

# THIS WEEK AT ST. ANDREW'S



ISSUE # 291 December 18, 2025

**Open Church: Sanctuary**  
Wednesdays at 12:00 - 1:30 pm

**Meditation Hour: Sanctuary**  
Wednesdays at 4:00 - 5:30 pm

**Activity Group: The Gathering Room**  
Thursdays at 10:30 am - 12:30 pm  
*Cancelled until January 8 2026*

**Worship Service: Sanctuary**  
Sundays at 10:30 am - 12:00 pm

***Christmas Eve Service: Sanctuary***  
*Wednesday December 24 at 7:00 pm*  
*Everyone is welcome to attend!*



## From the Pulpit

Many of us long for the “perfect” Christmas, surrounded by loving family, presents under the tree and a joyous feeling of Christmas warmth and love. However, our Christmas celebrations don't always turn out to be a fulfilment of our dreams. The birth of the newborn “king” in a stable was a surprising and unexpected way for God to enter our world. So is it possible, even when our Christmas does not go as we had hoped or planned, that God may still surprise us, this year, with unexpected joy?

- Rev. Wes Denyer

# A Time Called Christmas Day

For many, this is a truly wonderful day. It's a day of family, of special and traditional food, sharing of gifts, conversation, and laughter. It is a day (unless you have little children in the house!) when time seems to run more slowly. The day has a drowsy, gentle pace. It is a day to think of the slow and gentle movements of Mary, Joseph, and the new baby, and the rhythmic breathing of the animals in a stable long ago.

## Historical Roots of Christmas Day

It is not known exactly why or when December 25 came to be associated with Jesus' birth. Some of the earliest references to the celebration of Christmas were not made until the mid-300s. The celebration of Christmas Day became more prominent after the crowning of Charlemagne in 800 and King William 1 of England in 1066. And – a curious little note from history – during the Protestant Reformation, some Puritans condemned Christmas celebrations as pagan, and in 1647 in England, Christmas was banned! After much rioting and many protests, it was restored in 1660. The Bible doesn't give the date of Jesus' birth. Some suggest that December 25 was chosen to stand against the Roman pagan festival of the Winter Solstice, which ended on that date. Others suggest that December 25 was chosen by counting backwards from the date of Jesus' death, but calendars and calculations are inconclusive.

## Finding Meaning in the Tradition

Christmas Day, despite its tumultuous past, has become for Christians a day of celebrating that the Messiah was born to the Virgin Mary. Christmas is a celebration of God joining us in a small, vulnerable child. This, of course, doesn't “make sense,” making Christmas Day a time of great mystery. When God could have come to us in a blazing chariot or an earth-awakening UFO, this day causes us to ponder. Why did God come to us in a newborn child?


## Questions for Personal Meditation

1. Today, in the midst of activity, how can I find time to ponder the mystery of God's coming?


2. How is this day different from all the other days in the Christian year?
3. When I crawl into bed tonight, what will I most remember about Christmas Day?

*From PCC web site on Christmas  
Jerry Verwey, Session Clerk*


## Announcements

 **ELDER NOMINATIONS:** The session of St Andrew's. Having resolved to add to our number, now only 9, gives notice to the congregation that we are requesting nominations for elders from the congregation. The nomination must be supported by two nominees. The nominated and nominees must be professing members of the congregation. The nomination period will extend till Jan 10 th 2026. Nominated forms must be in writing and signed and can be deposited at the church office or emailed to either the clerk at [session.clerk@standrewsvictoria.ca](mailto:session.clerk@standrewsvictoria.ca) or the office at [office@standrewsvictoria.ca](mailto:office@standrewsvictoria.ca) They may also be given to your elder.

- Session clerk, Jerry verwey


 **THANK YOU:** Thank you everyone for making the Gift of Christmas Music a success this year, it really was a wow! There were many compliments as people were leaving. Some had attended before and a number of new people came this year. Donations were very generous! This is one of St. Andrew's Advent gifts to the community and it only happens with a large team effort. Thank you to Susanne and the musicians for their beautiful contributions to the program and to Darby and Dylan for leading the singing, to Dorothy for welcoming and explaining the process, Shannon for posters and programs and etc., to Arthur, Deb, Patricia, David, Patti, Dave for greeting and ushering, Jean for photos, Jerry for all his technical support, Wes for perfect closing comments, Dave and Sheelagh, Kathie, Trudy, Christine for donating and serving the delicious refreshments, and Grant, too, for various jobs. Definitely a team effort.


