

First Met News

Spring 2022 Newsletter



On Christmas Eve 2021, we were back to a virtual service as the Omicron variant began to spread.

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First Met Hours of Operation

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

OFFICE HOURS
Monday to Thursday
9:30 to 2:00 pm

SUNDAY HOURS
8:30 am - 2:00 pm

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.

This Issue of Broadview

The March edition of Broadview has just arrived. Here's a peak at some of the stories:

- How Herbie Kuhn became the voice and soul of the Toronto Raptors
- What Canada can learn from the Berlin tenant movement
- The innovative Japanese method of growing mature forests
- Ralph Milton argues the world and the church need to understand how much they need seniors.



It's almost time to renew of your subscription. Watch for an email from Janet Gray explaining how to renew or get a new subscription to this informative magazine. Group renewals through the church are easy and save you money on the cost of a subscription!

Schedule for Upcoming Newsletters

The deadlines for submissions for upcoming newsletters are:


- Summer 2022: June 6 (published by Jun 19)
- Fall 2022: August 15 (published by Aug 26)
- Winter 2022: November 14 (published by Nov 27)

Sunday Services

Weekly in-person services begin March 6 at 11am. Masks and a vaccine passport are required.

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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 Follow us on Instagram
@firstmetvictoria

Shelagh's Message

When I was an undergrad, I used to work at Chateau Lake Louise. As soon as my final exams were over, I would leave Trent University in Peterborough, Ontario, heading to Toronto, Calgary and finally, the Rockies. Such beauty and a completely different world! We worked some "split shifts" in those days, with four to six hours off in the afternoon. That afforded hikes in the surrounding area. One hike was up "Beehive" where you first visited the Lake Agnes Tearoom, then ascended. Half-way up from Lake Agnes, someone chalked "You're almost there"; then "You can make it." And when you got to the vantage viewpoint the cheery sign awaited you: "See, I knew you could do it!"



You and I are walking a pilgrim path that has been travelled for 2000 years! Our ancestors in following the way of Jesus would recognize some of what we are experiencing and other things would be confusing, or nonsensical. Welcome to the Spring of 2022! We look for guides and milestones as we navigate COVID 19, and ask if we can finally celebrate passing a milestone marked "You're almost there." I certainly pray that is true!

On the pages of this newsletter are the writings of some of our companions on this most unusual journey. Together we are leaving a trail for the future. But for right now, we are living fully in this exciting, ragged, and often exhausting time. It has asked a lot of people, and everywhere we see signs of how hard that has been. It has also been a season of blessing, and similarly, we have chances to express our gratitude and appreciation. I pray the Sacred Spirit will help us voice that awareness in both compassionate responses and expressions of thankfulness.

On March 13, our congregation will receive its official designation as an Affirming Congregation. To those who attended the meeting to endorse this recommendation from the Board, on line or in-person: what an achievement! Thank you, First Metropolitan United, for continuing to hike that path when COVID made the terrain ever more steep and unreliable. In a way, we were passing those encouraging chalk signs as we met for classes -first at Cadboro Bay United Church, then in chats and resources on Zoom - and finally, for voting unanimously to become affirming! We had PIE days with candle lighting and video visits from past Moderator, the Rt. Rev Gary Patterson, and present Moderator, the Rt. Rev. Richard Bott. Thank you to everyone who helped make this a reality! We joined the growing number of churches, cathedrals and synagogues with rainbow steps. The call to justice for the LGBTQIA2S+ community globally is one we have agreed to respond to as we go further on this trail. But for this moment, we pause at this rainbow vista point and say "Thank you, we made it this far!"

Lent and Easter 2022 invite us to revisit some familiar territory and to walk some miles with new scenery. I so look forward to seeing people come back to church, in mid-week groups and at Sunday worship. I know online worship and zoom meetings will continue to be part of how we do church. (That would amaze our forebearers, right?). I wonder what First Met will look like in five years, in ten years? I pray we will continue to be a blessing as we companion each other and are companioned by the Sacred Spirit.

May there be Grace and Blessings on your path,

Shelagh

Report from the Board Chair



Our Mission Statement:

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

This mission statement was adopted at our November 21st meeting when we voted to become an Affirming Congregation. It is part of our Strategic Plan that was completed in January, 2020.

And then there was COVID! So much of the Strategic Plan was put on hold because of it. But recently, the Board has been looking over the Strategic Plan to edit and amend it. Sometimes this simply means changing the dates and sometimes it means reconsidering the goal itself.

