

THIS WEEK AT ST. ANDREW'S



ISSUE # 307

April 23, 2026

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

Worship Service: Sanctuary

Sundays at 10:30 am - 12:00 pm

We will have a 'good-bye' time for Jaime and Alex Kim during coffee hour after service!





From the Pulpit


This is Good Shepherd Sunday, and the sermon title is "Shepherds and Strangers." In this sermon we reflect upon stories of shepherds, animals, and human-animal bonds to understand how love goes beyond practicality. Jesus, the Good Shepherd, protects and sacrifices for his flock, unlike "strangers" who imitate but lack true care. Discernment - recognizing God's authentic voice - comes from living closely and deeply with God. Finally, we are invited to question, think, and develop spiritual insight rather than rely on unquestioned authority, trusting that we can all learn to distinguish the true shepherd from the stranger.


- Rev. Wes Denyer

Announcements


 **ACTIVITY GROUP:** The shipment for [Compassionate Resource Warehouse](#) headed to Ethiopia at the end of the month is in urgent need of reusable, grocery type bags. Ethiopia has very recently instituted a ban on single use plastic bags so alternative packaging is required. If you have spare bags please drop them in the baskets in the narthex. Thank you!

 **THE LINK:** Contribute to St. Andrew's monthly newsletter! **May's** deadline for submissions is **Sunday, April 26th**. To contact the editor or make submissions please email: thelink@standrewsvictoria.ca.

 **TEA FOR TUTU 'ALICE IN WONDERLAND':** May 5, 6, 7 at 2:00 pm in the Kirk Hall. Reserve your free seats - email tea4tutu@balletvictoria.ca or phone 250-380-6063. For more information about the program go [HERE](#).

 **CHOIRBURST:** Presented by St. Andrew's Music Outreach program in the St. Andrew's Sanctuary from 10 am - 6 pm on May 15th & 16th. Local and visiting choirs & singing groups will share their music with the Victoria community! **St. Andrew's choristers are singing at 10:30 am on Saturday, May 16!** Each group will sing for 20 minutes, creating a vibrant showcase of voices throughout the day. A full performance schedule is available [HERE](#).

 **PRESBYTERY MEETING:** on Tuesday, June 23 at 10 am in the Sanctuary and The Gathering Room of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church.

 **QUARTET FEST WEST:** Presented by St. Andrew's Music Outreach program on July 5th in the Sanctuary at 2 PM. Donations are appreciated, and support our music program, and our musicians! Quartet Fest West is one of the finest chamber music programs in North America! This concert features several participants from this year's festival.

Community Events

AROUND THE TABLE: Join 'Inclusive Christians' on Wednesdays, from 5 - 6 pm, at the UVic Multifaith Center, for a simple Christian service of prayer, song, scripture, and contemplation. All are welcome. A free simple dinner is provided following the service. Hosted by the Anglican, Lutheran, Presbyterian, and United Spiritual Care Providers. For more information contact the [Rev. Laura Kavanagh](#).

A poster for 'TASTE OF VISTA' featuring a background image of a waterfall. The title 'TASTE OF VISTA' is written vertically in large, bold, yellow letters. To the left, a list of free public lectures is provided, including dates, speaker names, and topics. At the bottom, it says 'vancouver island school of theology and the arts'.

FREE PUBLIC LECTURES

APRIL 9	KELLY CARTER <i>For the Church & the Academy: The Theological Contributions of N.T. Wright</i> 7PM @ SHELBOURNE ST. CHURCH
APRIL 16	LIZ SCOTT <i>Mental Health for Parents</i> 7PM @ KNOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
APRIL 23	HEIDI TEEL <i>Children & Faith Formation</i> 7PM @ SAANICH COMMUNITY CHURCH
APRIL 30	ANDY WITHROW <i>Reading Revelation Without Fear: An Introduction to the Bible's Most Misunderstood Book</i> 7PM @ SHELBOURNE ST. CHURCH
MAY 14	MICAH SMITH <i>Faith & Technology</i> 7PM @ SAANICH COMMUNITY CHURCH
MAY 21	MARK GLANVILLE <i>Locally Rooted Worship</i> 7PM @ KNOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
MAY 28	TIM STEWART <i>1 Corinthians: Sources of Unity in a Conflicted Church</i> 7PM @ TBA

vancouver island school of theology and the arts

FREE VISTA: Free public lectures through the Vancouver Island School of Theology are happening on Thursdays in April and May at 7 PM. Go [HERE](#) for more information.

