

First Met News

Winter 2018-19 Newsletter



Music Director Kelly Charlton with the Pringle Bells

Advent 3

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First Met Hours of Operation

OFFICE HOURS

Monday—Friday
9:30 am - 3:30 pm

CHURCH HOURS

Monday—Thursday
8:30-3:30 and 5:45-9:30

Fridays
8:30-3:30

Sundays
8:30 am - 2:00 pm

Office Contact Information
Phone: 250-388-5188

Need pastoral care after hours? Please call the church at (250) 388-5188, press 4, then wait on the line.

Discover the true meaning of Christmas

Longest Night Dec. 21 7 p.m.

Christmas Sunday Dec. 23 11 a.m.

A Paper Bag Christmas Dec. 24 4:30 p.m.

(Family service)

Carols in the Candlelight Dec. 24 7:30 p.m.

(Brass Quintet at 7 p.m.)

The Magic of Wonder Dec. 24 11 p.m.

Music for Meditation Jan. 1 2 p.m.



Regular Sunday Services

9 am - Communion in the Chapel

11 am - Worship in the Sanctuary

If you can't attend the 11 am service you can
always see us on live streaming.

<https://www.firstmetvictoria.com/live/>

Live streaming of regular Sunday Service is FREE; however, we welcome donations from our online community.



Friend us on Facebook



Follow us on Twitter

Shelagh's Message

Thank you for this blessing and opportunity to continue in Ministry with First-Met!! I am so looking forward to our ongoing time together! I have been enjoying our developing relationship and so appreciate the energy of the new Board. I am grateful to Spirit for bringing us together! As we get organized, some things will be re-imagined, and others designed. It may well feel like there are spots of overlap and places where is a gap. This is all part of the transitions that we are going through both as a Congregation and as a Denomination. The re-organization of the United Church may impact us in ways we cannot imagine. The final Presbytery meetings are happening all over the country and people are looking forward with curiosity. We congratulate Jane Dawson on her appointment in the Ottawa Valley as she will be helping a cluster—or is it a region—of churches adjust to the new organizational map. Here in BC there aren't many geographical changes to our District, (it is almost the same as the old BC Conference.) But as they say in serials, 'More will be revealed!'

We enter the holy season of Advent/Christmas and I know some people have questions around Our God being so vulnerable as to risk a baby's fragile body. I had a very rich conversation about that this week: it is good food for thought! What does it mean, in the ultimate sense that God was willing to trust at this level?

Another person felt that the most central Incarnation was the Creation itself: also fragile and vulnerable.

These are our different theologies as we approach the Nativity. I welcome our diverse and changing points of view. These important conversations are part of our Sacred Journey as a community of faith and as individuals. My own faith is grounded in the Incarnation: in Jesus Christ. Christmas is my time of year! The mythic images of singing angels can describe how an individual feels realizing the amazing power of the love of God. I pray our worship offerings this season bring a touch of that experience home to each one of us. The Advent candles, the soaring music, the cheer of the nativity sets and the embrace of old friends: all these can be incarnational experiences for us.

Our new year follows up on the excellent Stewardship programme offered this fall. Again, thanks to those who made that possible!! As we recognize the ongoing presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives, we might ask ourselves what role do we see ourselves playing in the community. Are we teachers, encouragers, activists, advocates? Listeners, comforters or servant-leaders? Our prayer is always that we are able to follow Spirit's leading and nudging us to new ways of expressing our faith, and being in a community of faith-filled people!

I am grateful for the hard work and heart work of the leaders of this congregation. And also for the dedication of the staff team! Our staff meetings are great, often punctuated by real laughter!!

As we approach Christmas Sunday we pray that the Spirit of peace, hope, joy and love will enter into our lives and our church and make their presence known! We ask God: "Fill us with your love. Empower us with your strength. Grace us with your loving kindness. Move us with your will for justice. Receive our prayers for each other, our loved ones, and those we miss this Christmas season. Bless this congregation as we go forward into a new chapter, and unite us into a strong community of communities, Amen!"

Merry Christmas, one and all

Shelagh



Message from the Board Chair



I am excited and full of trepidation about my new position in the Church. I feel so fortunate to have excellent fellow Board members to participate with me as we navigate the perilous waters ahead.