- Cheers, Dawn

 **OFFICE HOLIDAYS:** Shannon will be gone on holidays from December 19 - 28th. She will not be monitoring her phone or email while gone.

Please contact your church elder if there is an urgent matter at this time. The next issue of announcement will be published on Wednesday, January 8th, 2026. See you in the New Year!

 **WARM TOES:** Let's share the joy of a warm pair of socks with those in need! All sock donations will go to [The Mustard Seed Street Church](#). A donation bin is set up in The Gathering Room to collect socks. **The last day for donations is December 24th!**

 **SHARE THE JOY:** Let's share the joy of a warm meal with those in need! We're collecting monetary donations for [Christmas hampers](#). All donations are in support of [The Mustard Seed Street Church](#). For cash or cheque donations use your regular donor envelope labeled "Share the Joy". For e-transfer donations please send the transfer to [treasurer@standrewsvictoria.ca](mailto:treasurer@standrewsvictoria.ca) with "Share the Joy" in the comment section. **The last day for donations is December 24th!**

 **THE LINK:** Contribute to St. Andrew's monthly newsletter! Next month's deadline for submissions is **Sunday, December 28th**. To contact the editor or make submissions please email: [thelink@standrewsvictoria.ca](mailto:thelink@standrewsvictoria.ca).



**SHELBOURNE Community KITCHEN**

## HOLIDAY FOOD DRIVE

November 19 - December 19  
*Getting Good Food to Good People*

### Most Needed Donations

- Canned Proteins:** canned plain beans, canned tuna/salmon/ham, peanut/nut butters, dried beans and lentils
- Vegetables/Fruits:** Low-sodium canned vegetables, low-sugar canned fruit, apple sauce, fruit cups for kids lunches
- Canned Tomatoes**
- Drinks/Dairy Alternatives:** Coffee, tea, juice boxes, shelf-stable unsweetened milk alternatives (rice, soy, almond, coconut etc.)
- Grains:** Rice, pasta, whole grain cereals, oatmeal, crackers, granola bars, gluten-free options
- Kitchen Essentials:** pasta sauce, cooking oil, sugar, spices
- Instant Meals:** baked beans, canned soups, stews, instant noodles, craft dinner. Low-sodium and gluten-free alternatives in high demand
- Toilet Paper**

Foods must be unopened and in their original package

**DONATION DROP OFF: 101-3787 Cedar Hill Rd.**  
Tuesday 4PM - 7PM  
Wednesday & Thursday 10AM - 1PM

**Cash Donations**  


*Thank You for Your Support*  
[www.shelbournecommunitykitchen.ca](http://www.shelbournecommunitykitchen.ca)

# Community Events

**👑AETHELING:** Presented by Ensemble Laude on Sunday, December 21 at 3:00 pm in the Sanctuary. A concert of richly woven medieval-inspired works on the theme of children, including the fantastic piece A Ceremony of Carols by Benjamin Britten, with Keri Lynn Zwicker, harp. Go [HERE](#) for more information as it becomes available.

DR. ADAM JONATHAN CON, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR  
Capriccio  
VOCAL ENSEMBLE  
**illuminare**  
NIGHT BEFORE LIGHT  
2025-2026 SEASON  
FEATURING  
Elaine Hagenberg's *Illuminare*  
with Cascadia String Ensemble  
CAPRICCIO.CA  
**DEC 22 AND 23, 2025 | 7:30PM**  
CHRIST CHURCH CATHEDRAL, VICTORIA

**🎵ILLUMINARE:** CapriCCio Vocal Ensemble presents "Illuminare: Night Before Light: A luminous celebration of the holiday season, where music glows with wonder and joy". With Cascadia String Chamber Orchestra and guests. Featuring: Elaine Hagenberg's *Illuminare* – a vibrant work bursting with energy, proclaiming light over darkness. On December 22 and 23 at 7:30 pm at Christ Church Cathedral, 930 Burdett Avenue. (Entrance to concerts is on Quadra Street!) Purchase tickets [online](#) or at the door.

