

First Met News

Winter 2022 Newsletter



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Our annual Let Not Your Heart Be Troubled Service was held on October 30, 2022, Thank you to Kelly Charlton, the First Met Sanctuary Choir and Choral Scholars Annalysa Tylor, Amber Dayton and Nathan Corpus for the poignant and comforting music.



First Met Hours of Operation

CHURCH BUILDING HOURS

Monday–Friday
8:30 am–3:30 pm
5:45–9:45 pm (Mon–Thu)

OFFICE HOURS

Monday–Friday
9:00 am–4:00 pm

SUNDAY HOURS

9:00–1:00 pm
8:30 am–1:00 pm (on first
Sunday of month)

Note the church will be closed
from Dec 25 to Jan 3.

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.

December Issue of Broadview

The December issue of Broadview is out!. Here's a peek at some of the stories:

- Iconic playwright Tomson Highway on trickster wisdom
- For these Canadians, reconciliation has become a personal call to action
- Four LGBTQ2S+ writers on how they're rebuilding Christmas with love
- Photographer and filmmaker Noor Gatih captures her grandmother's complex life through "Knobs and Chai"
- Canadians share their concerns about hockey culture
- From drag queens to miniaturists, these ministers showed their skills on reality TV.



You can check out some of these stories and some online articles at <https://broadview.org/magazine/december-2022/>.

Schedule for Upcoming Newsletters

The deadlines for submissions for upcoming newsletters are:

- Spring 2023: February 13 (published by February 26)
- Summer 2023: June 12 (published by June 25)
- Fall 2023: August 4 (published by August 28)

Sunday Services

Weekly in-person services at 11:00 am

Chapel Communion service: First Sunday of the month at 9:00 am
Masks and vaccination against COVID-19 are strongly recommended

Virtual church services: firstmetvictoria.com/pages/live-stream

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



Like us on Facebook
[firstmetvictoria](https://www.facebook.com/firstmetvictoria)



Follow us on Instagram
[@firstmetvictoria](https://www.instagram.com/firstmetvictoria)

Shelagh's Message

Christmas 2022 is just around the corner, so very different from last year and from others we have shared. Christmases, it seems to me, are often regarded as 'hinges' in families and congregations. We speak of 'the last Christmas before going to college, 'or ' the first Christmas in the new place.' In congregations we can remember the first Christmas with new choir gowns, or the last Christmas a beloved Minister worshipped with us. In our First+Met story, this Christmas is the first one after our congregational decision to seek amalgamation with another congregation.

Theologically, the 'hinge' has been the Incarnation of God in Jesus. At different times, we have reflected on this Sacred story in many ways. But this year, using the inspiration of *The Universal Christ* by Richard Rohr, we are seeing the Incarnation in fresh ways to include all of us, and all of Creation as incarnations of the Divine Love, Grace and Purpose.

The prism of God's presence reflects each week in Advent in different ways, as we structure our worship celebrations around the Advent traditional values of Hope, Peace, Joy and Love. This mailing includes a prayer card and an Advent Journal, crafted by Joan Mason, based on this book and the Worship Design Studio of Dr Marcia McFee. It is a beautiful resource to deepen our experience of Incarnation in ways that totally support us as individuals, families and congregation this Christmas.

It is my prayer that the many colours of God's love and presence remind you that, as Jesus said , " you are the Light of the World," Wherever you find yourself in this season when we gather our hearts, minds and souls around the warmth and light that is God's eternal gift to us all, I hope First Met is part of your Advent through our many offerings.

May we look at Jesus and the Incarnation so deeply that we might see the Christ in everyone. What a Christmas gift to each and all of us!

Blessings,

Shelagh



Shelagh was presented with a birthday cake on Sep 25

Report from the Board Chair



“In September, David and I went to Ottawa because his 102-year-old father, Jack Bray, was near death. We thought we would be there for his death and then a memorial service, but his father had other ideas. He was discharged from the hospital to his home. In spite of Jack’s age, he was fiercely independent and still living in his three-storey house. So, we moved out the dining room table and put in a hospital bed. Then we spent much of the fall providing care while his father slowly recovered. When it became clear that his father was not going to die, we had to find a long-term care place for him to move into. After a few weeks that felt like an eternity, he moved into the Perley Veterans Centre in Ottawa.

I took away two important lessons from this experience. The first one is that no matter how independent we think we are, we should not ignore the effects of aging. As we grow older, we must learn to give up the illusion we have of our independence and prepare ourselves to recognize and accept the help that we need.

The second really important take-away from this experience is that we don’t have to die when others expect us to. If our will is strong enough, we can come back, even from the edge of death.

I see a parallel between these two lessons and the situation of our church here in Victoria. We must prepare ourselves for an inevitable loss of independence, but stay firm in our purpose to carry on. We’re not ready to die just yet!

Besides the deaths of millions of individuals, COVID has been responsible for the early demise of so many churches, including David’s father’s church in Ottawa. And we at First Met can no longer ignore the evidence of our own aging population and infra-structure.

Being proactive and planning for the future is important. So, the Future Search Group worked through the summer and the Board and congregation agreed with their finding that we should look for another congregation/s to amalgamate with. We are now in the process of putting together an Amalgamation Steering Team for this purpose.

I’d like to take this opportunity to offer my thanks on your behalf to those on the Future Search Group who worked so hard: Ross Breckon, Linden Holmen, Larry Scott, Marion Denton, Barry Rolston, and, of course, Cheryl Black.

As Christmas approaches, we celebrate the birth of a child who brought new promise to the world. May we, too, celebrate the promise of renewal as we embark on our next journey.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to you all!

Edeana Malcolm, Chair of the Board

Monthly Town Halls

With so much transition going on at First Met it is important that we have as many communication channels open as possible to meet the needs of a diverse membership. Two formats we will use on a regular basis are Sunday congregational meetings in person and Zoom town halls at 7 p.m. on the 2nd Tuesday of each Month. Upcoming dates are Dec. 13; Jan 10; Feb 14; Mar 14.

Shelagh will host the town halls to give people the opportunity to both hear reports and discuss issues of importance to First Met.



Advent Worship Series: Reflecting the Sacred

The Advent and Christmas season is a time when the juxtaposition of the sacred and secular sometimes seems blatantly opposed, and sometimes quite blurred. The word “sacred” points to something dedicated as holy and set apart. This Advent you are invited to a spiritual journey of seeing all things pregnant with the Holy. How does our experience of Advent and Christmas change if we live it imagining that everything is reflecting the sacred?

As people of faith, it is imperative that we grapple with our incarnational faith and what it calls us to be and do. Richard Rohr’s book *The Universal Christ* and its companion book of reflections, *Every Thing is Sacred*, invites us to imagine that indeed, every thing, every one, every encounter is pregnant with the sacred. Not in the sense of “where is God in this”, but in a more radical notion that “Christ is here and permeating and radiating from everywhere”. Rohr calls this the “Christ Mystery” or “Christ Mirror”. Rohr asks “What if Christ is another name for everything – in its fullness?” He argues that the radical role of religion is to reconnect us to everything, to see ourselves and the world in wholeness.