Jim Olesen – vice chair
Anne Carson – secretary
Liane Clark – treasurer
Ross Breckon – Chair of Redevelopment Task Group
Emily MacDonald – member at large
Jacquie Henderson – member at large

Currently, we are working on putting together a budget to present to the Congregation in January 2019. This would be so much more difficult without Liane Clark's super-human contributions. She is a priceless asset to our Church. Please read "The Circle of Givings, Budgets and Foundation Funds" on page 6 to better understand the scope of our problem.

By now you will have heard our much more happy news that Shelagh has agreed to stay at the Church for longer than her original contract. We look forward to calling her as our lead minister in 2019. For this, we appreciate the ongoing work of the Search Team with Steve Gray as the Chair.

We have not forgotten our fall Congregational Conversation. Thank you to those who participated in it, and to those who participated at the latest conversation on Redevelopment Space Requirements. We hope to come back to get your further input on the challenges that face us. These conversations are a work in progress. Please be patient with us as we work out how best to conduct them in the future.

On top of all this, we hope to begin work on a strategic plan in 2019!

We appreciate your input on any and all of these issues.

Merry Christmas

Edeana Malcolm

P.S. As I would like to devote more time and energy to my duties as Board Chair, I am resigning my position as newsletter editor effective after this issue. I have really enjoyed the work and regret I cannot continue. Unfortunately, I have not yet found a successor, but Shelagh MacKinnon has urged me to "create a gap."

Some would say a print newsletter is not necessary when all the information is available online, but I know that it is important to those without a computer. So, please consider filling this gap as a gift to them, especially the ones who are homebound .



Members of the former Council at the last meeting



New Board: Edeana Malcolm, Ross Breckon, Liane Clark, Jim Olesen, Emily MacDonald, Jacquie Henderson, Anne Carson

Ringling the First Met Bell



Bell ringing photo by David Bray

"For bells are the voice of the church; They have tones that touch and search The hearts of young and old." - Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

"God's voice is usually nothing more than a whisper ... But other times ... rings as loud as a church bell." - Nicholas Sparks

Building Supervisor Bruce Davies rings the bell at First Met. He goes up the tower at 10:45 every Sunday morning, pulls on the bell rope and starts the ringing that poet Longfellow called the voice of the church and novelist Sparks hears as the voice of God.

Ringling the bell is one small part of Bruce's Sunday routine, along with making sure everything is in place and the church runs smoothly. And it's hard work. Ringling that more than 1,200 pound

bell takes a lot of muscle power – and Bruce rang it 100 times on Remembrance Day!

The bell is a working piece of church history. It was created for First Presbyterian Church in 1860 by Naylor Vickers and Company of Sheffield, England.



Bell photo by Cullen Morton, 2009
FMUC Archives/FMUC_2009-007-1)

The Circle of Givings, Budgets and Foundation Funds

Lower pledges => lower budgeted givings => less monies available for ministry and / or more monies taken out of the Foundation trust funds => encroachment of the Foundation capital => less income available from the Foundation to the church in following years which combined with lower pledges starts this circle all over again.

So how does the above circle play out for 2019?

The 2019 Stewardship campaign shows a drop of \$20,000 from the 2018 Stewardship campaign after excluding from both years congregants who passed away in 2018. Some good news includes 5 new pledgers and over 90 people on PAR (pre-authorized remittance). The latter number is important as First Met pays a flat rate for PAR services if the number of PAR contributors is over 90.

The drop in the pledge campaign has led to a conservative estimate of givings in the 2019 budget leaving less money available for our ministries. Despite this drop, savings were achieved in other areas so the budgeted amount to come out of the Foundation for the Operating and Capital budgets is just under \$200,000. Your Board has accepted all 2019 budgets to go to the congregation in January 2019. The narrative split of the Operating budget is reaching out 17% (14% in 2018), caring 41% (44% in 2018), learning 16% (19% in 2018) and worship 26% (23% in 2018).

However, \$200,000 coming out of the Foundation in 2019 is a concern given that the Board of Trustees Chair recently advised your Board that there has been encroachment on the capital of the Foundation as budgeted. However, unlike previous years, market conditions are such that about \$100,000 of that capital will not be replaced before year end so, using a conservative 4% return on investment, at least \$4,000 less Foundation income will be available for First Met's use in 2019. Therefore, there will be more encroachment on the Foundation capital in 2019 leading to even less income available in 2020.

What can I do to help (and not just with money)?

