

# First Met News

Fall 2020 Newsletter



We give thanks to God who  
loves each one of us!

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## First Met Hours of Operation

CHURCH HOURS  
Monday—Friday  
8:30 am -3:30 pm  
5:45—9:45 pm (Mon-Thurs)

OFFICE HOURS  
Monday and Wednesday  
9:00 am —3:00 pm  
Tuesday and Thursday  
9:00 to Noon and 1:00—3:00 pm

WELCOME ATTENDANTS  
Monday—Wednesday 10:00 to Noon  
Monday—Thursday 1:00—3:00 pm

SUNDAY HOURS  
8:30 am - 2:00 pm

The doors are still locked during this reopening period. Please phone for an appointment or come during Welcome Attendant hours.

Office Contact Information  
Phone: 250-388-5188

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

## Coming Soon in Broadview

### Raising Better Boys

Stereotypical notions of what it means to be a man can hamper boys' development. This month's cover story looks at efforts to curb toxic masculinity before it takes root.

### Rethinking the Police

Three people with first-hand experience of law enforcement share their visions for changing a system plagued by racism.

### Change in the United Church

After almost 14 years as general secretary, Nora Sanders is stepping down. She talks to

*Broadview* about the highlights and challenges of her time at the helm.

For more info, speak to Sharron Higgins.



## Schedule for Upcoming Newsletters

The deadlines for submissions for upcoming newsletters are:

- Winter 2020: Nov 17 (published by Nov 29)
- Spring 2021: Feb 1 (published by Feb 14)
- Summer 2021: Jun 6 (published by June 20)

## Sunday Services

First Metropolitan is beginning to invite limited participation in Sunday services on a reservation system.

(See p. 18 for details on reserving a spot.)

Virtual church services: <https://www.firstmetvictoria.com/live/>

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



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# Shelagh's Message

One of my favourite scenes in the movie *You've got Mail*, takes place in September. Tom Hanks' character and Meg Ryan's are emailing each other about the excitement of the fall. "Don't you love New York in the fall? It makes me wanna buy school supplies. I would send you a bouquet of newly sharpened pencils if I knew your name and address." I agree! Along with richly scented chrysanthemums, a bouquet of freshly sharpened pencils is the perfect decoration for this time of year. That line will stay with me forever!



Does 1998 seem like a lifetime ago? Well, in some ways it is! Kids born when that movie was released are through high school now! No graduation ceremonies for this year's grads must have seemed so very unfair! And what a time we are **all** having. In this newsletter you will see the steps we are taking as a Community of Faith to adjust to this new reality. We won't get a report card for all our efforts, but I personally think we would get great marks for how hard we are all trying!!

I hope and pray that you are doing well in the midst of all that is different even if it is not new. We know that there is real loneliness being felt right around the world, as well as a sense of interconnectedness! Let us know if you, or someone you know, needs help. Thank you so much.

I wonder: "How do we keep up our hope and encouragement, as we are face a three-fold challenge in the fall of 2020? First, the Pandemic and its many impacts; secondly, the opioid crisis spiralling out of control, and finally, the urgent call for racial justice for Black, Indigenous and marginalized people here and in the States.

What do we have in our toolboxes at this unprecedented time? We are encouraged to listen to our own stories of resilience: our family, our congregations, our places of residence or origin. What is there in those stories that will help us? Kindness to others is a lasting and powerful theme. We have witnessed many acts in 2020 that will endure as remarkably kind, generous and just. It is a decision to bring them to mind. The same technique might help us in the other two areas as well. Abraham Heschel wrote of the prophets' hope: "The prophet is a person who, living in dismay, has the power to transcend that dismay. Over all the darkness of experience hovers the vision of a different day" (*Between God and Man*, p. 240). That vision of a different day makes us speak up for those suffering with a substance abuse disorder who are dying alone and of poisoned drugs. What vision can we formulate to hover over their suffering? I wonder...

Our work, under Edeana's leadership, on becoming recognized as an Affirming congregation speaks to the huge issue of equality for all in our city and country. We are following the teachings of Jesus who transcended the boundaries of religion, culture, gender, race, economic status, ability, and sexual orientation. He affirmed humanity's rich diversity. He taught a different way to live, one the world so desperately needs now. We are called to pray, deeply and often, for those who are oppressed that they may be freed and for those who oppress that they may be transformed to value all voices. We belong together! Within the confines of distance and healthy practice we are called to action for those who suffer. WE dare hope for the day when we all rejoice together

So many people are holding and supporting that vision of a different way. They are back at Our Place, they are gardening and sharing, they are knitting and planning and so much more. We are grateful to them all. We operate on the basis of your voluntary contributions in kind and financially, and the preauthorized monthly support from people who share our faith and values. Your generosity makes it possible for us to exist and promote positive change in Victoria and support endeavours around the world. With all of our hearts, thank you!

I send affectionate greetings after our beautiful summer. The gardens in Victoria have been lovely and refresh our hearts. Our outreach is changed but still strong and ongoing. It is a source of vision and light. Our building is mostly closed but programs are returning in many different ways, helping us keep our hearts and our minds open. We give thanks to God who loves each one of us as if there was only one of us!