The series consists of the following:

- November 27, Advent 1: Sacred Time - Hope
- December 4, Advent 2: Sacred Knowing - Peace
- December 11, Advent 3: Sacred Space - Joy
- December 18, Advent 4: Sacred People - Love
- December 25, Christmas Day: Surprisingly Sacred
- January 1, Sunday After Christmas: Sacred Doing

As a companion to the series, we have created a weekly journal with a series of questions for your reflection. If you receive a quarterly mail-out, this journal will be included in your package along with a poem by Derek Walcott titled “Love After Love” which speaks to the need to love and see the sacred reflected in oneself. Also included is a prayer card with two prayers from the Centre for Action and Contemplation. You may also download these materials from our website or pick up copies at the church.



Christmas at First Met

- Nov 19 Victoria Philharmonic Choir: *A German Requiem*, 7:30 pm
- Nov 25 Victoria Chamber Orchestra: *Christmas Baroque*, 7:30 pm
- Nov 27 1st Sunday of Advent Church Service, 11:00 am
- Dec 3 West Coast Reach Association: *We Are One! 2022*, 2:00 pm
- Dec 4 2nd Sunday of Advent Church Service, 11:00 am
- Dec 6 Interfaith Service of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women, 5:00 pm
- Dec. 9 CBC and Our Place: dramatic reading of Dickens *A Christmas Carol*, 7:00 pm
- Dec 10 Ensemble Laude, *Aurora*, 1:30 & 3:30 pm
- Dec 11 3rd Sunday of Advent Church Service, 11:00 am
- Dec 17 Sweet Soul Choir, *Big Brothers, Big Sisters benefit concert*, 7:30 pm
- Dec 18 4th Sunday of Advent Church Service, 11:00 am
- Dec 24 Christmas Eve Family Service, 4:30 pm
- Dec 24 Carols in the Candlelight, 7:30 pm (Annabelle Stanley on harp, 7:00 pm)
- Dec 25 Livestream Christmas Day Service, 11:00 am
- Jan 1 Livestream New Years Day Service, 11:00 am



Finance and Administration Report

This report focuses on the 2022 Operating Fund results for the first three quarters of the 2022 fiscal year. It includes a summary level Operations Income Statement (unaudited) for the period January 1, 2022, through September 30, 2022, showing the 2022 Budget, year-to-date results, and a financial forecast for the remainder of 2022.

In summary, our third quarter results suggest that the budgeted deficit for 2022 will be exceeded by approximately \$46,349. This forecasted increase in the deficit is largely due to lower-than-expected congregation donations and a large increase in Building and Grounds expenses. The notes below the Operations Income Statement provide a more detailed explanation of the year-to-date amounts and the major assumptions used to forecast the annual totals.

It is important to note that my forecast for an increased deficit in the First Met deficit for 2022 could be substantially mitigated by an increase in the donations from the congregation during the fourth quarter plus a gift of a milder fourth quarter from mother nature that would reduce our projected fuel consumption.

Please contact Ross Breckon at (250) 472-3381 if you have any questions about this financial update.

FIRST METROPOLITAN UNITED CHURCH						
OPERATIONS INCOME STATEMENT - SEPTEMBER 30, 2022 (Unaudited)						
	2022 BUDGET AMOUNT	2022 YEAR-TO-DATE (YTD)			2022 FORECAST TOTAL	
		AMOUNT	% of BUDGET	REMAINING BUDGET	AMOUNT	% of BUDGET
REVENUES						
CONGREGATION DONATIONS	\$ 260,000	\$ 171,188	66%	\$ 88,812	\$ 228,300	88%
LETTING REVENUE	\$ 179,600	\$ 115,913	65%	\$ 63,687	\$ 147,300	82%
PROGRAM REVENUE	\$ 63,740	\$ 32,631	51%	\$ 31,109	\$ 50,156	79%
INVESTMENT INCOME	\$ -	\$ 116	N/A	\$ -	\$ 116	N/A
TOTAL REVENUE	\$ 503,340	\$ 319,848	64%	\$ 183,608	\$ 425,873	85%
EXPENSES						
LETTING EXPENSES	\$ 35,000	\$ 1,588	5%	\$ 33,412	\$ 2,117	6%
PROGRAM EXPENSES	\$ 82,875	\$ 40,698	49%	\$ 42,177	\$ 59,739	72%
STAFFING EXPENSES	\$ 506,529	\$ 367,039	72%	\$ 139,490	\$ 492,835	97%
BUILDING & GROUNDS EXPENSES	\$ 214,205	\$ 200,417	94%	\$ 13,788	\$ 253,700	118%
ADMINISTRATION EXPENSES	\$ 75,600	\$ 45,713	60%	\$ 29,887	\$ 75,000	99%
DENOMINATIONAL ASSESSMENT	\$ 36,665	\$ 26,665	73%	\$ 10,000	\$ 36,665	100%
OPERATING EXPENSES	\$ 500	\$ 165	33%	\$ 335	\$ 200	40%
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$ 951,374	\$ 682,284	72%	\$ 235,677	\$ 920,255	97%
NET INCOME	-\$ 448,034	-\$ 362,436	81%	-\$ 52,069	-\$ 494,383	110%
FOUNDATION DONATIONS	\$ 448,034	\$ 279,800	62%	\$ 168,234	\$ 494,383	110%

Continued on p. 7

Continued from p. 6

Notes to September 30, 2022, Income Statement for Operations

The numbers shown in this Income Statement are for the period January 1, 2022, through September 30, 2022, and represent 75% of the 2022 fiscal year which ends December 31, 2022. The notes below are presented on a line-by-line basis following the statement shown on p. 6.

Congregational Donations: The September year-to-date amount is \$171,188 or 66% of the 2022 budgeted amount. This amount includes donations made by the congregation (not including designated donations) using envelopes, pre-authorized remittances (PAR) plus those donations made through other registered charities. To reach our budgeted Congregation Donations, the congregation must contribute an additional \$88,812 over the final three months of 2022. Based on the year-to-date amount shown above and our Givings pattern in 2021, the forecasted 2022 year-end total for Congregation Donations will be approximately \$228,250 or 81% of the budgeted amount for 2022.

