



Many of you who have attended St. John's over the last number of years have no doubt noticed the gradual shrinking of the congregation as many of our longtime congregants have died or moved. Unfortunately, this drain has not been offset by an influx of new attendees. This trend has had a negative effect on the finances of the church, which have continued on a downward trend, presenting a growing challenge in meeting church expenses.

This has not gone unnoticed by the leaders of St. John's. Reverend Willem, the Session and its Finance Committee have wrestled with these growing trends and have, over the past years, attempted to reduce operations costs of the church, and to increase income. This, however, has not been sufficient to overcome the downward slide. On the positive side, St. John's continues to be a positive influence in White Rock and the surrounding area with ministry and outreach programs that touch the lives of many. From our Sunday worship and Bible study programs, to our long-running Friday Lunch Hut, our wide range of music outreach events, and our ongoing initiatives focused on bringing God's word to the community through the sharing of our facilities with other Christian congregations, we make our presence felt. It is the firm belief of your church leaders that God has a plan for St. John's; He just has not yet revealed it to us.

In the meantime, at its September 2017 meeting Session decided that the continuing financial and ministry concerns at St. John's warranted a request to the Presbytery of Westminster for advice and direction relating to our current situation. As part of this initiative, Session also asked that Presbytery carry out a formal visitation at St. John's wherein congregation members and church leaders will have the opportunity to express their comments and views relating to our ministry here in the White Rock area. Some of you may recall participating in the last such visitation in November 2014. The formal request to Presbytery was sent on October 20th, and Session will ensure that the congregation is kept apprised of further developments.

In these anxious times Reverend Willem, the Elders and I would ask that everyone bear in mind God's message to the Israelites, in exile in Babylon at the time, which is contained in Jeremiah 29: 11: "For I know the plans I have for you", declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." We just need to keep praying to God that He will make his plans apparent to us in the near future.

Keith Leishman
Clerk of Session