**🎄A CHILD'S CHRISTMAS IN WALES:** Presented by Vox Humana on Wednesday, December 24 at 2:30 pm in the Sanctuary. A warm and nostalgic Vox Humana Christmas

tradition: join us for the reading of Dylan Thomas' famous and whimsical story, interlaced with Christmas music evocative of both joy and mystery of the season. Melville Jones returns to narrate this beloved tale. Go [HERE](#) for more information as it becomes available.

**🍗ANNUAL RECOVERY CHRISTMAS DINNER:** Presented by St. Andrew's and the Recovery Christmas Dinner Committee on Thursday December 25 at 12:00 - 2:00 pm in the Kirk Hall. Everyone is welcome to enjoy a free buffet style Turkey dinner at St. Andrew's Kirk Hall. Email [recoverychristmasdinner@gmail.com](mailto:recoverychristmasdinner@gmail.com) for more information about the event.

**🍷AROUND THE TABLE:** Laura Kavanagh is continuing as a Spiritual Care Provider at UVic in 2026. One program she is involved with is Inclusive Christians: Around the Table. This is an ecumenical communion service hosted by Anglican, Lutheran, Presbyterian and United SCP's on Wednesdays at 5:00pm during the university term. The simple service focuses on reading and reflecting on the gospel, prayer, song, silence and sharing bread and wine. While this service is centered on students, all are welcome. After worship everyone is invited to enjoy a meal. We usually have about 20 participants. Help is needed to provide these meals. If you, or a group from your congregation, would like to help prepare a meal in the coming term, please be in touch with Laura as soon as possible by email at [lauratodd60@gmail.com](mailto:lauratodd60@gmail.com) or phone at 250-415-8173. The dates are January 7, February 4 and April 1. The meal is simple – vegetarian/vegan soup or chili, bread & butter, and salad, fruit or veggies. Thank you for supporting students and Inclusive Christians on campus in this way.

**🇪🇺 ROBERT BURNS MEMORIAL CONCERT:** Presented by The Victoria Scottish Gaelic Choir and on January 25 at 2:30 pm in the Kirk Hall. Join us for an afternoon of Scottish entertainment in celebration of Scotland's beloved bard! Go [HERE](#) for more information and tickets as they become available.



## Esmy's Story of Entrepreneurship in Malawi

In Balaka District, Malawi, Esmy Edward, a single mother of five, once struggled to feed her family and pay school fees for her two sons in secondary school. Her story took a hopeful turn when she joined a program to enhance climate resilience and improve income and food security through PWS&D partner, Churches Action in Relief and Development.

Esmy learned financial management, joined a village savings and loan group, and received training in climate resilient farming techniques. She received five goats, whose manure improved her crop yields. With care and sustainable practices, her herd has grown to 10, ensuring steady food and income.

Today, Esmy's thriving farm ensures the family has reliable access to food. "I am grateful for the support I have received," Esmy says. "Now, I can provide for my children, and I envision maintaining my house and seeing my sons finish school without difficulties."

This Advent season, faithfully respond to support farmers as they work to provide food for today and an income for the future.



## Christ is Born

Hope stands resilient, even in the face of poverty, injustice and adversity. Through PWS&D, the church answers God's call to support those in need.

Together, we are working toward a brighter future for our global community by fostering sustainable solutions to overcome poverty and offering support in regions impacted by disaster, whether caused by conflict or climate change.

Inspired by God's promise of abundant life, PWS&D addresses challenges such as hunger, poverty, injustice and disaster. Our collaborative efforts aim to restore dignity, alleviate suffering and encourage cooperation within communities.

As we celebrate the birth of Christ, let's keep our neighbours—both near and far—in our hearts. Your support plays a vital role in the success of this transformative mission.

[This Christmas, help spread hope, peace, joy and love across the globe by supporting PWS&D.](#)