Letting Revenue: The September year-to-date amounts to \$115,913 or 65% of the 2022 budgeted amount. The 2022 budget assumed that First Met would have new tenants for the lower level of the Heritage Building beginning in September 2022, however it is unlikely that new tenants will be in place before 2023. At the end of June 2022, the Our Place Shelter ended its agreement with First Met and moved to a new location on Pandora Ave. The financial impact of losing the Our Place Shelter and our delay in finding a new tenant for the lower level of the Heritage Building is a decrease of \$60,000 in budgeted Letting Revenue in 2022. The good news is that our Office Administrator, Lauren Paterson, has been working diligently to secure new room bookings and parking rentals for First Met and is making good progress securing additional letting revenue. I am forecasting that the Letting Revenue for 2022 will be approximately \$147,300 or 82% of the budgeted amount for 2022. Well done, Lauren!

Program Revenue: The September year-to-date amount is 32,631 or 51% of the 2022 budgeted amount. It is noted that this revenue includes approximately \$6,000 of unbudgeted fundraising revenue which will flow through First Met to other charities (St. Nicholas Ukrainian Church Manse fire and Bella Coola - Tammy Lindahl Recognition fund). Based on the current trend plus upcoming events, I am forecasting the Program Revenue for 2022 will be approximately \$50,156 or 79% of the budgeted amount for 2022.

Investment Income: The September year-to-date amount is \$116 which is \$116 more than budgeted. This income stream is typically very small and includes interest paid by bank accounts and small, short-term investments. The annual budget amount is usually set to \$0. I am forecasting the operating account Investment Income to be approximately \$166 for 2022.

Letting Expenses: The September year-to-date amount is \$1,588 or 5% of the 2022 budgeted amount. The 2022 Budget anticipated the payment of \$25,000 in real estate fees to secure new tenants for the lower level of the Heritage Building. As it is unlikely that First Met will have new tenants for the lower level in 2022, this expense will be deferred until 2023. Letting Expenses for 2022 are forecasted to be approximately \$2,117 or 6% of the budgeted amount for 2022.

Program Expenses: The September year-to-date expenses are \$40,698, or 49% of the 2022 budgeted amount. This reflects a continuing slowdown in certain Program activities in 2022, possibly due to COVID-19 concerns. Activities could pick up somewhat in the last quarter of the year but the Program Expenses for 2022 are forecasted to be approximately \$59,739 or 72% of the amount budgeted for 2022.

Staffing Expenses: The September year-to-date amount is \$367,039 or 72% of the 2022 budgeted amount. These expenses are tracking very closely to the budget and are forecasted to be approximately \$492,835 or 97% of the budgeted amount for 2022.

Building and Grounds Expenses: The September year-to-date expenses for operating and maintaining the First Met property is \$200,417 or 94% of the 2022 budgeted amount. We are experiencing budget overruns primarily in three areas, heating fuels, heating system maintenance, and building repair. A longer, colder spring in 2022 has already pushed our heating fuel expenses to 113% of the annual budget for this expense category with several cooler months yet to come. I am forecasting that the Building and Grounds expenses for 2022 will amount to approximately \$253,700 or 118% of the budgeted amount for 2022.

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Administration Expenses: The September 30, 2022, year-to-date Administration Expenses amount to \$45,713 or 60% of the 2022 budgeted amount. One large Administration Expense, budgeted at \$14,000 (Accountant Fees), will be reported at the end of the year. I am forecasting that Administration Expenses for 2022 will amount to \$75,000, or 97% of the amount budgeted for 2022.

Denominational Assessment: The September year-to-date Denominational Assessment expense is \$26,665, or 73% of the 2022 budgeted amount. The Assessment is determined by the UCC at the beginning of each year and is expensed monthly throughout the year. I am forecasting that the Denominational Assessment expense to the end of 2022 will amount to \$36,665 (100% of the amount budgeted for 2022.)

Operating Expenses: Operating Expenses include items such as on-site meeting expenses and gains or losses on the disposal of assets. The September 30, 2022, year-to-date Operating Expenses amount to \$165 or 33% of the 2022 budgeted amount. I am forecasting that the Operating Expenses to the end of 2022 will amount to \$200, or 40% of the amount budgeted for 2022.

Foundation Donations: First Metropolitan Foundation supports the monthly operations of First Met. The September year-to-date amount is \$279,800, or 62% of the 2022 budgeted amount. Based on budget overruns resulting from forecasted increases in 2022 Building and Grounds expenses and decreases in Congregation Donations, the First Met deficit in 2022 is forecasted to increase from \$448,034 to \$494,883, an increase of approximately \$46,849. This increase in the First Met 2022 Operating Fund deficit will put additional demands on the Foundation Trusts in 2022.

Ross Breckon, Treasurer

Thank You From Marion Denton

Thankyou to all the folks who bought jams and jellies. The proceeds of \$500 was given to the children and youth programs. Our church family is wonderful and so supportive.

Marion Denton

CBC Radio & Our Place present
A dramatic reading of Charles Dickens' Classic Tale

A Christmas Carol

Friday, Dec. 9, 2022
7:00pm Live Event
First Met United Church
932 Balmoral Rd, Victoria

Tickets: \$15.⁰⁰ individual
\$35.⁰⁰ family
\$15.⁰⁰ virtual link

Feel the Christmas Spirit and give back
in service to our community

Buy tickets: ourplacesociety.com/christmascarol

Featuring CBC Personalities & Special Guests, including:



Bob McDonald Gregor Craigie Liz McArthur Rohit Joseph Kathryn Marlow

We are excited to announce that Jack Knox of the Times Colonist and Joe Perkins of CHEK TV will be our guest celebrity readers!
Also featuring the music of the West Coast Reach Choir

All proceeds to benefit Our Place Society



Coldest Night of the Year

The 2023 Coldest Night of the Year walkathon campaign returns to downtown Victoria and the West Shore on Saturday, February 25. Our Place Society and the Pacific Centre Family Services Association (in the West Shore) for the charity two- and five-km walks. Families, faith, work, school and community groups will walk in solidarity raising awareness and funds to help serve the hungry, homeless, and hurting people in our community. Coldest Night has become one of the country's most successful community action campaigns and last year we were able to raise over \$100,000 for our neighbours in need. People can sign up at <https://cnoy.org/location/victoriapandora> for the downtown walk and <https://cnoy.org/location/victoriawestshore> for the Langford walk starting at Starlight Stadium. There will have warmups, family friendly activities, warm toques and warmer bowl of chili for those who fundraise.

Spiritual Care and Wellness News

The Spiritual Care and Wellness Ministry Team serves to support and advocate for the spiritual care and wellbeing of First Met members, adherents and the wider community.