Many Blessings  
*Shelagh MacKinnon*

# Board Chair Report

## Welcome Attendants

We are cautiously beginning to open (see Reopening Plan Stage Two **on the website**). **As it is ironic to call it “reopening” when all the outside doors are locked**, and because I believe the job of the church is to welcome everyone, I have asked for and received volunteers to be Welcome Attendants at the Balmoral Street door on weekdays. This has the added benefit of freeing custodians and other staff from the tyranny of the pager. We could still use a few **more volunteers if you’re willing in order to extend our “open” hours**.



If you have business at the church (to pick up a brochure, visit a staff person, join a meeting, drop off a cheque, whatever it might be), someone will be at the Balmoral entrance to answer the door between 10 and noon in the morning Monday to Wednesday and between 1 and 3 in the afternoon Monday to Thursday. At other times you will have to call a staff person to answer it.

## Board Business

During the summer, the Board met by Zoom on June 4 and 18, July 14 and 29, and August 19. The minutes of these meetings are on the website. Besides working on the reopening plan, we **extended Micia Kanstrup’s job to June 2021, extended the hours of the Our Place shelter to March, 2021 and also extended Ryan Lee’s job as a Communications Technician until the end of December, 2020**. Our next Board meeting via Zoom is Sept. 9, 2020.

## Strategic Plan

**As Robert Burns said in “To a Mouse”, “The best laid schemes o’ Mice an’ Men/ Gang aft agley/ An’ lea’e us nought but grief and pain/ For promis’d joy!”** Well, I’m not sure that our Strategic Plan promises joy, but it certainly has gone “agley” during this period of COVID-19. After almost two years of working on it, we have had to remove the dates and are in the process of re-examining them.

In the meantime, Ryan Lee (with the help of Joan Mason and David Bray of the Communications Team) has put the Plan (sans dates) together in a booklet that will soon be ready for you to read. This will be posted on-line and mailed out to those who are not on-line in time for our congregational meeting some time in November. This will be a Zoom meeting with the possibility of phoning in for those without a computer. At that meeting, we will vote on the Strategic Plan as well as other matters of importance, such as the budget.

As we begin to meet in person a little more often, I look forward to seeing more of your masked faces from a distance, especially on Sunday mornings. Let us pray for a speedy end to this pandemic so that we can all meet again in one place some day. In the meantime, God bless you and keep you strong and safe from COVID-19.

*Edeana Malcolm, Board Chair*

Looking for info on  
First Met events,  
either past or  
upcoming?

Check out our  
website

[firstmetvictoria.com](http://firstmetvictoria.com)

# Becoming an Affirming Congregation

One of the goals of our Strategic Plan is to become an Affirming Congregation. We would like to **do this before next summer's Pride Week rolls around.** In order to make this happen, there are several requirements that we have to meet.



I'd like to let you know what we've done so far and what we still have to do. First of all, with the help of the Board, we have written a new mission statement as part of our Strategic Plan. It is:

*As a faith-based community, we are committed to including people of all ages, economic circumstances, races, ethnicities, sexual orientations and gender identities in all aspects of the life and work of our ministry. Together we seek transformation, engagement and service for ourselves, our community and our world.*

Secondly, with the help of the Worship/CSD and Communications Teams, we have written an inclusive marriage policy. It is:

***We welcome couples who seek God's blessing on their commitment in a spiritual wedding ceremony here at First Metropolitan United Church. They do not need to be members of the Church.***

*We celebrate weddings for couples of all sexual orientations, gender identities and physical abilities who are in committed relationships.*

*Our policy includes inter-church and inter-faith weddings in which someone from another faith community may share in officiating.*

**During Pride Week, the Sunday School invited local children's book author Robin Stevenson to speak to the children.** We also purchased some of her books for the church library, including *Pride Colors; Kid Activists; Pride: Celebrating Diversity and Community; My Body, My Choice;* and ***Ghost's Journey: A Refugee Story.*** During Pride Week, we also put up banners and gay flags to show the community our intention to be radically welcoming.

We still have a lot to do. We need to hold discussions with as many groups as possible within the church on what it means to be affirming. We invite your comments, questions and reflections. We hope to hold Zoom meetings (and perhaps even small, socially-distanced, in-person meetings) with **various groups where we can share stories, discuss, watch films, and answer questions.** We'd also like to invite other Affirming ministries in Victoria to tell us about their experiences.

When these requirements are met, we will hold a congregational vote, perhaps in the late spring of 2021, on the question of whether or not we want to become an Affirming Congregation.

*Edeana Malcolm*



# First Met Financial Update

2020 Operating Revenue / Expense Summary to June 30, 2020

As seen in the table to the right, First Met's results have been affected both on the revenue and expense side by COVID-19. Revenues are below budget by about \$50,000 for the first half of the year. Expenses are below budget by about \$77,000 for the first half of the year so the net loss is below the budgeted loss. Part of the reason for the decrease in program expenses is a much lower than usual United Church of Canada assessment amount. Included in these numbers despite COVID-19 are a successful Congregational Camp at Camp Pringle, continued monthly donations to the Mission and Service Fund and donations to Our Place.

