

December 8, 2020



## Pastor's Parable

The news Monday: "No holiday gatherings allowed in B.C. as COVID-19 restrictions extended into January." Christmas will look and feel different this year than most of us have ever experienced. For St. Andrew's, it means that in-person worship will be suspended until at least the 2nd Sunday of January.

But while our worship on Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Easter, Pentecost, Thanksgiving and Remembrance Day was distinct and different, so will it be on Christmas. Like those who initially met in living rooms and around kitchen tables in early Victoria dreaming of the Lord's church, so we continue to dream and vision who/what God continues to call us to be.

What has this year taught us? I will be asking that question in the weeks and months to come. Our lessons learned during productive times as well as during challenging times is what shapes our character and grows our faith. Recently I have engaged in two virtual learning opportunities. One was a seminar led by thought-leader Simon Sinek, author of *Start With Why* and his newest book, *The Infinite Game*.

Sinek challenged us to "start thinking about how to build and sustain strong and healthy organizations." He explained that in maintaining a vision for the future, one of the keys is for everyone to take responsibility for making others rise. Imagine if we all were focused on goals committed to assisting one another to grow spiritually, mentally and intellectually. Sinek writes that leaders in organizations must be committed to empowering great people to do extraordinary things. Jesus calls and challenges us to do great things for Him as the gathered Body of Christ.

A second learning opportunity is offered by UVic's Centre for Studies in Religion and Society, a multi-series virtual opportunity in their Values for a New World series. Last week, Victoria writer, Esi Edugyan joined UVic professor Tom Lilburn as they offered spiritual and political responses to the state of the world. Described was the growing awareness that fundamental things can be destroyed in a short period of time. It is imperative during the pandemic that the church needs to ask questions of faith and envision new opportunities for ourselves as a society. It is time to assess the old systems, long in place, that may be failing us now. What spiritual resources may be needed now?

That question and others will be asked and answered as the series continues with upcoming guest presenters, Croatian theologian, Miroslav Volf (January 7), Noam Chomsky (February 2), Thomas Homer-Dixon (February 23) and Linda Woodhead (March 4). Watch the first discussion here <https://vimeo.com/csrs> or better yet, sign up for future discussions here at <https://www.uvic.ca/research/centres/csrs>

[Click here for our Blue Christmas Service.](#) Featuring music, prayer and scripture to bring us from "lamentations" into hope.

A Blue Christmas or Longest Night Service is a special way to recognize that this season is filled with joy but also with grief, difficult memories and stresses. We hope that you will find some solace in this service and pass it on to friends who might be feeling down.



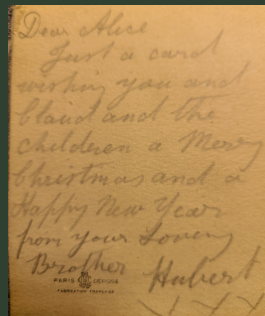
# Preserves



Every year Ann Lambie makes preserves for our annual church bazaar. We won't be able to host the bazaar in-person this year but we have an opportunity for you to support the church and get some yummy jams, marmalade and more! Ann has worked hard to help us with this fundraiser so please consider ordering soon. These preserves make great stocking stuffers or basket stuffers or are delightful to enjoy at home. [Click here to fill out an order form](#) for delivery of preserves right to your door

## Wartime Christmas: Christmas Postcards from World War One

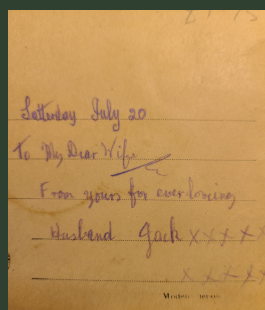
During Christmases of 1914 to 1918, embroidered silk postcards were a popular souvenir gift for service people in Europe to send to their loved ones at home. These postcards were delicate and could be fairly expensive so they were usually mailed along with letters meaning that many have no name, address or message associated with them as the letters they arrived with have been lost to history. Those that do have messages often come from "somewhere in France" as those serving weren't at liberty to share their actual location. They often include tender kisses in the form of X's drawn in pencil. Looking through them comes with a bittersweet feeling as we consider the love, worry and loneliness of both those who sent the cards and those who received them at home.



"Dear Alice, Just a card wishing you and Claud and the children a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. From your Loving Brother Hubert  
xxx"



"God be with you till we meet again"



"Saturday [sic] July 20  
To My Dear Wife From you for ever loving Husband Jack XXXX XXXX"  
This one includes a little printed card that fits into the embroidered envelope. Cards for future holidays were often sent months in advance.



These particular postcards are from a local collection (with thanks to Whitney's mum, Lisa for allowing her to share them with you) and are a reminder of all the ways we connect with those we love when we are apart.

### Read From Your Bible This Week

Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11

Psalms 126

1 Thessalonians 5:16-24

John 1:6-8, 19-28



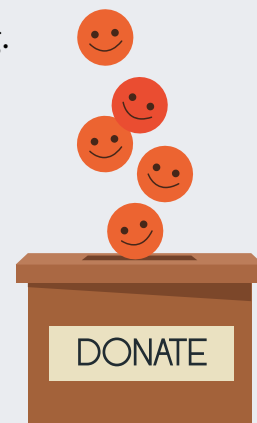


# Advent

## the season of expectation

This advent, we need your help to share joy with others!

The Mission and Outreach Committee encourages the St. Andrew's congregation to donate to this year's Share the Joy of Christmas campaign. We provide gift bags for the 15 women and 30 men who live in rooms on the top three floors of Our Place on Pandora Street. These folks are pulling their lives back together and are committed to working forward toward independent living. Our gift bags are often the only items that the residents receive on Christmas morning. In our gift bags, we include warm toques, gloves, socks, and personal care items like shampoo, soap, razors, shaving foam, toothpaste, a toothbrush, a pocket calendar, antiperspirant, a puzzle book, pens, pencils, and Christmas treats.



St. Andrew's also gives 20 turkeys (over 10 kilograms each) for the annual Christmas dinner that Our Place prepares a few days before December 25th. This meal feeds the working poor, the homeless and those far from home, creating a time of community and warmth at this special time of year. Making a donation is easy. **You can use the Donate tab on the church's website: [standrewsvictoria.ca](http://standrewsvictoria.ca) or mail in a cheque to Share the Joy, c/o Treasurer, St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Victoria, B.C. V8W 1C1.**

For more information, please phone Brian Titus (250-382-2387) or Debra Verwey (250-383-1009).



**The Advent Bible Study** continues on December 14 and 21 at 7:00 pm. [Click here for the zoom link](#) to the first bible study. Remember that you can also access a zoom meeting by phone. [Click here](#) to find a call-in phone number for Canadian participants. The meeting ID is 854 7313 8078



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This year our Christmas Eve service will be offered as a video filled with music from Christine, members of our community and harpist McKenna Jennings. The service will be made available in some form to our entire congregation, even those shut-in without computers so that everyone at St. Andrew's as well as our extended family and friends can worship safely together on Christmas Eve, no matter where we are, while we need to be physically apart.