PIPE ORGAN EVENT: Piano students are invited to attend a morning with Dr. Mark McDonald and the Wolff organ at Christ Church Cathedral on Saturday, April 25 from 9 AM - 12 PM. Register by April 22 with the Royal Canadian College of Organists [HERE](#).

A poster for 'Spring Into Action Food Drive' featuring a purple grocery bag filled with food items, a can of tomatoes, and a green container. The text includes the event name, dates (March 24 - May 7), a list of items to donate, and drop-off locations and times. The logo for 'SHELBOURNE Community KITCHEN' is at the top, and there are images of yellow and purple flowers.

SHELBOURNE Community KITCHEN

SPRING INTO ACTION FOOD DRIVE

MARCH 24 - MAY 7

CONSIDER DONATING THE FOLLOWING ITEMS!

- CANNED FISH & MEAT
- CANNED PLAIN BEANS
- PASTA SAUCE
- GRANOLA BARS
- JUICE BOXES

DONATIONS CAN BE DROPPED OFF AT:
101-3787 Cedar Hill Rd. (pink doors)

Tuesdays 4 PM - 7 PM
Wednesdays 10 AM - 1 PM
Thursdays 10 AM - 1 PM

HEART CALLED & FORMED: Join us Friday and Saturday May 8 and 9 for a conference on theology with Mark Buchanan and Gordon T. Smith through the Vancouver Island School of Theology. [Tickets Available Here!](#)

THE PANDORA CHORUS SPRING CONCERT: Join The Pandora Chorus for their Spring Concert on Saturday, May 2 at 7:00 pm in the St. Andrew's Sanctuary. They will be singing songs from our Winter-Spring repertoire, including songs by HUNTR/X, Radiohead, Jacob Collier, Joni Mitchell, Fleet Foxes, Paul Simon, and more! Doors open 6:30pm, Show 7:00pm. Tickets: [\\$20 advance online](#), no ticket needed for children ages 12 and under. Tickets will also be available at the door for \$25 (cash only).

THE VILLAGE CHAMBER CHOIR INAUGURAL CONCERT: Join The Village Chamber Choir on Saturday, May 9 at 2 pm in St. Andrew's Sanctuary. This concert features a more challenging and traditional choral repertoire. From French to Latin, Fauré to Whitacre, classical to pop, it is sure to be a beautiful afternoon of choral favourites. Tickets can be purchased [HERE](#). Ticket Cost: \$20 Adult, \$15 Student, \$10 Child.

SING THE NORTH FESTIVAL: The festival brings together more than 100 singers from across North America for a week of rehearsals, workshops, choral skills sessions, and social events. The Festival culminates in a concert with orchestra in towering Christ Church Cathedral on Saturday, August 8 at 2.30pm. For more information please go [HERE](#).

VIP SUMMER CAMP 2026: A program of the Presbyterian Church in Canada. This year's locations and dates are as follows: Little Qualicum Falls Provincial Park (June 8-12), Rath Trevor Provincial Park (July 25 - 30), and Rath Trevor Provincial Park (July 30 - August 3). For more information go to our [website](#) or contact the registrar at jermareng@gmail.com.

Mission Moment



Gerry Kent describes the United Mission to Nepal (UMN) as “an advocate for those who cannot or do not have the opportunity to seek help for themselves.” Since September 2025, Gerry has taken on the three-year volunteer position of Funding Manager in Nepal for the UMN.

On the PCC's Mission Blog web page, he shares the enriching developments facilitated by the UMN in sectors of Nepal. He describes “the hand of God reaching into this area in love, offering healing.” With support from Presbyterians Sharing, Gerry carries out his life-long commitment to serving the people of Nepal in the spirit of Jesus Christ.