- 1) Volunteer your knowledge, expertise and time. Your help, even on a short-term project, means that First Met does not have to pay for that work and/or can reduce the workload on other volunteers.
- 2) Submit any ideas you have for generating more revenue or reducing expenses into the suggestion envelope coming to your Board's bulletin board currently under construction.
- 3) Have you put First Met in your will or as a beneficiary of a life insurance policy, RRIF, endowment...? Let the Finance Office know (if you have not already) so you can be listed, anonymously if you wish, as a member of the Legacy Circle and help support First Met for many years to come.
- 4) Remember the Raise the Roof and the Womens' Washrooms projects? First Met continues to accept tax receiptable donations towards these projects to repay the loans from the Foundation giving it more cash to earn income on for First Met for the following year.
- 5) Submit a 2019 pledge card if you have not already and use PAR if you can as it is the least costly method to administer.

Liane Clark, Treasurer and Finance Chair

First Met – St John Refugee Support Group Two Newcomer Families Settling into Life in Victoria



The First Met – St John Refugee Support Group has been very busy over the past four months welcoming two new families to Victoria. Both families have been sponsored under the Canadian Private Sponsorship of Refugee Program, an initiative started in 1978 whereby refugees can resettle in Canada with support and funding from private groups. From Eritrea, Ghebremeskel family of nine, arrived in mid-July. From Syria, Roua Bilal and her two children, arrived in late August. Both families had their siblings request that their relatives be sponsored to come to Canada. Having a support network, both from relatives and the sponsorship team, makes it much easier to become familiar with the city and Canadian culture and to help build their new life.

On November 3, the Ghebremeskel family welcomed their newest member, a healthy baby girl, Hannah, the first Canadian citizen in the family. Both she and her mum, Tsigay are doing well. The six school-aged children have settled in well to three schools - Spectrum for the eldest (Yeol and Alexander both boys); Colquitz for Liwam and Nebait (both girls) and Tillicum for Michael and Nataniel. Paulos (almost three) wishes he was at school, too, and we will be working on a play group or pre-school for him. Father, Hagos, is enrolled in an Employment BC program at ICA and we are hopeful that he will find a job before too long. Plaudits to members of the support team who have been so generous with the time and energies in finding accommodation, furnishing it, school visitations, transportation to and support at medical and dental appointments, cooking, installing a computer and communications system and odd jobs round the house.

For the Bilal family, the first month was busy with appointments and signing up for government programs and acquiring documents. Within a week of arrival, Roua's daughter Tala was registered at Esquimalt High in Grade 10 and her son Nawwar was registered at Camosun College for English upgrade courses. Over the past three months we have gotten to know the family through regular English practice sessions with Roua. In November we gathered for a "welcome dinner" to officially welcome Roua and her children to Victoria. Over 40 people attended a potluck dinner at the Denson Lounge at St John the Divine Anglican Church. Roua and her children, Roua's brother and family, and many members from both First Met and St John joined in the celebration. Roua shared some delicious homemade Syrian desserts with all the guests. Gifts of welcome were provided by the Knitting Ministry at First Met. Roua was given a prayer shawl, her children prayer scarfs, and the family a knitted blanket, all very much appreciated by the family. Nawwar has just told us that he now has a part-time job in addition to his studies at Camosun College. Many thanks to the support team who have been helping with the many aspects of helping the family settle into life in a new country.

For more information about the activities of our Refugee Support Group, or if you would like to volunteer, please contact Kathy Cook at 250-370-0991 (kcook@datagruven.com) or Janet Gray 250-478-8066 (janet.gray@homehere.ca).



The Welcome Potluck for the Bilal family (more photos on p. 15)

UCW NEWS



Join us for a meeting: a brief business meeting, a devotional, a program and a time of Fellowship!

Dec. 10 - Mildred Mossop Unit Meeting
Dec. 20 - Unity Meeting. Bring \$5 for sandwiches

UCW Supports the Work of First Met and Beyond-

*A donation of \$50 was given to the **Knitters Group** for yarn for Prayer

Shawls.

*A special donation is sent to ROTO Ministries for Christmas gifts for our African Elders.

This year the special gift is a radio.

*Mildred Mossop unit donated \$25 to the **Angel Gift Christmas** program of *Prison Fellowship Canada*. This group organizes Christmas gifts for the children of men or women who are in prison.