Program groups and their leaders are:

- Visitation Volunteers Ministry: Megumi Matsuo Saunders
- Caregiver Support Group: Emily MacDonald
- Gentle, Restorative Yoga, Chair Yoga & Tai Chi: Elaine Duke/Edeana Malcolm
- Prayer Connections: Anne Sikstrom
- Flatlanders and Ramblers Walking Groups: Alternating volunteer leaders/Rennie Warburton
- Knitting/Prayer Shawl Ministry: Shirley Chatfield/Joan Mickelson

The Spiritual Care and Wellness Ministry also administers the Margaret Cameron Trust Fund. Recent donations supporting community programs are:

- **Our Place:** \$1000 for food supplies appeal
- **Tiny Homes** In North Park community: \$1000 for Christmas gifts
- **North Park Neighborhood Association:** \$1000 for weekly Grocery Hamper Project

In November Liane Clark, CPA, is offering Fraud Prevention sessions in person and by Zoom. (see page 10)

Sharron Higgins, Leader smhiggin80@gmail.com



Gingerbread kits are being donated to the families who receive Hampers from the North Park Neighbourhood Association weekly Hamper Program. This is the second year in a row that the Evolving Church Team has donated Gingerbread Houses. They were such a hit last year and so well received we decided to do it again this year.



First Met Knitters Update

The group began meeting again in person at the church in the Spring. It is a smaller group than in the past but happy to be together to share news and ideas. We are also supported by at-home knitters. Thanks to Lauren and Katya who act as a centre for drop-off of product and pick-up of yarn for the knitters.

We are just starting to re-establish our supply lines as most of our receiving places were not accepting knitted items during COVID.

We would still welcome donations of easily laundered yarn.

Joan Mickelson, 250-385-4033

Fraud Prevention for Seniors Workshops



Fraud is the number one crime against older Canadians. Though people of all ages can be victims of fraud, older people get targeted more than others. Some of the reasons are that they are often home during the day to answer the door or phone, they can be more trusting and they may not have family or friends close by to ask for a second opinion.

Con artists don't just target people who have a lot of money. A con artist may steal a small amount from many people. They use a variety of ways to reach people, including the internet, social media, phone calls and even door-to-door visits.

Fraud Prevention for Seniors is a one-hour presentation on what fraud is, how it works, why seniors are vulnerable, and what to do if you are a victim of fraud. Real-life examples and handouts will be provided.



You may attend any one of the following presentations:

- Sunday from 9:45 am to 10:45 am on November 27 in room 124 (Chapel)
- Tuesday from 7 pm to 8 pm on November 29 via Zoom (visit the First Met website to get the link)
- Thursday from 1 pm to 2 pm on December 1 in Room 119 (Doreene McLeod Rm)

These workshops are open to anyone concerned about fraud. Any questions about this presentation, please contact Liane Clark at 250-886-5661 or email her at clark.liane@gmail.com.

Starter Kits – Albina St. Housing

The construction of this five storey building with 52 units of transitional housing is nearly completed. It will be managed by Our Place. First Met has seven starter kits packed and ready for pick up. Please pray that this will support and encourage the recipients on their journey.

Three other full or partial kits have gone to an international UVIC student, two recent arrivals to Canada (a brother and sister), and a graduate of the Therapeutic Recovery Centre. It is my plan to wrap up this project by the end of 2022. Thank you for your support and kind and generous donations. Any remaining goods will be passed on to local shelters or Broadview Thrift Shop.

Joan Mickelson



Honouring Tammy Lindahl's Ministry– An Update

The First Metropolitan United Church Spiritual Care and Wellness team initiated a fundraising project in June 2022 when we learned Tammy Lindahl would be leaving her ministry in Bella Coola. On her return to Victoria, Tammy was honoured with a certificate and an announcement of the fundraising results to date on August 21, 2022. You can watch the presentation and Tammy's response at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BRL29r2Ehdc>.

The First Metropolitan United Church community responded generously with a total donation of \$4,070 in love and gratitude for Tammy Lindahl's compassionate and healing ministry. The funds will cover the costs of a hospital grade sleeper/couch for the hospice room at the Bella Coola Hospital. Bella Coola pastoral charge donations will add to the upgrade by providing funds for some requested kitchen items, a plaque, a book case and additional resources.



ABOVE: Tammy speaking at the service honouring her, following the presentation of the certificate (shown below left). BELOW; In the Quadra Garden following the service.



In Recognition of
Rev. Tammy Lindahl's
years of pastoral care to the congregations of First Metropolitan,
Emanuel and Augsburg-Mackenzie United Churches
an August 2022 donation was given in love and gratitude to
support palliative care at the Bella Coola Hospital.

Edeana Malcolm *Rev. Shelagh MacKinnon*
Board Chair Lead Minister



Prayer Requests

Prayer Connections Team members are committed to praying during their personal prayer time for requests from the congregation and staff. Prayers can be for yourself or those you care about regarding anything that concerns you including illness, bereavement, family issues, financial worries, etc. Private information is kept strictly confidential.

Make a request:

- By emailing prayer@firstmetvictoria.com
- Completing a prayer request form and dropping it in the donation baskets at Sunday services or at the office
- Asking a staff member to relay your request.

Children and Youth Ministry Update



ABOVE: Jellyfish lanterns at Goldstream camp.

It was a wonderful action-packed summer starting with a gathering of families at Goldstream group camp - with a scripture scavenger hunt, campfire and jellyfish lanterns.

Our book table was a big hit - with folks visiting, reading and contributing more books! A huge thanks to all who donated. With the funds received, the kids chose a Mission & Service Fund project that helps children and families in need, run by the Church of North India near the border of Bangladesh.

Sunday school has been joyful and busy, with our ongoing 'giant orange flag' project as we learn about walking the path of truth and reconciliation, stories from the Old and New Testaments, soccer and baseball in the gym, and sometimes we squeeze in some playtime too.



RIGHT: Book sale tables in the Doreene McLeod Rm.

Our new First Met Youth Group got off to a thrilling start with a trip to Galey Farms at Halloween— watch for our video, produced by our A/V technician Maxwell! Still to come for our Youth Group is a night at First Met, with tacos, indoor games and lots of 'bear'-themed fun.

On December 18, we will have an afternoon of Christmas Story-telling, cookies and crafts. Kids can hang out with us while adults get their Christmas shopping done (or join us!).

And last but not least our annual 4:30 Christmas Eve Family Service returns, complete with nativity and live animals. Please be sure to join in.

Many thanks to our wonderful church congregation, staff and volunteers for all your support and encouragement!

Micia Kanstrup



ABOVE: Youth group fun at Galey Farms

RIGHT: Soccer in the Fellowship Hall

FAR RIGHT: Children at Old and New Testament story-telling



Evolving Church Team News

First Met is going through a significant period of transition as we move towards amalgamation. This is taking place in a larger context of change, both locally and globally; things such as climate change, Indigenous reconciliation, economic disparity, poverty, drug addiction, and toxic drug deaths, to name a few. We are looking at ways of doing church differently and are experimenting with a myriad of ideas. We were slowed by the pandemic, but now that things have returned to a “new normal”, we plan to try out some new ideas.