An Update From Lebanon

In a social media update, Near East School of Theology (NEST), a PCC partner based in Lebanon, recounts the horror of living under bombardment. “Eternal Darkness! That’s what today’s latest vicious campaign against Lebanon was called by its masterminds. That name no doubt reflects the state of their souls and military minds.” They describe the attacks on April 8, 2026, as “the most violent and comprehensive” so far since the hostilities broke out.

NEST asks that people pray for the safety of their loved ones, and that of all people in Lebanon, for comfort for those who have lost loved ones, healing for the wounded, and courage and blessings for first responders.

“We are okay... The NEST team is okay... Following over 100 missile attacks, resulting, according to some sources, in over 250 deaths, over 1500 wounded. But ‘Eternal Darkness’ will not touch OUR souls, as we continue to look after our loved ones and pursue our God-given mission to bring love, peace, and reconciliation in a region and world full of darkness.” NEST’s update notes that a few people remain in the NEST building, ensuring it remains secure and well cared for, as several of the attacks have come within a kilometre of NEST. “As we write these lines, the stench of gun powder reaches us, and our eyes sting... Tonight again, we brought a car-full of ingredients for the community of over 300 in the nearby shelter to cook three large meals. I think they thought angels had come to them out of nowhere! Refugees who have lost their homes still need to eat! Thank God for his protection. We count on your prayers.”



A Childhood Interrupted

At just 16 years old, Ahmad Reza starts each day burdened with a responsibility no child should have to carry. In the quiet village of Zargaran, nestled within the mountainous region of Bamyan Province in Afghanistan, he struggles to survive as an orphan whose young life has been shaped by significant loss and daily hardships. Reza has become the sole support for his family following the devastating deaths of both parents.

In 2023, his mother, Mah Jan, passed away at age 40 due to severe jaundice. The grief was overwhelming, yet there was little time to mourn, as two years later, in June 2025, his father, Sayed Ahmad, died at age 75 from complications related to high blood pressure. He was a shoemaker, which was the family's main source of income.

Orphaned, Reza found himself thrust into the role of protector and provider for his siblings—Jafar, aged 11, and Ahmad, aged 7—at a time when most boys are still focused on their own education and dreams.

Shortly after Reza's mother died, his older sister, Nikbakht, then 19 years old, married. She lives with her two-year-old son and her husband, Taqi, who works far away in a coal mine, enduring dangerous and exhausting conditions for long periods. However, his earnings are barely enough to cover even basic needs. The family resides in a rented house and is constantly worried about unpaid rent and rising living costs.

Now, Reza lives with his older sister Nikbakht and takes on the responsibility for her, her son and his two younger siblings. The family has no dependable source of income and relies on occasional help from relatives, neighbours and humanitarian aid to get by. Each day involves making tough decisions about food, rent, fuel and the children's education, with limited resources.

Sadly, experiencing such a loss in a short period, combined with stress, left Reza dealing with psychological distress. He had to drop out of school after Grade 6 to support his family. Now, he works as an unpaid apprentice at a vehicle repair garage, walking nearly five kilometres. Despite the physical exhaustion, he remains determined and dreams of a brighter future for his loved ones by gaining mechanical skills that will help improve his family's living conditions.

"I have suffered deeply since losing my parents," Reza shared quietly, "but I walk this long distance every day with hope that I can learn a skill and one day support my sister, my little brothers and our home."

"For this winter, we have almost nothing to eat. Our remaining food is just 700 grams of cooking oil and 16 kilograms of flour," he added, tears in his eyes. "Every day when I return home and hear my little brothers crying from hunger or see them unwell and needing medicine we cannot afford, an unbearable burden presses down on my shoulders. I feel so helpless, so incomplete, as if there is no path to rescue us."

When a local partner surveyed Reza's village as part of an emergency food assistance project, they identified the family as a recipient of the project supported by PWS&D. He was informed that he would receive monthly cash assistance for five months during winter.

Hope and happiness returned to the family.

"For the first time in months, the constant worry about where our next meal will come from has eased. For five months, we can breathe more easily and focus on healing and moving forward. I am deeply thankful," Reza shared.

His younger brother, Jafar, also shared, "I feel that we will not be hungry for the next five months. Thank you for choosing our family."

This story was written by PWS&D's partner in Afghanistan, with minor additions and edits by PWS&D Communications.