*UCW made a \$1000.00 donation to the Choir Bursary Fund.

UCW Events

*In September the UCW held a special meeting in support of the **Mission and Service Fund**. Our speakers, Kathy Cook and members of the Refugee Committee from St. John the Divine, shared information about the challenging task of bringing refugees to Victoria and the details regarding support for Refugees. We raised \$1303.20 for the Mission and Service fund.

*On November 16 the First Met UCW held a special Service for the ***Ingathering of the Least Coin*** with \$ 279.63 collected to be sent to the **Women's Inter-Church Council**

UCW Mission and Service Sept 10, 2018

Call to Worship – Psalm 84

Hymn #589 Lord Speak to Me

Reflection: In Search of Our Kneeling Places

This was the title of a poem written by Ann Weems for Advent and Christmas quite a few years ago.

I want us today to think of places where we need a “kneeling place,” a place where we need to pray for people in pain, people who are hungry and those living in fear. I have found four for us today.

I often remember when I was a child before getting into bed I was taught to kneel at my bedside and say:

Now I lay me down to sleep
I pray the Lord my soul to keep,
If I should die before I wake
I pray the Lord my soul to take.

Then I would continue: God bless Mom, Dad, etc. You perhaps have similar memories.

Nelson Mandela was quoted as saying at the time of the apartheid in South Africa: “What must happen to bring us to our knees?” What must happen indeed.

1. Seeing we are here today to celebrate Mission and Service, it would seem obvious that this should be our first kneeling place. There is a wide field of Mission and Service areas where people are given clean water, where they are helped from danger and shown how to grow needed crops. Families separated are found and settled. This is massive work and always in need of funding and volunteers. We must gladly kneel here.
2. Moving on, we realized that the world is made smaller because travel has opened us to other places. Refugees fleeing their hoes. We meet other cultures and other faiths. Sometimes we might feel threatened by so much that is different around us. We should be actively engaged to fully understand the words “tolerance” and “inclusiveness.” We share with St. John the Divine church our refu-

gee families. Perhaps we might feel our faith is challenged. We should truly ask ourselves, “What is my faith? What is important to me? Who is Jesus to me?” Questions we must deal with about other faiths will help us to be more compassionate to others. Here we can kneel together to better understand our own faith and others.

3. Talking about the world being made smaller, I would like to include the computer and cell phone world. Young people live in a totally different world than you and I remember. They have so much more to deal with—drugs, weapons, chat rooms, internet, to name a few. I often feel the family unit is threatened by the economy and by the so-called morals of the day! I hope that we will spend time in a kneeling place for the family unit. A family that plays, works, shares, and above all, loves one another. Families may indeed differ today but we know that God’s unconditional love has compassion for all who together share their time and life. Let us pray to Parent God to enable this unit to be held together by bonds of loyalty, trust and love.
4. And finally, I would like to have us on our knees to pray for First Metropolitan Church. We have had a long winter of challenge and some feelings of the wilderness. Then a blessed summer of fellowship and fresh renewal to be followed by Fall. September is here and we will meet with our new minister Shelagh MacKinnon, face interesting challenges and change, new visions and a new journey. We are surrounded and embrace by God’s love and strength. We will persevere, thanks be to a God who calls us, feeds us and transforms us to be the people of God.

Our Kneeling Places for today are our 1- Mission and Service, 2- challenges of our faith, 3- our extended family, and 4- a new journey for First Metropolitan Church. Let us kneel and give thanks to God.

Amen

Closing Hymn: #424 May the God of Hope Go With Us.

Joan Dowse



Prayer Connections

First Met has an intercessory prayer group called the Prayer Connections Team. Members are committed to praying at home during their personal prayer times for requests from the congregation and staff. Prayers can be for yourself or those you care about regarding anything that concerns you: health problems, bereavement, relationship issues, work-related or student concerns, financial issues, etc. Private information is kept strictly confidential. Prayer team members pray for each request for one month. You may renew your request after that time if you wish.

How can I make a request?

- Prayer request slips are available in the church office and can be placed in the box marked “Prayer Requests.” On Sundays, slips are available from the sanctuary pews or entrance, or the exterior entranceway to the chapel, and can be placed in the offering plate.
- By Email
- A staff member is able to pass on prayer requests to the prayer team if you are unable to get to church and do not have email.



