastor@standrewsvictoria.ca or by telephone: (250) 883-4132.

Worship Services are Postponed

Public services of worship at St. Andrew's are postponed at this time as are all of our regular ministries such as open church and meditation hour, bible study, thrift shop and regular meetings.

We encourage everyone to stay at home as much as possible to care for yourselves and to care for the most vulnerable people in our community.



March 18, 2020

Check your INbox



You'll be receiving two emails a week while the church is closed. We are working on bringing you worship materials and ways to stay connected. We will continue with our usual Tuesday email but will add an email on Friday or Saturday as well.

A PRAYER from the Moderator of General Assembly

Loving God, we thank you for your presence with your children through the anxiety of the COVID-19 situation. "Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no evil; for you are with me; your rod and your staff—they comfort me" (Psalm 23:4).

Thank you for wise leadership and health authorities that guide us in making good decisions for our communities. "You are a hiding place for me; you preserve me from trouble; you surround me with glad cries of deliverance" (Psalm 32:7).

Thank you for doctors, nurses, medical researchers and technicians, and all those who are working to care for the sick and develop treatments for this illness. "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want" (Psalm 23:1).

Thank you for cleaning staff and caregivers and volunteers, and all who are working to keep our environments clean and safe. "My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth" (Psalm 121:2).

Thank you for pastors, elders, neighbours, and friends who are working to care for those who are vulnerable, alone or afraid. "I wait for the Lord, my soul waits, and in his word I hope; my soul waits for the Lord more than those who watch for the morning, more than those who watch for the morning" (Psalm 130:5-6).

Thank you for the peace and comfort that comes from knowing that we are not alone. God, grant us patience as we wait; grant us courage as we serve you and care for one another; grant us hope as we trust in you for the future. "O [People], hope in the Lord! For with the Lord there is steadfast love, and with him is great power to redeem" (Psalm 130:7). Amen.



"Sometimes God calms the storm, but sometimes God lets the storm rage and calms His child." - Leslie Gould, The Amish Nanny

Mark 4:35 - 39

35 That day when evening came, he said to his disciples, "Let us go over to the other side." 36 Leaving the crowd behind, they took him along, just as he was, in the boat. There were also other boats with him. 37 A furious squall came up, and the waves broke over the boat, so that it was nearly swamped. 38 Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion. The disciples woke him and said to him, "Teacher, don't you care if we drown?" 39 He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, "Quiet! Be still!" Then the wind died down and it was completely calm.



We Continue along in the Season of Lent

Liturgical Readings for This Week:

- 1 Samuel 16:1-13
- Psalm 23
- Ephesians 5:8-14
- John 9:1-41