Thanks to all of you who have mailed in cheques, used the church's mail slot to drop off donations, signed up for Pre-Authorized Remittances or navigated the Canada Helps website, the Foundation withdrawals are below budget. Thank you to those who provided post-dated cheques at the start of the summer to support First Met through July and August.

Throughout this newsletter are the activities that are still taking place or that will start up in the fall. Your financial support ensures these activities continue and that First Met's staff continue to work their full hours supporting these activities. Even though we cannot be together, our church is still here.

Please stay tuned for more details in September on the Fall Stewardship Campaign which will run a little differently this year. It will be your opportunity to commit to the work of your church in 2021.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any questions about First Met's finances.

*Liane Clark, Treasurer*

	Budget Jan to Jun 2020	Actual Jan to Jun 2020	Actual Jan to Jun 2019
Revenues			
Givings	\$131,500	\$115,256	\$133,028
Letting	\$140,850	\$122,717	\$163,047
Program	\$ 50,815	\$ 25,712	\$ 44,107
Miscellaneous	\$ 6,500	\$ 15,507	\$ 13,575
Total Revenue	\$329,665	\$279,192	\$353,757
Expenses			
Program	\$ 68,228	\$ 35,192	\$ 77,503
Staffing	\$212,150	\$ 174,822	\$200,469
Administration	\$ 37,158	\$ 30,541	\$ 32,136
Buildings	\$113,010	\$ 112,847	\$120,049
Letting & Other	\$ 1,600	\$ 1,680	\$ 2,213
Total Ex-penses	\$432,146	\$ 355,082	\$432,370
Net Income / (Net Loss)	(\$102,481)	(\$ 75,890)	(\$ 78,613)
Foundation Withdrawals	\$102,481	\$ 55,500	\$106,500

## Prayer Connections

Prayers continue though the church building is closed. Would you like the Prayer Connections Team to pray for you or those you care about? To make a request:

- Email [prayer@firstmetvictoria.com](mailto:prayer@firstmetvictoria.com)
- Via the church website; click on the link on the bottom menu bar.
- Ask a staff member to pass on your request if you do not have email.

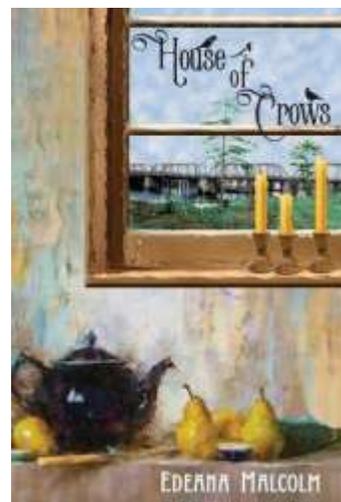


# What We Are Reading This Fall

## *House of Crows* by Edeana Malcolm

*House of Crows*, a new historical fiction novel, is a story that spans the years between 1852 and 1898. The narrative alternates between Edie, the grandmother from Scotland, who arrives with her young family at Fort Victoria to work as an indentured servant on Craigflower Farm; Lucy, the mother, who grieves the death of her beloved husband; and Maggie, the daughter, who works as a maid at Point Ellice House.

Life in early Victoria is a struggle, especially for women on their own. Edie survives an alcoholic husband and Lucy is also widowed young. Maggie calls their home the House of Crows because all three wear black. If you love **historical fiction and stories about women by women for women... this is your book!**



**The book is currently available at Munro's, Bolen Books, Ivy's and at Point Ellice House for \$24.95.** The publisher is Three Ocean Press. It is also available through print on demand at Amazon.ca. You can see a video of the author reading from her book on YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5dYTm4IGv6E>

## *Unsettling Spirit: A Journey into Decolonization* by Denise Nadeau (First Met Library)

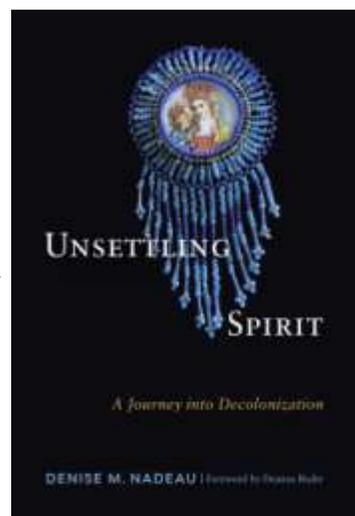
What does it mean to be a white settler on land taken from peoples who have lived there since time immemorial? In the context of reconciliation and Indigenous resurgence, *Unsettling Spirit* provides a personal perspective on decolonization, informed by Indigenous traditions and **lifeways, and the need to examine one's complicity with colonial structures.**

**The author shares stories from her early and brief experience of "Native mission" in the late 1980s and early 1990s in northern Canada and Chiapas, Mexico, and the gradual recognition that she had internalized colonialist concepts of the "good Christian" and the Great White Helper. She goes back to look at her family's history in Quebec and uncovers the responsibilities that come with facing this history.** Incorporating insights from Indigenous ethical and legal frameworks, *Unsettling Spirit* offers an accessible reflection on possibilities for settler decolonization.

A foreword by Cree-Métis author Deanna Reder places the work in a broader context of Indigenous scholarship. The cover image is by **Mi'gmaq beader Bernadine Martin.**

**The book is available from Monro's Books, UVic Bookstore, Amazon and First Met Library (when it opens!).** [denisenadeau.org](http://denisenadeau.org).