We continue to move outward into our local community, with support for the Hamper Program run out of our Fellowship Hall, and the Tiny Homes in our neighbourhood. The Spiritual Care and Wellness Team have graciously offered us some funds to purchase Christmas gifts for the children in the Hamper program, and for the inhabitants of the Tiny Home village. In December, we plan to have a First Met table at the North Park Neighbourhood Christmas Multicultural Festival which will be held at the Save On Foods Memorial Centre, on December 18th. Our goal is not to proselytize, but to meet our neighbours. Our “guess the number of fish in “bottle” game for children will be replaced with “guess the number of candy canes in the Christmas Stocking”, to win the Stocking.

We have been working with Our Place to offer an observance for families impacted by the death of a family member due to the toxic drugs being sold on our streets. In October, Kyla Morgan offered a workshop on using Naloxone to treat someone experiencing a drug overdose. These are the realities of our present day.

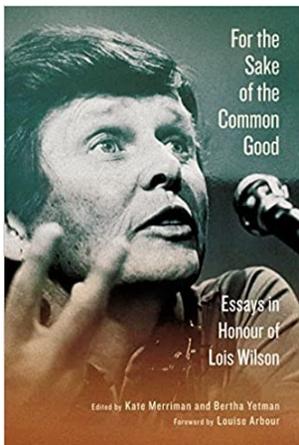
We also plan to do a church service in February, incorporating some new ways of being church, so stay tuned! We also want to offer some new experiences, such as a Gratitude Walk in the Forest. We have yet to work out the details of these events, but have plans to do so.

The Evolving Church team meets on the first Wednesday of the month at 10:00 in the Doreene McLeod Room. We have 10 enthusiastic members now who would love to have you join us.

Emily MacDonald, Team Leader

NORTH PARK NEIGHBOURHOOD ASSOCIATION'S
MULTICULTURAL FESTIVAL & COMMUNITY SKATE
Sunday, December 18, 2022
10:30am-1:30pm
Save-On-Foods Memorial Centre
1925 Blanshard St.
FREE ADMISSION
\$1.60 SKATE RENTALS
(PLEASE BRINGS SKATES IF YOU HAVE THEM!)
40+ VENDORS
KIDS ACTIVITIES
FREE

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For the Sake of the Common Good

This recently-published book of essays in honour of Lois Wilson was presented to the library by Rev. Dr. Allan Saunders, who was also the author of one of the essays in the book. Lois Wilson was the first female Moderator of the United Church of Canada from 1980–1982. She is a former Senator and President of the World Council of Churches and a passionate advocate for human rights in the church, Canadian Parliament and the world. First Met congregants will also remember her as a frequent presenter and guest at the Epiphany Explorations conferences.

Cultivating Gratitude

What is gratitude?

Gratitude is a feeling of thankfulness for what we have received. We are grateful for what is given to us, accepting that we are dependent on others in many ways. We are open to receiving gifts and we appreciate what we have been given.

Why is gratitude important?

The feeling of gratitude helps us to let go of the negatives in our lives and to embrace the positives. It lifts our mood, increases our satisfaction with life, and creates more optimism, happiness and self-worth. Gratitude also helps us to be more compassionate, generous and forgiving. It enhances our relationships and builds our resilience.

What can we be thankful for?

The big things for which we can be grateful include our health, our human body and human mind, our safety, our family, friends, pets, our community, our financial resources, our successes, our good decisions, our good actions and the fortunes of others. We can be grateful for the gift of life, the plants and animals we consume to keep living, the plants that give us air to breathe.

If meaningful to us, we can

appreciate the universal consciousness, the life force energy that lies beyond our thinking mind. We are thankful for the people, for example our parents and teachers, who helped us in our journey through life. We can be grateful for what we have learned from our education and life experience.

The small things for which we can be thankful include a good meal, a sunny day, fresh water to drink, a genuine smile, an encouraging word, a talk with a friend, a walk in nature, watching a sunrise or sunset, a good sleep...

What are some activities to cultivate gratitude?

I hope you enjoy these activities:

1. Three Good Things

- Set aside a specific time each day for gratitude: e.g. at a meal or just before bed.
- Recall three things from your day for which you are grateful. Examples are the bounty of a meal, beauty of the night sky, warmth of the sun. For a breath or longer, pause and feel the thankfulness.
- Write these three things down in a journal. Each time you journal, try to write down three different things for variation.

2. Recognize the contribution of others

- Bring to mind people in your life who have been helpful to you, who have loved you, taught you things, opened doors for you, been generous to you and made important contributions to you.
- For example, you could think of your parents, who gave you life, your family and friends who give your life meaning and purpose, your teachers who taught you, the people who grow your food, provide your goods and services and who are responsible for your having the life you have.
- Bring to mind some of what you have received from these people.
- Think of someone you really appreciate. What are some of the things that this person has given to you? Let these memories become feelings of thankfulness, and let those feelings sink in.
- As you are aware of these people and some of what they have given you, open to the beautiful feeling of gratitude for all of those people.
- Experience the appreciation that comes for being conscious of all you received and the realization that we are dependent on others and that we are strong in our togetherness.



Continued on p. 15

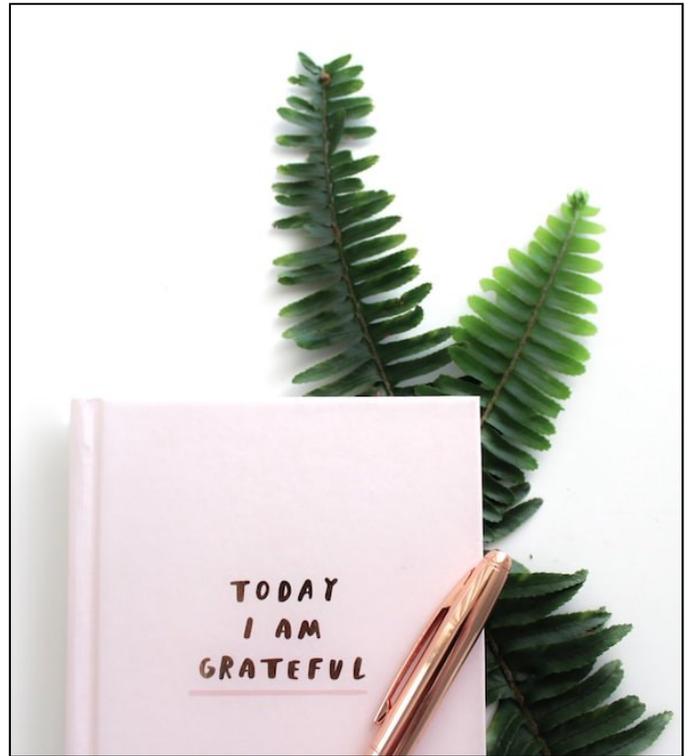
Continued from p. 14

3. Appreciate your good qualities

- Bring to mind three or four things that you appreciate about yourself.
- Probe to see what you really like about yourself.
- Give yourself the time and space to feel whatever you are feeling and be as you are.
- Acknowledge these good qualities and focus on just one of them that resonate for you now.
- Hold this quality in awareness and determine if some people are associated with this good quality for you, people who have been a positive influence in your life.
- Feel good about key aspects of yourself. Let this experience sink in and let self-appreciation take root in your heart.