Therapeutic Recovery Community

On Oct. 13, 2018 Our Place Therapeutic Recovery Community opened its doors to the public for an open house. Many members of our church community took the opportunity to see first-hand the innovative ideas and approaches the center has to offer. Facilities such as a commercial kitchen, a carpentry shop, a welding shop, as well as rooms to allow for artistic expression, will help residents to acquire skills needed in a work place. Rooms for therapeutic dialogues, for group and one to one sessions, are also in place. Some of the finishing touches and decorations will eventually be done by the residents themselves.

In the meantime, the facility has opened. I have asked Don Evans for an update of what is happening. Below is his response.

“A skilled complement of staff have been hired and we now have our first three residents at the Therapeutic Recovery Community. We anticipate it will take 9 months until we have a full complement with 50 residents. People can be referred from three places: the Integrated Court, Corrections and Island Health. One of the challenges we are finding is that people coming from Island Health have a long waitlist for detox which is a requirement before entering the program. Things are going really well for our first few residents and they are looking forward to the next two years as they have the opportunity to learn new life and employment skills and heal from all of the underlying issues of their addiction. They will be building self-esteem and confidence for a bright and healthy future.

“We have all of our government funding in place and we are getting close with our private funding. Currently we need to raise an additional \$100,000.”

First Met United Church has contributed \$5,009.00 to this project in the 2018 fiscal period. The contributions were made in addition to the regular church givings. Once more the TRC fundraising committee expresses gratitude to all who have contributed. Heartfelt thanks for your generosity.

As per our previous newsletter article we set out a challenge to to ask our First Met community to raise \$7,000 in the 2019 fiscal period to contribute to the Therapeutic community. Again, this money is to be raised separately from our church’s regular givings, and, if we cannot achieve this goal, we will forward to Our Place whatever we can raise. Ongoing financial support will be important to realize the long term success of the Therapeutic Recovery Community project.

If you are able, please consider supporting this project.

With thanks,

First Met, Our Place TRC Fund Raising Committee
Heini Mathis heinim@shaw.ca Janet Gray janet.gray@homehere.ca

STEWARDSHIP FAIR

After weeks of planning the big day was finally here! Early Sunday morning people started arriving to set up their tables in the Fellowship Hall. At the other end of the hall, Moira's team were busy setting up for the soup luncheon.

Ann Maffey generously donated balloons for the occasions and they had "Thank you" written on them. Coloured leaves were placed on all the tables.

The church service over, people headed for the hall to enjoy a bowl of soup and then tour the displays. Below are some of the photos taken by Larry Scott.

Many people deserve a sincere thank you for making the day the success that it was and I am very grateful to them for all their support.



Health & Wellness ↑ Music



NAME CHANGE

From now on Stewardship Plus will be known as the "Whole-Life Stewardship Ministry Team."

THANK YOU

Thank you for the opportunity of serving as your Chair of Stewardship Plus over the last several months. I am stepping down as Chair and as a member of the committee as of December 2 due to health reasons. I want to say a special thanks to Anne Carson, Ann Maffey, Jean Jenkins, Forrest Nelson and Liane Clark. A sincere thank you to Larry



Trustees



Ministry & Personnel ↑ Knitting ↓



Scott also for his assistance with the Narrative Budget brochure and the Love in Action pamphlet. He also designed the bookmarks for the Stewardship Fair.



Below:

Melanie Ihmels
with Jim & Mavis
Olesen

Sunday School Pizza Kick Off in September



Help Us Celebrate!

Did you know we have, as part of our fellowship, three ladies who are 101, and two who are 100? As well, we have seven couples who have celebrated 60 or more years of marriage. Indeed, these are facts to honour, and are only the folk we know. Since we like to celebrate these auspicious occasions, we are asking you to let us know if you are 90 and up, or married for 60 years or more, and would like to share. If you want to let us know about someone else, please make sure they are agreeable. This information can be given to Fiona in the church office, or called to me at 250-388-9401.

Shirley Chatfield



Congregational conversation on space, Dec. 2



Let Not Your Heart Be Troubled Service,
November 4

Emerging Artist Craft Fair

The Holy Spirit was certainly evident during the Winter Craft Fair for Emerging Artists held Nov. 18.

The fair sponsored by First Met, Our Place and the Cool Aid Society attracted about 65 vendors and 500 customers. Music, decorations and good cinnamon and cookie tastes and smells lent a very meaningful Joy.