Join a webinar on Wednesday September 30th at 7pm with guest speakers Denise Nadeau, settler and author of *Unsettling Spirit: A Journey into Decolonization* and Lindsay Borrows, lawyer and Anishinaabe, as they engage in a dialogue about *Unsettling Spirit* and Indigenous Law. There will be time for Questions and Answers after their initial discussion. The event is free, but please register at: <https://bit.ly/3bkpBhf>



Continued on p. 8

## What We Are Reading (continued from p. 7)

Stevenson, Robin. *Pride Colors*. Ed. Liz Kemp. FM Library J 535.6 S948 (Children)

In this photographic concept book, babies and toddlers are introduced to the PRIDE flags and the meaning behind each colour.

Stevenson, Robin. *Kid Activists: True Tales of Childhood from Champions of Change*. Ill. Allison Steinfeld. First Met Library J 303.4092 S948 (Children)

Across history, activists have worked, marched, and spoken out for equality and justice--and many had moving, relatable childhood stories. Martin Luther King Jr. argued with his dad about whether dancing was a sin. Harvey Milk had a passion for opera. Dolores Huerta was wrongly accused of plagiarizing. *Kid activists* tells these stories and more through engaging biographies and full-colour illustrations on nearly every page. Learn about Susan B. Anthony, James Baldwin, Ruby Bridges, Frederick Douglass, Alexander Hamilton, Nelson Mandela, Iqbal Masih, Janet Mock, Rosa Parks, Autumn Peltier, Emma Watson, and Malala Yousafzai.

Stevenson, Robin. *Pride: The Celebration and the Struggle*. [Victoria, BC]: Orca Book Publishers, 2020(c). First Met Library T 306.766 S948 (Young Adult)

Like the original version, this new edition of *Pride: The Celebration and the Struggle* celebrates **the LGBTQ+ community's diversity and the incredible victories of the past 50 years but it also has a** larger focus on activism, the need to keep fighting for equality and freedom around the world and the important role that young people are playing. The new edition has been updated and expanded to include many new Proud Moments and Queer Facts as well as profiles of young activists. There is also a section on being an ally, a profile of a family with two gay dads (one of them trans) and much, much more!

Stevenson, Robin. *My Body, My Choice: The Fight for Abortion Rights*. Ill. Meags Fitzgerald. First Met Library T 362.19888 S948 (Young Adult)

Abortion is one of the most common of all medical procedures. But it is still stigmatized, and all too often people do not feel they can talk about their experiences. Making abortion illegal or hard **to access doesn't make it any less common; it just makes it dangerous. People who support** abortion rights have been fighting hard to create a world in which the right to **access safe and legal abortion services is guaranteed. The long fight for abortion rights is being picked up by a new generation of courageous, creative and passionate activists.**

*From the Ashes: My Story of Being Métis, Homeless, and Finding My Way* by Jesse Thistle (First Met Library)



In this extraordinary and inspiring debut memoir, Jesse Thistle, once a high school dropout and now a rising Indigenous scholar, chronicles his life on the streets and how he overcame trauma and addiction to discover the truth about who he is. *From the Ashes* is a remarkable memoir about hope and resilience, and a revelatory look into the life of a Métis-Cree man who refused to give up.

To borrow books from the Mountford (First Met) Library, contact David Chamberlin at 250-382-0634 and he will arrange for the books to be delivered to you. To see what books have been added recently, go to <https://www.firstmetvictoria.com/about/library>.

# “Let Not Your Heart Be Troubled” Service

## Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> November, 2020 11:00 am

Each year the congregation of First Met pauses to remember. In 2020 the ‘pause’ takes on a very new meaning with regard to the Covid-19 pandemic, as it clearly shows how live music has been paused due to safety protocols. It is through music that we celebrate and dedicate our hearts, our minds and our souls to honour the love of those who have gone before, are with us now, and who will come another day.

Though we cannot present a live service this year, the Music Committee has been working diligently over the summer months to produce an online alternative which we feel will be equally poignant and satisfying. Congregants will still be able to participate by choosing music from a carefully selected list, and by making dedications to commemorate a loved one, a special anniversary or event, or to simply give thanks for the many blessings bestowed during the past year.



Participants will be encouraged to light a specially blessed candle at home during the service at the appropriate moment, and music will be a combination of past performances by the Sanctuary Choir, newly-recorded offerings by several choral scholars, and by musical friends of First Metropolitan United Church. Information as to how you can participate will be sent by email in the third week of September, and some hard copies will be available at the Church Office.

Please join us for a morning of music, comfort and community as we continue our tradition in a **new format. You’ll be glad you did.**

*Kelly Charlton, Director of Music Ministry*

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## UCW News



The UCW members have enjoyed the recent summer weather keeping connected by phone, email and one-on-one or small group visits. We have made bookings for 2020-2021 meetings but at this time, have not confirmed these dates. We are all being cautious of social distancing and keeping healthy. Watch for more news as decisions are made.

We were very saddened by the news of the recent death of Dorothy Zilkie, a long time and very supportive UCW member. We send our condolences to her family and friends.