4. Be happy for others

- Be happy for others. Name them.
- Be happy for their positive experiences, for their successes.
- Be happy that things are going well for them, for the good conditions in their lives.
- Explore what it is like to have this happiness for them.
- Shift to other beings.
- Be happy that they are growing, getting better at ...
- Become more and more aware of what it feels to be happy for them.
- Things are getting better for them. Be aware of improvements.
- Be happy that their external conditions are getting better.
- Be happy that they are still alive, that they are still conscious, breathing.
- Let this happiness for others sink in.



5. Gratitude Walk

Take a gratitude walk in the neighbourhood in which you reflect on your gratitude for your relationships, material comforts, your physical surroundings, the air you breathe and everything you see, hear, feel, smell, and even taste.

Gratitude is a powerful force that we can use to expand our happiness, create loving relationships, and improve our health.

Wally Lazaruk, October 2022

Sources and References

Dr. Rick Hanson provided permission to use/adapt his text and guided meditation material:

- [Rick Hanson, The Foundations of Well-Being Resilient - Dr. Rick Hanson: www.rickhanson.net > resilient](http://www.rickhanson.net)
- [HEAL: The Four Steps to Taking in the Good: www.habitsforwellbeing.com > heal-the-four-steps-to-ta...](http://www.habitsforwellbeing.com)
- [What Is Gratitude? - Verywell Mind: https://www.verywellmind.com](https://www.verywellmind.com)

Dalai Lama [Tenzin Gyatso] and Desmond Tutu. 2016. *The Book of Joy: Lasting Happiness in a Changing World*. With Douglas Abrams. New York: Avery.

Angel Gift Program

It's that time again when we think of exchanging gifts and sharing special seasonal activities with our friends and families. As Covid becomes more manageable, we are regaining freedom, becoming accustomed to the "New Normal", and looking forward to celebrating this year's Christmas season joyfully. But for those who are part of the Our Place Family, Christmas is not always a happy time. Many of these folk are not in touch with their families and find the Christmas season a cold and lonely time. Also, because of the pandemic, opioid epidemic, and increased victimization by those who prey on the more marginalized of our neighbours, Our Place Family members face many life challenges.

We have an opportunity, with the Angel Gifts program, to share some warmth and friendly greetings with the Our Place Family. The Angel Gift that you give might be the only gift that person receives. Those who have received Angel Gifts in past years have been very moved by the generosity and caring that come with the gift. This year, the project remains as important as ever.

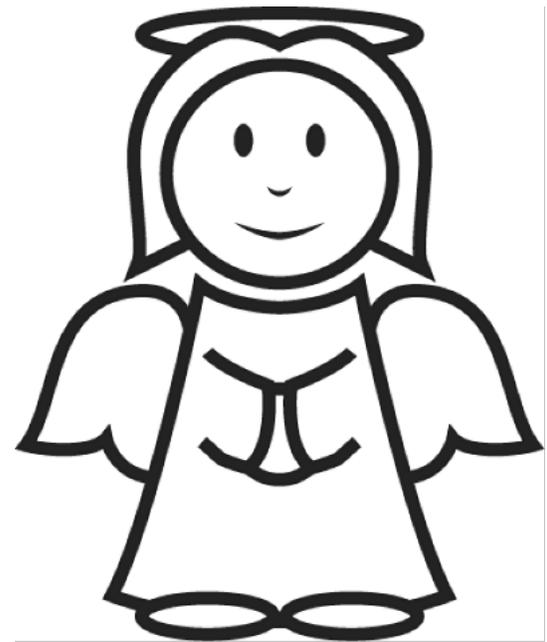
As was the case last year, donors need to sign up in advance. You can register by contacting Penny Bond, either in-person before or after Sunday services, or by email or phone. **The deadline for registration is Sunday, November 27.** Once this pre-registration is completed, Penny will send donors their recipients' information (name, age, size, gender & gift number) by email, or regular post if the donor does not have email. They also will be sent the 'Instructions for Donors' handout; it includes gift suggestions, price range, wrapping advice and final deadline date. If you would like to participate but finances are a concern, you might consider sharing the cost of one gift with a friend or family member. **Please note that the church office is not involved in registration.**

Wrapped gifts may be returned to First Met on Sundays, or dropped off at the church office, no later than Sunday, December 11. Our Place will begin distributing the gifts that week.

Our Place no longer is just the Pandora Avenue drop-in centre; it also manages shelters and transitional housing locations all over the Capital Regional District. Members of the Our Place Family are spread out amongst all the sites.

I hope you will consider making a member of the Our Place Family part of your Christmas celebration this year!

Penny Bond, FMUC Angel Gift Coordinator,
angelgifts-pb@shaw.ca, 250-384-2538



North Park Neighbourhood Association News



Things are always going on in North Park – it is a very active and engaged community! Over the Summer, a variety of free activities were offered in Royal Athletic Park, for both adults and children. This included arts, crafts and sports. “Adventures in the great OUTdoors” offered safe, supervised opportunities for gender diverse and questioning children and families to learn about physical literacy, through sports and entertainment.

The “Lending Hub” in the North Park Plaza on Vancouver Street, has continued its activities of lending boulevard chairs and tables, games, sports equipment, garden and household tools, and various other items over the Summer and early Fall months. The “Little Free Pantry” remains attached to the hub, and the “Little Free Library” is nearby. This year there have been volunteer Plaza Ambassadors on site to help people enjoy what the plaza has to offer. Stay tuned for some changes to the plaza.

The quarterly Multi-Cultural Festival in Royal Athletic Park is popular and well attended. First Met’s Evolving Church team had will also be present at the Winter Festival, to be held at the Save-On-Foods Memorial Arena on December 18 from 10:30–1:30. This combination of a Market and a free Neighbourhood Skate is a great opportunity for First Met folk to meet our neighbours.

On Wednesdays, a Craft Social, held 6:00–8:00 pm, provides an opportunity to work on a personal craft project; share or teach your skills with others (includes a knitting teacher each time); share your supplies, if and socialize with other crafters. This free event is held in the community room at 1025 Mason Street.

A new mural has been painted at 1923 Quadra Street, across from the Curling Club, and a new parklet is being built at Cook Street and Caledonia Avenue. And look for new banners along Cook Street.

