



December 21, 2021



Parable of the Pastor

Are you ready yet? Christmas week is here. Christmas is a mere 4 days away and chances are that you, like me, still have decorating, gift-buying, card-sending, baking and planning left to do. But, the previous question, “Are you ready yet?” connotes more of a spiritual question than one of holiday preparation.

“Are you ready yet?” must have been prominent in the hearts and minds of the young couple preparing to travel much too near the young woman’s due date. What if she went into labour while they were on their way? What if she delivered while they were filling out tax forms during their trip? They still were without reservations and a guaranteed place to lodge during their travel. The young woman would have answered our question “Are you ready yet” with a resounding “No, not in the least.”

Walter Brueggemann reminds us of these words,

“I thank my God every time I remember you, constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you, because of your sharing in the gospel from the first day until now. I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ. —Philippians 1:3–6

Brueggemann, Walter. *Celebrating Abundance: Devotions for Advent* (p. 52). Presbyterian Publishing.

Brueggemann explains, (The Apostle Paul) affirms that our lives are bracketed by the big drama of God’s purposes, and we do well to ponder such deep beginnings ... Imagine God’s large purposes hovering around your life. Advent is about ceding ourselves over to God in gladness, to refer our life back to God, who has given it to us.

“Are you ready yet?” in reality means, “Are you ready with overflowing love? Are you ready with new insight? No, not ready yet ... but under way with the realization that “the one who began a good work among us will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ.”

Suddenly, “Are you ready yet” as it relates to preparing for the holiday pales in comparison with the deeper question of “Are you ready yet?” as it relates to welcoming the birth of God’s purpose(s) for each of our lives. Our waiting for Christmas gives us an opportunity to create time and energy and space for those purposes. Aren’t you glad that we have more time to prepare for the truly important and deeply significant work of Advent?

Brueggemann prayed, “Coming God, make us ready with overflowing love. May we be on the way to you even as you are on the way to us. May we be glad and grateful as we wait. Amen.”

Advent Blessings

Pastor Mitch

St Andrew's Worships Together Though Apart

St. Andrew's continues to worship both in the church sanctuary and at home. We don't always see those who are worshipping from outside the sanctuary but here are some stats to help us feel more connected!

- Our companion videos get about 40 to 50 views
- Our livestream services get about 40 to 50 views and the recent Christmas concert had over 80 views!
- Our digital bulletin is seen by about 30 to 40 people
- Over 140 people receive This Week at St. Andrew's each week. The same number receive The Link every month.
- 12 to 20 people fill out our reservation form each week (many of those folks come to church with at least one other person!)



Colossians 2:5: "For though I am absent, yet I am with you in spirit, rejoicing to see your good order and the firmness of your faith in Christ."

Send your submissions to The Link editors by December 26th!
thelink@shaw.ca



Our Christmas Eve Service will take place at 7:00 pm in the sanctuary and via livestream. See our website, emails or the posters at the church for more information.

A Blue Christmas Service of Healing and Hope from Knox Presbyterian can be found [here](#)

Reservations for Sunday

We are still asking for congregants to register for attendance at the Sunday service. We know that many have stopped pre-registering. However, as more people attend (and we get closer to reaching our capacity of 70 attendees) we need your help to let us know if you'll be there in-person on Sunday. Please help us to prepare for worship by [clicking here](#) for the form to register for Sunday.

Read From Your Bible This Week

- Isaiah 9:2-7
- Psalm 96
- Titus 2:11-14
- Luke 2:1-14, (15-20)



Share the Joy of Christmas Update

The Share the Joy of Christmas Campaign 2021 has received enough money to provide 33 hampers for needy folk in Greater Victoria! This is more than twice the goal of 15 hampers that we chose, based on donations to Share the Joy in the past. Thank you so much for your generosity, St. Andrew's!

Each hamper can feed 4 persons during the Christmas season, so we are helping 132 people who might otherwise be hungry. A cheque to cover the cost of 25 hampers has already been sent to Mustard Seed Street Church which puts the food and gift baskets together. The remainder of the money will be delivered early this week.

Thanks again! Merry Christmas!



Christmas greetings from the Coggins,

Linda and I wish each of you a joyous Christmas. For your love, generosity, support and encouragement during a difficult year for us all...thank you! Your patience during these challenging times of being away from in-person worship and then re-entering our beautiful and treasured sanctuary has truly encompassed "the worst of times and the best of times." Certainly, it must remind you of all the years past that have likewise been characterized by pain and turmoil only to be surprised by God's gracious and steady hand that "God is not finished with us yet."

So, it has been with the Coggins in 2021 when we feared that our immigration status would continue to languish in never-neverland. Our search for new a housing option looked dismal until someone we know who knew someone else we know and said, "Have you asked about...?" Every time we felt that our backs were against the wall, God provided.

We have been blessed this year with your consistent faithfulness to the difficult work of trusting God in our present while looking toward the future with hope. 2022 promises to be a pivotal year of trusting that God will continue to "supply all our needs according to His riches in Christ Jesus."

We wish you a blessed Christmas and a hope-filled New Year. Thanks to God for our mutual work together.

With love,

Mitch and Linda Coggin



Support St. Andrew's by Ordering Preserves!

Anne's delicious preserves are available for delivery or pick up again this year! Contact David McLean or Dorothy Reimer to place your order! d.mclean@shaw.ca / 250-598-4432 or dotreimer@shaw.ca / 250-592-5051

Jams (with number available)

- 20 Raspberry Jam
- 12 Loganberry
- 6 Black Current
- 12 Blackberry
- 24 Strawberry
- 10 Goose berry/Rhubarb
- 9 Apricot
- 10 Rhubarb/Strawberry

Marmalade

- 12 Seville orange
- 26 Seville Ginger marmalade

Fillings/ relishes etc.

- 6 Bread and Butter
- 12 mild salsa
- 2 Beet root butter pickles

\$5 Each or
5 for \$20