# Grandmothers for Africa News

As with every conference and event this year, AIDS 2020, the 23rd International AIDS Conference, held July 6 to 10, shifted to a virtual format. The Stephen Lewis Foundation participated in two sessions that brought together African women, from across generation, regions and organizations to discuss the impact of HIV and AIDS initiatives led by youth and grandmothers.

According to the Global AIDS Update 2020, gender-based violence and inequalities continue to drive the AIDS epidemic. In sub-Saharan Africa, young women and adolescent girls accounted for one in four new transmissions of HIV, despite making up only 10% of the population. The report also reaffirms that a successful response must be community-led and rooted in human rights. This message was reinforced during the two sessions in which the Stephen Lewis Foundation participated in.

The personal and candid discussion (<https://youtu.be/O9Y2CxFXw34>) with two young women, Ruth Awori and Aziwe Mkhungekwana, highlights how youth-led HIV treatment and prevention initiatives are raising awareness and promoting positive living and treatment adherence.

The second session, **Grandmothers' Human Rights in the Response to HIV**, (<https://youtu.be/xBRhzLBRVAs>) focuses on how grandmothers and their communities have been impacted by HIV and are leading movements to claim their human rights.

(This article is adapted from the Stephen Lewis Foundation newsletter, *Voices*, of August 27, 2020.)



## UCC's New General Secretary: Michael Blair



The Rev. Michael Blair has been appointed as the new General Secretary of the United Church of Canada as of Nov 1, 2020. Rev. Blair has served as the Executive Minister, Church in Mission Unit, which maintains relationships with overseas partners, develops faith formation resources and initiates advocacy campaigns for the denomination. He replaces Nora Sanders, who is retiring after almost 14 years in the position.

**Born in Jamaica, Rev. Blair's faith journey began in the Anglican Church.** He came to Canada as a young adult with his family, was ordained in the Convention Baptist Church, and in 2010 was admitted to the United Church's order of ministry. More info: <https://www.united-church.ca/news/united-churchs-new-general-secretary>

# Congratulations Friendship Club on 70 Years!



Friendship Club, 60th anniversary. Ross & Pat McKinnon, Jim & Sheila Anderson, Rev. Alan Saunders, Marlene Campbell (FMUC\_2018-011-6-a)

In the late 1940s, the Couples' Club at First United Church had become too large to continue gathering in home. In September, 1950, Rev. Moir Waters arranged a gathering of some of the younger couples, thus began the **Wednesday Night Couples' Club** (also known as the **Young Couples' Club**).

The group met the first and third Wednesdays of the month, a practice that still applies. As young couples, they shared the joys and challenges of raising their families, including them in picnics, camp outs, concerts, dinners, and even work parties at the church and camp. Some of the **children even called other members "auntie" and "uncle"**.

As we got older, life changed and some of us lost dearly loved spouses and children. The group has always offered support in all of these life changes. It became apparent that the group should include singles—thus in the 1990s, the group became the Friendship Club.

For most of its history, the programs remained essentially the same, with corn roasts, decorating the church and hall for Thanksgiving, Christmas and Easter, work parties at Camp Pringle, travelogues presented by members who had visited interesting places, and assisting at the annual flea market.

Funds for some of these activities came from an **annual "Bring and Buy" with auctioneer Doug Collis**, providing hilarious descriptions of donated items and encouraging us to purchase these things.

Out of the proceeds of several pancake breakfasts, a relatively recent gift was a substantial contribution to the automated door opener at the Balmoral entrance.

In recent years, with members aging, we have changed to day meetings, with a schedule of restaurants for gathering over lunches. Our primary interest is friendship, fellowship and love.

**Our unofficial motto is "We Care! We Share! We Support! Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow."** It has carried us for seventy years so far, and we hope it will continue for many more.

*Shirley Chatfield*



Friendship Club, 60th anniversary. Janet Harper, Ethel Lett, Leanne Prestwich, Pat McKinnon. (FMUC\_2018-011-6-b)



Friendship Club, 60th anniversary cake, Sep 26, 2010.

(FMUC\_2018-011-6-c)

Thank you to First Met Archives for use of pictures from FMUC\_2018-011-6!

# Yoga at First Met

Get ready to stretch and feel relaxed, because Yoga is continuing to meet at First Metropolitan on Mondays and Thursdays! With the church entering Phase 2, classes will now be held in the sanctuary instead of on the garden off Quadra Street. Please do not attend the class if you have symptoms of COVID-19. Students who come to yoga class must bring their own mats and straps, but blocks will be provided.

If you have questions, please contact Elaine Duke at [elaineduke1000@gmail.com](mailto:elaineduke1000@gmail.com).



## Tai Chi (Chen-style)

Chen-style Tai Chi at First Met continues to meet on Mondays and Wednesdays from 12 p.m.-1 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall to work on balance while having some fun! Participation is on a drop-in basis. Donations are welcomed which will support the First Met Health and Wellness Bursary Fund. For more information, please contact Edeana Malcolm at 250-412-7682.