Other activities included:

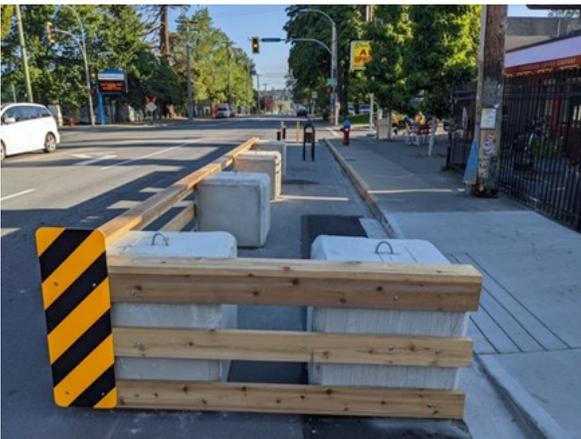
- an All Candidate Meet & Greet event and voting day information in several languages during the recent municipal elections
- a Community Association Land Use Committee (CALUC) meeting about a revised design for 1702 Quadra Street, “The Abbey”, located right across the street from First Met.
- The NPNA Grocery Hamper Program is continuing to operate from donated space at First Met, with much gratitude to the church for its support of this collaborative program. The program currently has a waiting list including several large families.

Sarah Murray, Executive Director of NPNA, has an office in the former Toddlers Room at First Met. Drop in and say hello to Sarah!

Penny Bond, First Met/NPNA Liaison



The mural at 1923 Quadra St.



The parklet at Cook and Caledonia under construction

Zatoun Products from Palestine for Sale



We are pleased to announce that we will be selling Zatoun Products from Palestine again this year. As in past years, we will sell olive oil (500 ml and 750 ml), spices and soaps plus we have a limited supply of a new item- Tree for Life Sponsorships. The Tree for Life Sponsorship is the perfect gift for those hard-to-shop-for folks. With each sponsorship, you will get a gift card saying that three olive trees will be planted in Palestine to help olive farmers renew their decimated groves. Good for peace and good for the environment!

Products will be available for sale in November on Sunday mornings and during the week in the office. Payment can be with cash, cheque, credit, debit, or e-transfer (finance@firstmetvictoria.com).

Zatoun products make excellent host/hostess and Christmas gifts! Instead of giving a bottle of wine, give a bottle of olive oil! Or treat yourself! These products make excellent "feel good" gifts—you feel good supporting a most worthy cause and the recipient feels

good receiving a gift that is both useful and authentic.

Zatoun is a non-profit volunteer organization registered in Canada to import and sell symbolic products to create awareness for a just peace for Palestine-Israel. You can read more about this great organization at Zatoun.com

For more information, email or phone Robin Breckon at robin.breckon@gmail.com, (250)472-3381.

Assistant Bookkeeper Katya Rummyantseva's 10th anniversary of employment with the church was celebrated at First Met on November 8, 2022 with Board members, Board of Trustee members and Staff in attendance. Several speeches were made thanking Katya for her dedication and hard work. Everyone present enjoyed the gluten-free cake seen in the picture below.



Thank you from Katya

Dear First Met Family,

Thank you so much for your warm wishes and the surprise party for my 10th Work Anniversary at First Met!

It has been a very good 10 years. I could not recall any morning that I did not want to come to the office. Most of that is due to all of you - the congregants and my wonderful co-workers who have always been very supportive and kind to me. A special thank you is to Liane Clark who has been my 'guardian angel' all these years.

We have walked this road, and continue walking it, side to side, to make First Met stronger and better.

Humbled,

Katya Rummyantseva, First Met Assistant Bookkeeper

COP27: Sharm el-Sheikh Climate Change Conference

Root of the problem - Digging Deeper - Grassroots - Uprooted - Rooted -

Temporary roots - The Root of the Matter - Rooted in Compassion - Finding our roots -

Looking at the ROOTS...



Finance Day

"All powers have 2 sides. The power to create and the power to destroy. We must recognize them both, but invest our gifts on the side of creation."
Robin Wall-Kimmerer

1st COP to discuss Loss and Damages



"Adaptation financing and also climate financing for Africa is non-negotiable. Our future is at stake". African youth at COP27

What is Climate Finance???

It has 3 purposes.

- cutting emissions
- adapting to the climate crisis
- paying for loss and damage

To put \$100 billion into perspective it = 37 days average profits of oil and gas

Building resilience for countries hit by natural disasters. UK credit agency will be first to 'pause' debt service payments for low income and small island states.

<https://climatenetwork.org/cop-27/>

Day 3

Ancient roots - new roots - Honourable roots - Damaged roots

#PayUp4LossandDamage
#ClimateJustice

The Sharm el-Sheikh Climate Change Conference took place in Egypt from November 6 to 18. Each day had a different focus, e.g., finance, biodiversity, science and youth, adaptation and agriculture. More information on the conference program can be found at <https://unfccc.int/cop27>.

Canada's COP27 delegation led by Minister Steven Guilbeault included representatives from various groups, including parliamentarians representing both the House of Commons and the Senate, representatives from civil society organizations, business, labour, most provinces and territories as well as Indigenous representatives and youth.

This year KAIROS and For the Love of Creation sponsored 10 delegates to attend in person. Two delegates are Indigenous youth leaders from Canada and eight are global partners and activists in environment, women's rights, indigenous rights, and peace. KAIROS also shared links to conference proceedings that can be viewed online: <https://www.kairoscanada.org/where-to-watch-cop27>

Janet Gray shared one page like the one shown at the left each day with quotes and 'Rooted' reflections from the day to an email list of interested congregants and others. Some of these pages were also shared on First Met's Facebook page.

Interfaith Service of Remembrance & Action on Violence Against Women

December 6, 5:00 pm
First Met Sanctuary



First Met United Church

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

Check out our website

firstmetvictoria.com

Christmas Past – from the Archives

Angels, magi, shepherds and critters - and the best crook ever! The annual Christmas pageant employed the skills of many and brought seasonal visitors to the church.



ABOVE: Christmas pageant 1959
(First Met Archives / FUC_2004-1047)

RIGHT Christmas pageant 1983
(First Met Archives / FUC_2006-063)

First Met Archives



Introducing Maxwell Sorensen and Stella Drinkwater

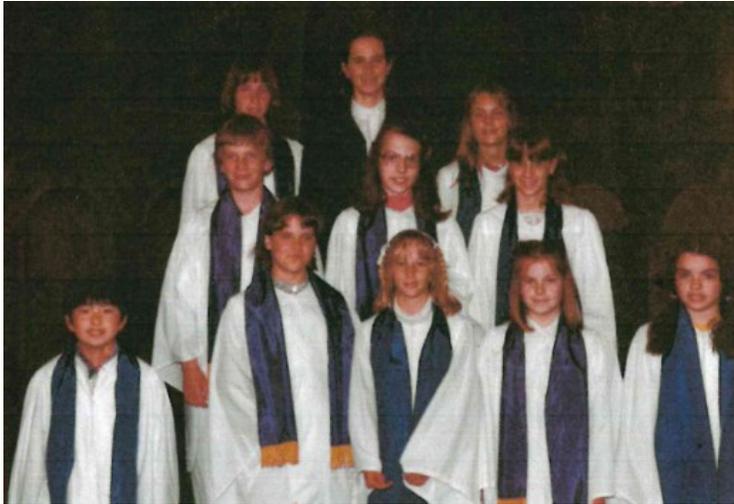
Maxwell Sorensen and Stella Drinkwater joined the First Met staff as casual audio-visual technicians in September 2022. They are both first year students in the Computer Science and Music program at the University of Victoria. Maxwell is from Calgary and Stella from Edmonton. In addition to staffing the technical desk as part of the tech team on Sundays, special services and outside events, they also have produced short videos that are used in the services.