Thanks to all including Cool-aid, Our Place and for your wholehearted First Met participation.



We Will Not be Separated

On Tuesday, October 30, Edeana Malcolm, newly elected Chair of the Board, and Rev. Shelagh MacKinnon delivered symbols of our sense of unity with the Congregation Emanu-El on Blanshard St. First Met has also sent 11 hand knitted prayer patches to the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh, site of a mass shooting days earlier. The patches, representing each of the 11 victims of the shooting, were made by First Met's Knitting Group.



*When you
can't
attend
Sunday
Services*

Watching *Livestreaming*?

The 11 am Sunday worship service is available on the First Met YouTube archive page at [www. Youtube.com/c/firstmetvictoria](http://www.Youtube.com/c/firstmetvictoria) or through the link provided from the Livestream page on the church website.

Check out these Frequently Asked Questions at our webpage:
www.firstmetvictoria.com/live-stream/pages/live-stream-faqs



New Growth New Church

The life of a Douglas fir Tree is about 500 years. Then the great giant falls, but the fallen log becomes a nursery where new life takes root and grows.

So it is with the Christian Church. Phyllis Tickle, once a presenter at our Epiphany Explorations, is famous for saying that a new movement in the Christian religion takes place every 500 years. Five hundred years ago, it was the Reformation, and so we are due for a new birth now. Being in the middle of this transformation, it is difficult to see what the new church will look like, but we have faith that it will be something wonderful.

So, next time you look around the church and lament the lack of the younger generations, take heart. They may not be in the building, but the Church of God is people, not buildings. As the “old tree,” let us do what we can to nurture the new growth.

To learn more about the possibilities, please read the story below.

Weird Church

Several members of our congregation attended a weekend workshop at Cadboro Bay United Church on October 26-28 where we learned about *New Expressions of Church in the Twenty-First Century*. Beth Ann Estock from Portland, Oregon, was an inspiring presenter who taught us about Spiral Dynamics to help us understand why millennials do not attend church. We also heard some imaginative and wonderful ideas about what Christianity may look like in this new millennium.

The Board was so inspired by this presentation we thought it would be a great idea to bring the message to all the congregation. Emily MacDonald has kindly offered to lead a Book Study on **Wednesday mornings from 10 to 11:30, starting Jan. 16**. We'll be studying *Weird Church: Welcome to the Twentieth Century* by Beth Ann Estock and Paul Nixon. Hope you can make it.

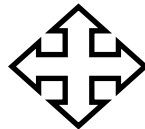


Year End Donations and Tax Receipts

As a registered charity, First Met is able to issue tax receipts. With this privilege come numerous rules and responsibilities dictated by the Canada Revenue Agency. In particular, donations can only be issued a tax receipt for the year they are given. Therefore, if you wish your donation to be included on your 2018 tax receipt, please ensure that you have dropped it off in the office before it closes on December 24th at noon, deposited it in the December 30th offering basket or mailed it to the church before December 31st, 2018. Please call 250-388-5188 extension 224 or email finance@firstmetvictoria.com should you wish further information.



Left: Board members, Jim Olesen and Liane Clark at the Stewardship Fair



In Memoriam

Barbara Robertson with Moira on Hospitality

Barbara passed away on November 4. Her memorial service was on December 11.



Herb Pitts Memorial Service on October 19



ONE SOLITARY LIFE

Here is a man who was born in an obscure village. He worked in a carpenter's shop until he was thirty. Then for three years he was an itinerant preacher.

He never owned a home. He never wrote book. He never held office. He never put his foot in a big city. He never travelled more than 200 miles from the place where he was born. He never did one of those things usually associated with greatness. He had no credentials but himself.

While still a young man the tide of popular opinion turned against him. His friends ran away - one of them denied him. He was turned over to his enemies. He went through the mockery of a trial. He was nailed upon a cross between two thieves. While he was dying his executioners gambled for the only piece of property he had - his coat.

When he was dead, he was laid in a borrowed grave, through the pity of a friend.

Nineteen centuries have come and gone and today he is the centerpiece of the core and the leader of the column of progress.

I am far within the mark when I say all armies that marched, all navies that ever sailed, all parliaments that ever sat and all Kings that ever reigned put together have not affected the life of man upon this earth as this **One Solitary Life**.