## Orange Shirt Day at First Met—Oct 4

In 1973, Phyllis' orange shirt was taken from her at six years old when she arrived at St. Joseph Mission residential school. September 30th has been declared Orange Shirt Day annually, in recognition of the harm the residential school system did to children's sense of self-esteem and well being, and as an affirmation of our commitment to ensure that everyone around us matters. First Met will be recognizing the day on Sunday, Oct 4.

In 2015, Victoria's Orange Shirt Day was initiated by residential school survivor Eddy Charlie and his friend Kristin Spray while they were attending the Indigenous Studies program at Camosun College. On September 30, 2018, the Province of British Columbia proclaimed Orange Shirt Day to recognize and remember residential school survivors and their families.

Local artist Bear Horne designed the pattern on the Victoria Orange Shirt t-shirts. The design includes a bear to assist us to follow the right path, an eagle to assist us to have a vision of a bright future, a flower to feed the connection of all these elements, and a hummingbird to keep our minds, bodies, and spirits healthy.

For more information and to purchase a t-shirt as well as copies of Phyllis' books, go to <https://victoriaorangeshirtday.com/>



Ryan Lee



# In Memoriam



Patrick Clarke, died May 30, 2020



Kate Deacon, died June 3, 2020.



Lennon Syrnyk, 2018-2020. Great-niece of Joan Mason



Phyllis Nicolson, died Jul 14, 2020.



Dorothy Zilkie, died Aug 7, 2020.



Jim Oleson, died Aug 4, 2020



Paul Porter, husband of Diana Porter, died Aug 2, 2020.



Elsie Morningstar, died Mar 13, 2020.



Randle Dykes, died Sep 2, 2020

# Advance Care Plan Zoom Series

The Yakimovich Wellness Centre and the Victoria Hospice have created a two-part interactive and action-oriented Advance Care Plan (ACP) series. The sessions will be delivered on the Zoom platform. Each session is 1.5 hours. The series will be released in September 2020 with the following content:

## Part 1:

- Participants will watch a video and break into groups to talk about - Why is ACP important to you?
- Terms will be explained: Representation Agreement, Temporary Decision Maker, Advance Directive and Advance Care Planning.
- The importance of values, wishes and beliefs will be discussed.
- The Speak Up Advance Care Planning initiative and resources will be introduced.

Homework will be proposed between the sessions:

- Start having conversations with family and friends about your health wishes
- Become familiar with the *Speak up* interactive ACP site

## Part 2:

- Check-in and sharing of homework experiences in either large group or small groups.
- Communication strategies for bringing up topics related to ACP will be discussed.
- **The importance of designating a representative to speak on participants' behalf** will be reaffirmed.
- The information presented in the series will be reviewed followed by an evaluation.
- A list of resources for personal follow up will be provided.

Participants will need to register for this series. Once registered, participants will receive suggested readings and a video to watch prior to the start of the first session. Participants will be encouraged to start thinking and deciding who their representative will be, consider the planning steps and begin filling in the forms.

*Please note:* Wills and Estates, Power of Attorney and other legal issues will not be covered in these sessions.

Victoria Hospice will offer the ACP series in September (Friday, September 25<sup>th</sup> and Wednesday, September 30<sup>th</sup> - 10:00 to 11:30 a.m.) and the Yakimovich Wellness Centre website will offer the series in October (potential dates are Thursdays, October 22<sup>nd</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> —the time is yet to be confirmed) After October, the sessions will alternate between Hospice and Wellness Centre: one month Victoria Hospice and next month Wellness Centre. Information is now available on the website of the Victoria Hospice (see Events) <https://www.victoriahospice.org> .

Wally Lazaruk, Sep 2020



# First Met Children: Journeying Together

With brave faith, connected community and unlimited creativity, our First Met families have journeyed together and stayed joyful through the summer months. Outdoor Sunday school continued until the increase in COVID numbers caused us to hit the pause button, but the connection and learning continued at home with our Camp@Home kits with crafts, stories and learning. New Faith@Home kits are coming soon, filled with activities for the fall.

Thanks to the support of staff, volunteers and our amazing congregational family, in June 45 campers, including Shelagh MacKinnon and eight FM families had a blast up at Camp Pringle Family Camp at Shawnigan Lake. With distancing and enhanced cleaning and safety protocols camp staff provided a safe and adventurous weekend.



The long sunny days of summer allowed us to continue our Outdoor Treasure Hunt and Sidewalk Chalk Bingo. Through the support of the Refugee Committee and Edeana Malcolm, we welcomed author Robin Stevenson to an outdoor visit (see photo on back cover). Robin talked to us about LGBTQ issues and read from her book *Ghost, a Refugee Story*. **We now have several of Robin's books in our church library.**

For the summer months the plan was to unpack The New Creed, with hands-on learning and community, and like most plans lately, it shifted into home and nature-based learning. **We're hoping to pick it up again when we're all back together.**

In July we joined in the celebration of Christmas in July, and our small tree was decorated with Gratitude Stars bearing the names of the many people who supported the Sunday school this past year in countless other ways. First Met families rang the church bells 75 times on August 6<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> for the Bells for Peace campaign, remembering the people of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and we learned about the significance of origami cranes.