You will also see past co-operative education students Ethan Slogotski, Zach Young and Trison Nguyen assisting at services and events. Trison has been on the tech team since 2014. He was vital in keeping our livestream services available in the early days of the pandemic when most of our volunteers were unable to assist. Thank you Trison!



LEFT: The Tech team on a Sunday morning during training: (L-R) Maxwell Sorensen, Ethan Slogotski, Joan Mason and Stella Drinkwater.

Donation Made in Memory



The Church received a generous donation from Ralph Rodger, marked in memory of former First Met members Tom Eadie, Shirley Newell and Robert Rumsby. The picture at left included with the donation is of the youth choir led by Barbara Eadie, Tom's wife.

UCW News

The UCW supports the Fellowship of the Least Coin, an ecumenical program offering prayers for justice and unity. In October First Met UCW held the "Ingathering of the Least Coin Service" prepared this year by women in the Philippines. We collected over \$300 for the Womens Inter-church Council of Canada in support of projects for women and children worldwide. Thank you to all who donated.

In 2021 the women of the Pacific Mountain Region contributed \$18,161 to the Mission and Service fund. Once again the First Met UCW is holding a special M&S fund raising meeting. On November 17 Dell Marie Wergeland will be speaking about the Compassionate Resource Warehouse. All are welcome.

Marie McKee



Irene Baddeley and Marie McKee leading the "Ingathering of the Least Coin Service" Oct 20.



Preparing Our Hearts

AbbeyChurch and Emmaus Community Quiet Day Retreat at MaryLake Nature Sanctuary (Highlands/Langford)
December 3rd from 10am - 4pm

Suggested donation of \$25 per person/family to participate with simple vegetarian lunch included. Email admin@emmauscommunity.ca to participate



Introducing:

Eun Jung Oh
Campus Minister,
United Church
University of
Victoria.

First Met Fall 2022 Pictures



LEFT: Blessing of the animals either live or virtually. ABOVE: Orange shirt day with Kyla and Shelagh.

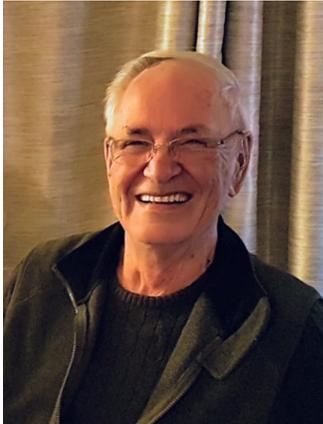


ABOVE: Flatlanders walk on October 2. ABOVE RIGHT: Janet Gray, Claire Lowery and Robin Breckon sold Orange Shirt day t-shirts outside the church. BELOW: Final Pop-up Café on Aug 30 was well-attended. BELOW RIGHT: Drag artist Vivian Vanderpuss photographed on the chancel.





In Memoriam



Allan McKay
Died Oct 19, 2022



William (Bill) Blaikie
Died Sep 24, 2022



Aldyth Swainson
Died Sep 20, 2022



Peter Cruse
Died Sep 20, 2022



Rev. Bob Stobie
Died Oct 23, 2022



Herb Whitney
Died Oct 1, 2022



Kelly Charlton, Choir and soloist Annalysa Tylor at the Let Not Your Heart Be Troubled service.



Lighting candles in memory at the Let Not Your Heart Be Troubled service, Oct 30.

EVERYONE IS WELCOME !

*Please
Join Us*

Caregiver Support Group

Meets the 4th Thursday of the month 1:00–2:30 pm. Contact **Emily Macdonald** at (250) 886-9975

First Met Knitters

Meetings second Tuesday of each month Sept to June from 1:00–3:00 pm. For more information, call **Joan Mickelson**, (250) 385-4033.

Men's Water Into Wine Group

Gathers the 2nd Tuesday of each month from 7:00–9:00 pm at the Bent Mast, 512 Simcoe St. and virtually on the 3rd Tuesday. Email **fmuc.men@shaw.ca** for more information.

Ramblers Hiking Group

Meets the 3rd Saturday of every month at various locations. For more information: **Rennie Warburton**, (250) 592-9161, **rwarby@gmail.com**. December 17, 4:30 pm: "Carols in the Forest".

United Church Women:

Mildred Mossop: 2nd Mon, 10:00 am
Unity: 3rd Thurs, 12:00 pm
Meetings in the Doreene McLeod Rm at the church.

Tai Chi

Meets Mondays and Wednesdays 12:00–1:00 pm in the Fellowship Hall. Call **Edeana Malcolm** at (250) 412-7682 for more information.

Women Exploring Spirituality

Meets 4th Monday of the month from 1:00–3:00 pm from Sep to Jun. December gathering will be Dec 12 from 1:00–3:00 pm in Rm 200 at the church. Contact **Rev. Shelagh MacKinnon** for more information.

Yoga in the Chapel

Gentle Yoga

Mondays except statutory holidays) and on 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 5th Thursday of the month, 10:30–11:45 am

Chair Yoga

Wednesdays, 10:30–11:45 am

Restorative Yoga

12:30 pm on the 3rd Wednesday of the month.

Contact **Elaine Duke** at **elaineduke1000@gmail.com**

Friendship Club

Meets 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of each month when COVID and weather permit. Contact **Marlene Campbell** at (250) 382-5954 for more information.

Evolving Church

Meets 1st Wednesday of the month at 10:30 am at the church. Contact **Emily MacDonald** at (250) 886-9975 for more information.

Flatlanders Walking Group

Meets 1st Saturday of the month from 1:00 – 3:00 pm at various locations from February on. December gathering will be with Ramblers "Carols in the Forest" on December 17.

NPNA Grocery Hamper Program

Thursdays from 8:00 am–12:00 pm in Rm 119. Contact NPNA to volunteer or receive a hamper at **npna@npna.ca**



Parking Options

Week Days

- Balmoral Road
- Ground Level ~ North Park St. east of Balmoral Gardens Apartments

Sundays

- Balmoral Road ~ Angle Parking
- Ground Level ~ North Park St., east of Balmoral Gardens Apartments

Observe the one hour and two hour parking limits when using street parking on Balmoral, Quadra and North Park Streets.

**First Metropolitan**
United Church of Canada

*A centre for
spiritual growth and
community engagement*

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