

February 16, 2022



Parable of the Pastor

By motion of session last night, choral and congregational singing will start again on Sunday, Feb. 20th - with the congregation initially singing two hymns per week. The choir will, with their mutual agreement, be keeping a "respectful distance" from each other: as currently stated by the "While [2-m] physical distancing is one tool to help limit the spread of COVID-19, it is not practical in many situations. Now that most people in B.C. are fully vaccinated, it is more important to respect people's personal space." (BC Centre for Disease Control, Dec. 22, 2021.)

Recently someone told me "Singing is why I attend worship!" Another shared, "Singing is 50% of worship." We all know that music heals the heart. How timely in this month in which we focus on music and meditations about joy are we able to reintroduce congregation and choral singing!

"Music acts like a magic key, to which the most tightly closed heart opens."

Maria von Trapp

"He who sings scares away his woes." – Cervantes

To press the metaphor further, in what other ways does our life "sing" or resonate with joy? How do we "sing" our joy through our words, actions, and attitudes? How might we express our appreciation, our gratitude and even our sorrow and dismay through a more careful choice of our words?

As we return the gift of song to our worship through the singing of the choir and congregation, may it inspire us to greater joy in our worship and in our lives lived during the week! Joy to the world, the Lord has come and so has our opportunity to praise.

Come to worship and sing with us!!!

Joyfully, Pastor Mitch

Save the Date

The 2021 Annual meeting and Budget 2022 meeting will be held on Saturday 5 March at 10 am. You can join the meeting on Zoom or in-person in the sanctuary. Further details and the Zoom link will follow next week



Follow up on minute for mission

This month the Mission and Outreach Committee has been putting a spotlight on our national church's projects in Afghanistan to encourage our congregation to make special donations to help relieve food insecurity there. Millions of Afghan children are facing death from starvation. Dawn in Afghanistan sees long lines of women and children outside bakeries queuing for the one food staple still available – bread – and even that is in short supply due to a 40% drop in wheat production after the worst drought in decades. Since NATO's pull-out in August 2021, there has been a catastrophic economic crisis. Food prices have tripled and most people cannot afford to pay food.

Until August, 30 million Afghans depended on World Bank-managed healthcare. Now, more than 90% of the country's health clinics lack the funds to stay open. Only 11% of Afghans have had a Covid vaccine.

The Presbyterian Church in Canada, which St. Andrew's is part of, does humanitarian work in Afghanistan through its branch, PWS&D. PWS&D works with a locally-based partner in Afghanistan, Community World Service Asia, CWSA for short. CWSA works on the ground in Afghanistan and provides the donated money to hungry families by cash transfers. That way the families can purchase the food they need.

Last week, the regional director of CWSA, Marvin Parvez, was in Canada and he held several Zoom meetings to inform Canadians about the situation in Afghanistan. Marvin was able to give us a very clear picture of what is happening to the women, men and children in the country.

Mr. Parvez shared that the donated money PWS&D has ready to use to feed the hungry families is being blocked by the Canadian government. Canada has applied sanctions against the Taliban government in Afghanistan since August last year. It is illegal at the moment for Canadians to send money to Afghanistan for whatever reason.

Other Western governments, including the United States and Australia, have allowed exemptions to their sanctions against Afghanistan so humanitarian aid can reach the hungry, desperate people there. It is time for Canada to do the same.

Marvin Parvez asked that the congregation of St. Andrew's-Victoria pray for the people of Afghanistan who are hungry and all the aid personnel there who are working so faithfully; some have not been paid in months. He also asked that we consider getting in touch with our local members of Parliament about changing our sanctions with Afghanistan. We need a solution so organizations, like Presbyterian World Service and Development (PWS&D) can send funds to support the work of CWSA in Afghanistan.

Please send a brief message to your member of Parliament, asking them to contact the Afghanistan parliamentary committee working on the situation, urging them to find a solution to the barriers preventing us from responding to these dire needs. To be effective, keep your email or letter simple, respectful and supportive of a solution. Focus on addressing the humanitarian situation and the need for saving lives. Your own words are best but, if needed, you can use this sample letter (a sample letter is attached to this week's TWASA)

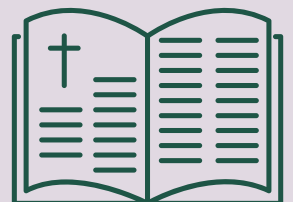
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Reservations for Sunday

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

- Genesis 45:3–11, 15
- Psalm 37: 1–11, 39–40
- 1 Corinthians 15:35–38, 42–50
- Luke 6: 27–38



Follow up on minute for mission

It is a good idea to include your address and telephone number so your MP can reply to you.

Letters to Members of Parliament do not require postage.

The three Members of Parliament for southern Vancouver Island (along with their email addresses and telephone numbers) are as follows:

Laurel Collins, MP for Victoria Email: laurel.collins@parl.gc.ca Telephone: 613-996-2358

Elizabeth May, MP for Saanich-Gulf Islands Email: elizabeth.may@parl.gc.ca Telephone: 613-996-1119

Randall Garrison, MP for Esquimalt-Saanich-Sooke Email: randall.garrison@parl.gc.ca Telephone: 613-996-2625

Address for all Members of Parliament in Ottawa: First Name/Last Name, MP
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0A6

Thanks for the letters that you write. We can make a change with our prayers and advocacy, a change that will feed children in Afghanistan.

Submitted by Debra Verwey

A church in the US is paying 'royalties' when it sings spirituals composed by enslaved Africans

A hundred or so masked parishioners in the pews of the United Parish in Brookline joined together at a recent service and sang "Lord, I Want To Be A Christian In My Heart."

This song, like many that churches sing, comes from a musical tradition of spirituals originally composed by African people enslaved in America. United Parish introduced a unique program to help carry on the legacy of this music and they're hoping to be a model for others.

Every Sunday that a song written by enslaved people is sung in the church, the church pays a "royalty" to support black musicians.

[Click here](#) to listen to the NPR radio interview or [toread the whole transcript](#)



May the presence and power of the Holy Spirit convict us to put our faith into action. Strengthen each of us to speak up for those whose voices are not heard, and their plights ignored. May we be a people marked by justice, mercy, and humility.

-From Bread for The World
Prayer for Hurting, Hungry and Vulnerable



House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0A6

Dear _____

I am one of your constituents who lives in Victoria, BC.

As you know, right now millions of children are starving in Afghanistan because of catastrophic drought conditions and dire economic circumstances as a result of the withdrawal of NATO forces from that country last August. Food prices have tripled since the withdrawal!

I donate money to my church's international aid projects in Afghanistan. Just recently, I learned that that money cannot be sent to Afghanistan because of Canada's sanctions against the Taliban. Other Western countries, like the United States and Australia, have exemptions for humanitarian aid. It grieves me that Canada does not have any exemptions so aid can get to those who need food now.

As my representative, please ask the Afghanistan parliamentary committee to find a solution/work-around to these sanctions blocking the flow of humanitarian aid from Canada to Afghanistan. Please stress the urgency of the situation.

Please let me know how things are progressing. I appreciate your efforts on my behalf.

Sincerely,