Our Blessing of the Backpacks (see cover image) at the September 6<sup>th</sup> service included a prayer for our children, youth, young adults and their families as they start a new adventure in learning at home, **school and university. Laminated backpack tags with "You are Loved", crafted by FMUC families, will be delivered to our Sunday school kids. If you would also like one, let us know! Backpacks with supplies were also given to a neighbourhood school.**

**We're excited about plans for small group campfires (with distancing) and participation in the Season of Creation and the Green Church movement. Our Oct 4<sup>th</sup> service will recognize Orange Shirt Day, that we hope to mark with a campfire with smudging and bannock-making. A unique outdoor Christmas Eve service for FMUC families is in the planning stage. Sunday school news and events are featured in our weekly newsletter, which also includes a Pet Show with commentary on how our pets show God's love in the world, as well as a shared prayer and scripture.**

*Micia Kanstrup, Sunday School Coordinator*

# Confronting the 1918 Influenza Pandemic in Victoria

Though beyond memory, our church communities have faced a global health crisis before. In 1918-1920, the Spanish flu pandemic swept the globe, claiming millions of lives.

How did our founding congregations respond? As archival repositories are presently closed for in-depth research, it will be some time before we can fully explore questions about the **pandemic's effects. However, there are known similarities and differences between our current experience and the 1918 pandemic:**

- **The 1918 “Spanish Flu” (a misnomer) was** not caused by bacteria, as commonly believed at the time, but by influenza A virus subtype H1N1, the same virus responsible for the 2009 swine flu pandemic.
- It is reported that 500 million or **one-third of the earth's people were infected** and between 20 and 50 million people died during 1918 through April 1920. The source of the virus is unknown, but likely spread to Canada through massive troop movements in the final months of the First World War.
- **Victoria's health crisis surged in three waves:** October 1918, January 1919, and February 1920. During the first wave, **Greater Victoria's municipal health officers**, empowered by a provincial order-in-council, imposed conditions that helped prevent the spread of influenza.
- On October 8, 1918 all schools in Victoria, Saanich and Oak Bay closed, as well as **“churches, theatres, pool-rooms, dance halls, and public meeting places until such time as danger is considered past in the city.”** The closures and ban on gatherings remained in effect until November 20.

- Victoria had lower rates of infection and death than Vancouver. Approximately 30% **of Greater Victoria's population of 56,109** contracted the virus and 259 perished from it or from subsequent pneumonia.

We know that church activities curtailed included worship, sports, music, meetings and **social gatherings. We don't know much about** the hundreds of acts of kindness performed or the stories of personal loss. We can only imagine.

The 1918 influenza pandemic was overshadowed by the seemingly endless world conflict and is not mentioned in our official church histories. After four years, Victoria and the world were war-weary. Though an armistice seemed close in the fall of 1918, Victoria newspapers continued to report war casualties and deaths every day.

The prohibition on public meetings unraveled **on November 7 when a “false armistice”** celebration occurred, in response to inaccurate wire service messages. Victorians poured into the streets to celebrate. On November 11, when the real armistice was announced, larger crowds filled the streets. A huge open-air church service of gratitude convened. The result was a spike in influenza cases. Eventually, the pandemic subsided.

**Victoria's influenza experience was eclipsed by** the tragedy of the First World War. Similarly eclipsed was the tragic sinking near Juneau of **the CPR's SS Princess Sophia** on October 25, 1918, with the loss of all 364 aboard. The loss of the *Sophia*, a favourite in Victoria and Vancouver, was the worst maritime accident in the history of British Columbia and Alaska. Yet this, too, was overshadowed by the enormity of the global conflict.

Continued on p. 17

No doubt, both the 1918 and 2020 pandemics will be re-examined over time. Meanwhile, we are grateful for the creative ways our church teams have reached out to our congregation in this uncertain time.

*Don Bourdon / Archives and Heritage*

For further information on the 1918 influenza pandemic, see:

*Spanish influenza in Victoria, Canada, 1918-1920* / Peter Grant <http://spanishfluvictoriabc.com/>

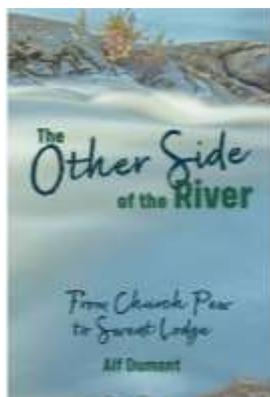
*British Columbia and the pandemic of 1918* / Daniel Marshall <https://theorca.ca/resident-pod/british-columbia-and-the-pandemic-of-1918/>



First Presbyterian men's and women's basketball teams, c.1918. (First Met Archives / FUC\_2004-1003) Sports events were suspended during the 1918 influenza pandemic. No longer would young women's basketball "Presbyterians" challenge the "Metropolitans" or the young men's "Presbyterian 'A'" take on the "Christ Church Crusaders".

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## *The Other Side of the River* by Alf Dumont



Alf Dumont walks between the two worlds of Indigenous and settler, traditional spirituality and Christianity. He shares stories of building bridges between these worlds. Dumont challenges the church to re-examine the theology behind its past decision around residential schools, so that it might live out the words of its apologies. He challenges the country to re-examine its responsibilities and relationships with Indigenous people through stories, humour, poetry, and insight.

This book is available from the United Church of Canada bookstore.

