



ST. ANDREW'S
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Service in the Heart of Victoria, BC since 1866

standrewsvictoria.ca

This Week at St. Andrew's

March 17, 2021



Pastor's Parable

One year ago, our lives and world changed dramatically. March 15, 2020 was the 3rd Sunday in Lent. COVID-19 was sweeping across Canada with over 500 cases confirmed by March in British Columbia. Swift action was required by BC Centre for Disease Control and followed up by St. Andrew's Session on March 17, 2020. All religious gatherings were suspended until further notice. One year ago, this month our lives and world changed dramatically.

Immediately we went to work determined to prove "the church is not the building." While the office was suddenly and remains closed, the Staff have continued to answer calls and emails, create and send a weekly newsletter and provide weekly worship services to the majority of St. Andrew's faithful. Certainly, we believed we would return to worship by Easter Sunday, April 12 or certainly by Pentecost on May 31. Surely Car Free Day or the Bazaar would happen as usual. Each of these dates passed with no lessening of restrictions.

It gave us hope when restrictions were lifted (somewhat) and we again were able to gather for in-person worship on Sunday, September 27! With the sanctuary spaced appropriately to allow for physical distancing, worship attendees became mask wearers and were escorted formally to their seats. A brief service, sans singing to avoid the risks of airborne transmission gave us hope that perhaps sooner rather than later, this too would pass. Yet, 8 weeks later, on Thursday, November 19, our worst fears were realized, and restrictions were back in place, yet even more devastating internationally, the virus continued to spread and persons continue to die alone in ICU's isolated from their loved ones.

One year later, our lives and world remain dramatically changed. On this our one-year anniversary, we miss terribly the ability to see, worship and laugh with one another. We ask longingly, "How long O Lord" when it comes to enjoying a cup of tea at Coffee Hour or singing our favourite hymns. We have missed honouring the lives of those who have celebrated significant birthdays, anniversaries, graduations as well as celebrating the lives of those who died in 2020.

And yet, one year ago, our lives and world changed dramatically. I do not miss rushing to accomplish things that I now realize are not as important as I previously thought. I treasure the added time to read, walk, think and pray. I value the video chats with family during which our more relaxed lives allow us to enjoy these moments when not rushing off to do something else. We could never have predicted the vastness of these changes, yet neither could we have anticipated the growth, the deeper meaning and the significant and profound insights that have come our way if we have been paying attention.

Solomon wrote in Proverbs a good word, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and do not rely on your own insight. In all your ways acknowledge God and God will make straight your paths." This has been a year of crooked paths, when I have tried to figure out what, and why and when, but when I leave the path straightening to God, all roads have led to deeper meaning and growth. I hope you can say the same.

Lenten Blessings. Pastor Mitch

Bible Study with Pastor Mitch



Join the bible study at 6:00 PM tonight

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89538643720>

Or call in from your phone using +1 778 907 2071

Meeting ID: 895 3864 3720

Bring your Bible and yourself!

AGM- What's Next?

It's time to vote on important decisions of the church. Minutes from last week's zoom call can be found in this week's email (they were attached along with this newsletter). The 2020 reports and the 2021 budget can be found at our [website](#).

Click here to vote on the motions. If you have any questions or would like clarification, please email Colina at session.clerk@standrews.ca

All votes must be in by Tuesday, March 23rd.



Click here to sing with Christine to Take Up Your Cross

Our monthly congregational newsletter needs you!

Please send your submissions to thelink@shaw.ca by March 28th



WELCOME

If you are interested in welcoming people and ushering at St. Andrew's when in-person worship starts again, please contact the office or contact Sheelagh Garson at 250-385-5157

Read From Your Bible This Week

- Jeremiah 31:31-34
- Psalm 51:1-12
- Hebrews 5:5-10
- John 12:20-33