***Essay, Dr. James Allan Francis-1926**

Submitted by Irene Baddeley

Strollers



Above: At Willows Beach



Left: At Willows Beach Tea House

Below: Strollers Christmas Party



Right: Wind-up Party in September



John Dominic Crossan

on Salt Spring Island
FIRST ANNUAL
SPRING SYMPOSIUM

John Dominic Crossan
Author of Jesus: A Revolutionary Biography

HOW TO READ
THE BIBLE
&
STILL BE A
CHRISTIAN

WATCH FOR NEWS ON
ADDITIONAL DAYS TO ROUND
OUT THIS SYMPOSIUM: A DAY
LONG WINE TOUR, A DAY OF
STRESS MANAGEMENT



I SHALL NOT HATE...

Rescuing the non-violent God from warring Christians

Friday & Saturday, March 22 & 23, 2019

Salt Spring Island United Church
111 Hereford Avenue, SSI, BC V8K 2T3

\$99 (includes all lectures, snacks, and workshops)

To register, email chris.levan4@gmail.com or call the church at 250-537-5812. Ask about group rates, one-day admission and the Friday night keynote address.

Angel Voice Brings Solace

Padre E.W MacQuarrie with the Carleton and York Regiment
At the Battle of Ortona, Italy, December 1943

Even in the midst of war, Christmas comes round. It is, at last, Christmas morning and all our wondering whether we'd be in the line on Christmas Day has been settled. We are. But can we pay no heed to the day – not so much to the calendar as to the longing, deep down in our hearts, for peace and joy and the love that comes down at Christmas time? There is not much that we can do. We are only two or three hundred yards from the German trenches and we must not assemble in large groups. There can be no real get-together, not much Christmas singing. But we can and we do come together, some sixty of us, the Colonel included, to Holy Communion.

Outside, shells whine and mortars burst nearby, but we are in an old reservoir and we feel quite safe. And there again, the ancient miracle is repeated. Let the guns roar, let the battle rage. For a few brief moments, we are with Him. Now it is New Year's Eve. A battle is raging up ahead, but I have been there all day and have come back behind to get sufficient quiet to write a word of comfort and peace to the newest "next-of-kin." We are really in a wonderful spot. It has already had 14 direct hits, but shows no signs of cracking. It is another water reservoir, but instead of water, it contains the blankets and scrounged bedsprings of fifteen or twenty men.

Best of all, we go down to get into it. Overhead are four feet of earth on top of a brick dome and we clamber down a 12-foot ladder to get to the bottom. Canadians are in one half, for it is divided by a four-foot-thick wall, reaching almost to the top, and English and Welsh gunners are in the other half. This way, we keep our units separated. But it is New Year's Eve.

I am busy by the light of a candle, writing a letter home to a mother whose son was that day killed by a shell while going to the aid of a comrade. I have been asked to start a sing-song, but I must first finish this letter. Meanwhile, the other officer present climbs to the top of the middle wall of partition and calls to our British allies to join in a "sing." A Welsh lad volunteers to sing a solo and comes to the top where we can all hear. He has a beautiful voice – what Welshman hasn't – and we clamour for more. I finish my letter and send for my violin and so begins an evening of song that will long be remembered.

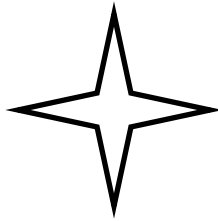
We sing songs of home. We sing marching songs of the last war. We wander down long, long trails – each of us to his own destination. We come back again to Old MacDonald's Farm. We are relieved and uplifted. But the night is wearing on and our gunner friends on the other side of the wall, whom we cannot see but hear, must be at their guns before dawn. It is time to stop, but no, not yet – our Welsh gunner, up there on top of the wall, has one more song, one more libation to pour forth in music. He sings, in a voice I shall never forget, The Lord's Prayer, in Welsh. As his voice lifts again to the Throne of the Most High that simplest of all prayers, other forces are surely at work. The power of song has been making itself felt now for some time. But with that prayer, it is as if Christ Himself had come to plead for his Kingdom.

I look at the massive wall that divides us from our brothers on the other side. Massive? But the voice of song has made it as though it never were. It is a dead thing. But men's hearts and voices are alive and vibrant. I look at the wall, but what I see is what St. Paul looked at so long ago – “The middle wall of partition” – and I see all the barriers and all the walls that man has erected between himself and his brother man. I see the thing that brings on war – that has brought on this war. I see Christ on the cross. But I also see the breaking down of the middle walls of partition all over the world and men linking up with the voice of song and of praise. Lo! See the Christ stand.