# Returning to In-Person Worship Services

Over the summer a few congregants with their own mode of transportation but without computers **have been invited to be the silent “audience” when a church service was being recorded.**

This experiment has worked well with up to 10 people attending on a Sunday. In the fall, the church service attendance program is being expanded to up to 40 people per service (respecting the provincial health order of a maximum of 50 people). Because there is no fair way to invite people without leaving someone out and because no one wants to be turned away at the door, a first-come-first-serve online registration system is being set up for you to reserve a spot at the services you wish to attend. The link to the online registration system is on our website. For those of you without computers, you will be able to phone 250-388-5188 extension 224 to reserve.

At this time, you are able to reserve your spot for any of the following Sundays:

Recording Date	Maximum Numbers	What's On
September 13, 11 am	20	2 services being recorded
September 27, 11 am	30	2 services being recorded
October 4, 11 am	30	Thanksgiving & Communion Sunday
October 18, 11 am	40	2 services being recorded
November 8, 11 am	40	Remembrance Day Sunday
November 15, 11 am	20	Rev. Shelagh MacKinnon 40 years since ordination

**The Advent and Christmas services’ registration links will be posted by mid-October** to give time to work out any glitches with the registration process. Should the demand for Advent and Christmas services warrant it, additional service times will be provided.

To provide a safe environment for everyone, please note the following:

- If you develop any symptoms of COVID-19 or become a close contact of someone with COVID-19, please do not come to church even if you have reserved a spot. Do not worry about cancelling your reservation.
- It is recommended to come early and be patient.
- You will be greeted at the locked Balmoral accessible entrance and asked if you have any symptoms of COVID-19, have been out of the country in the last 14 days or are a close contact of someone with COVID-19. If you answer yes to any of these questions, you will not be able to come into the church.
- You will wash your hands for 20 seconds at the handwashing station. If you wish to use hand sanitizer instead, please use a loonie size dollop and rub into your hands for at least 20 seconds.
- You will proceed directly to the Sanctuary making sure hallways are vacant before proceeding down them.
- Once in the Sanctuary, select your seat. Please feel free move around and talk to others before the service as long as you stay 6 feet away from anyone not in your bubble.
- Masks are recommended but not mandatory.
- There is no singing during the service.

We look forward to having you back in church. For those of you who cannot be out in public for health reasons, we will continue with Livestream services.

# Reframing Aging

*"I like being old because the view from the brink is striking, a full panorama of my life - and a bracing breeze awakens me to new ways of understanding my own past, present, and future."*

Parker J. Palmer

In his book *On the Brink of Everything*, author Parker J. Palmer offers a number of ideas to help us consider aging in a positive manner. A few of his key ideas are summarized below:

- Aging is both a privilege and a passage of discovery and engagement.
- We can be grateful for the gift of life and to those who helped us.
- We can experience joy by doing one thing at a time.
- **We can be "more aware of the loveliness of simple things: a talk with a friend, a walk in the woods, sunsets and sunrises, a night of good sleep."** (Parker J. Palmer)
- Through self-examination and reflection, we can learn to accept what we have been and done.
- We can engage life as it is. Everything is a teacher with lessons for us.
- Being human, we fall down and get up again and again. We can embrace our human frailty with reverence and respect.
- We can give of ourselves and serve, offering whatever we know to be useful and helpful to others. We can pass on our gifts to the world.
- We can converse with young people to learn from them and to offer positive role models.
- Our survival needs include grace, forgiveness, unconditional love of family and friends and openness of friends.
- We can spend time in the natural world, as much as possible.
- We can practice hope where love is a public ethic and a shared practice.
- Every act of love inspires another.
- **We can practice our humour to ease the burden of life's gravities.**
- By recognizing the reality of death, we can awaken to the many gifts of life and the importance of being fully present now.



*"I'll be asking if I was faithful to my gifts, to the needs I saw around me, and to the ways I engaged those needs with my gifts—faithful, that is, to the value, rightness, and truth of offering the world the best I had, as best I could."* Parker J. Palmer

Reference (available from our public library)

Palmer, Parker J. (2018). *On the Brink of Everything: Grace, Gravity, and Getting Old*. San Francisco, California: Berrett-Koehler Publishers.

Wally Lazaruk, August 2020



Friendship Club at Esquimalt-Gorge Park, July 2020



Prayer Flags for Kathy Cook and family



FAR LEFT: Robin Stevenson reading *Ghost, a Refugee Story* to Sunday School children



LEFT: First Met flower gardens lovingly tended by Larry Scott

## “Movies at the Met”

The FALL Season is almost here and many may be wondering about the status of our monthly film series. The series will begin as soon as the Church has clearance to have small gatherings in the building.

In the interim, I would love to hear film ideas that have occurred to you while cooped up in your own home. We have all explored Netflix and other venues during COVID19 and you may have come across some winners. Your suggestions would help me expand my list. Look forward to hearing from you.

Barry: [bwrolston@telus.net](mailto:bwrolston@telus.net)



### Parking Options

#### Week Days

- Balmoral Road
  - Ground Level ~ North Park - East of Balmoral Gardens Apartments
- Please register your vehicle opposite the church office.

#### 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 (September to June)