The day has been a long and heavy one. Many men have died, but softly, as the last strains of the Lord's Prayer die away and the year draws to its close, I play The End of a Perfect Day, and voices rise quietly and thoughtfully on both sides of the wall as though it had never been there. It is a holy hour – it is almost sacramental.

These are the things that stand out of a padre's battle experience. What, to him, can be more precious than his feeling of the presence of the Lord? And He does come – in the dark, in the night, in a voice of song – in the murmuring cry of a wounded man – in the question so wistfully asked “Why does He allow it?” Or sometimes in the voice of thunder, as a shell bursts beside a man and leaves him unscathed but more thoughtful. In a thousand ways, He comes and a padre remembers what he has seen.

[Padre MacQuarrie is the father of Marg MacQuarrie of our congregation]



Classical Music and Culture Tour

Upcoming 13-29 May 2019 Mary Byrne will host a second tour to Europe in support of the Victoria Conservatory of Music: **Musical Milestones 2019**, a tour of classical music and cultural tourism, and a fundraiser for the VCM (\$300 tax deductible donation).

Berlin – our first stop – places us in the modern city of Deutsche Grammophon, cabarets, and the Berlin Philharmonic. A stop at Potsdam and a stay at Dresden will seat us in two of Europe's great Baroque musical courts. For two nights at Leipzig we will walk the footsteps of Johann Sebastian Bach, Felix Mendelssohn, and Richard Wagner. Forging to the east, we visit the UNESCO heritage centres of Wrocław and Kraków in Poland, where western classical and eastern traditional music meet. We end our tour in Budapest to the strains of music by nationals, émigrés, and expats floating above the waters of the hot springs and the Danube.

I am hoping that you will join our tour, and to consider making the recommendation of this experience to kindred souls who might wish for the musical experience of a lifetime. Registration and payment deadline is 30 January 2019. Find us on Facebook (Musical Milestones) and on the Conservatory's Events page www.vcm.bc.ca/events

EVERYONE IS WELCOME!

Please
Join Us

Caregiver Support Group

Meets the fourth Thursday of the month 1– 2:30 pm

Contact **Emily Macdonald** 250-886-9975 or **Heather Querengesser** 250-721-9705

Healing Pathways

Monday or Thursday, every hour on the hour from 11:00 am. The last appointment is at 2:00 pm. For appointment call **Joan Mickelson** 250-385-4033

First Met Knitters

Meets the second Tuesday of the month 1:30 to 3:30 pm

For more information call **Joan Mickelson** 250-385-4033 or **Shirley Chatfield** 250-388-9401

First Met Men's Group

Gathers the second Tuesday of each month at the Oak Bay Rec Centre on Bee Street.

Please contact **Cyril Nasim** 250-383-0400 or mnasim@shaw.ca for more information

Ramblers Hiking Group

Meets the third Saturday of every month at the church for car-pooling. Call **Rennie Warburton** 250-592-9161 or rrwarby@gmail.com for more information

Tai Chi

Meets Monday & Wednesdays noon—1:00 pm in the Fellowship Hall

Call **Edeana Malcolm** at 250-412-7682 for more information.

Women Exploring Spirituality

Meets the fourth Monday of the month 1:00—3:00 pm

Contact **Joyce Clugston** 250-360-1941 or **Anne Sikstrom** 250-383-0172 for information

Yoga in the Chapel

Gentle Yoga

Mondays & Fridays 10:30-11:40 am

Chair Yoga

Wednesdays 1:30– 2:30 pm

Look for **Restorative Yoga** to begin some time in February.

Please contact **Elaine Duke** at elaineduke1000@gmail.com

The Friendship Club

Dec. 19 11:30 am Uplands Club-house

Dec. 31 1:30 pm Marlene's

Events & Dates for 2019 are not yet decided



Parking Options

Week Days

- Balmoral Road
- Ground Level ~ North Park - East of Balmoral Gardens Apartments

Sundays

- Balmoral Road ~ Angle Parking
- Ground Level ~ East of Balmoral Gardens Apartments
- Underground ~ North Park west of Balmoral Gardens ~ 10:15 am to 1:15 pm

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