As we looked over the Plan, I was pleasantly surprised at how much of it we had achieved in spite of our COVID confinement. This includes:

- Objective G1.3: Fulfill the steps of becoming an affirming congregation.
- Objective G1.5: Engage with the larger community including the North Park Neighbourhood as measured by an increasing number of joint events.

As a church, we are constantly evolving in response to the changes we experience. One of these changes is that our congregation is aging and our volunteer pool is shrinking. In response to this, many of our teams (once called committees) have become “ad hoc.” That means the volunteers are not committed for lengthy terms that never seem to end. They may only work for a short period, on and off, or as the Spirit moves them.

One example is the former Christian Spiritual Development and Worship Team. Anyone who wishes to help with worship for one Sunday or a season has only to let Shelagh know. This model is also used for the latest team, Evolving Church, which has been active in our local North Park community. If you want to help out with their work, contact Emily MacDonald.

Once we begin “in person” worship again with coffee time, the “ad hoc” model can also be applied to the Hospitality Team. You can volunteer for one Sunday or a month of Sundays. But we will still need someone to coordinate these volunteers.

I do so look forward to March when we will be meeting in person again. To celebrate this, and to celebrate becoming an Affirming Congregation, we are organizing a party on Pie Day, March 13 at 1 PM after the worship service. Pie Day is important for our Affirming Ministry as PIE is an acronym for Public, Intentional, and Explicit, which we strive to be. We will have tarts and tea or coffee together again. If you can volunteer to bring some tarts or to help decorate the Fellowship Hall, please contact me at dnmlclm3@gmail.com or 250-412-7682. I promise you, it's a one-time ad hoc commitment!

Edeana Malcolm, Chair of the First Met Board



Welcome New Board Member Marketa Mellows!

We extend a warm welcome to Marketa Mellows who joined the First Met board in January.



A Good Enough Faith: Our Lent Worship Series

Our worship series for Lent 2022 “Good Enough: Embracing the Imperfections of Life and Faith” was inspired by the new book of the same name. You can view a podcast on the book at <https://katebowler.com/podcasts/giving-up-on-perfect-introducing-good-enough/>. The author, Kate Bowler (www.katebowler.com), is a seminary history professor, author and podcaster, and ‘incurable optimist.’

Her research focuses on the ‘prosperity gospel’ movement which has contributed to our ‘self-help’ craze. Her recent bestsellers, *Everything Happens for a Reason: And Other Lies I’ve Loved*, and *No Cure for Being Human (And Other Truths I Need to Hear)* chronicle her life as a young person living with stage four colon cancer, discovering she had fallen into the same trap her research is about: the belief that we can all bootstrap ourselves into a perfect life. This idea is so baked into our consciousness that sometimes we think God requires this perfection of us and we end up falling continually short.

This worship series invites us to take seriously, and with humility, that most often life is imperfect. We have lived this reality for the past two years as our world has coped with the COVID-19 pandemic. We are still in the midst of great disturbance from the way we imagined life to be. In many cases, dreams have been thwarted by pandemic through loss of life, health, and economic security. And then there’s all the other hard stuff, unrelated to pandemic, that happens in our lives.

The Good News certainly is that God loves us deeply and is present to us powerfully, even, and especially, in the midst of the imperfect and down-right awful moments of life. This is the right time to question our popular theories about how to build a better life. We cannot “have it all” if we just learn how to conquer our limits. Kate Bowler says, “The problem with our lives is that we cannot solve them. We can only live them.”

Our worship series is as follows:

- Mar 2, 7:00 pm (Ash Wednesday): Perfectionism is impossible. Transformation isn’t.
- Mar 6 (Lent 1): Ordinary lives can be holy.
- Mar 13 (Lent 2): We interrupt our Lent series in order to celebrate PIE Day and the formal recognition of First Met as an affirming congregation.
- Mar 20 (Lent 3): Lots of things can be medicine.
- Mar 27 (Lent 4): We often believe we are the problem.
- Apr 3 (Lent 5): We are fragile.
- Apr 10 (Palm Sunday): You are a group project.
- Apr 14, 7:00 pm (Maundy Thursday): We are blessed, regardless
- Apr 15 (Good Friday): Even today, God is here and somehow, that is good enough.
- Apr 17 (Easter Sunday): A Good Enough Faith.



Prayer Connections

Prayers continue despite COVID restrictions. Would you like the Prayer Connections Team to pray for you or those you care about? To make a request:

- Fill out a prayer request card and place it in the donation baskets in the sanctuary
- Email: 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.



Liane Clark Retires as Church Treasurer

As previously announced, I will be moving on from the Treasurer role as of April 30, 2022. I am not sure what I will be doing next but I do know that I will be staying in Victoria, that I am planning to remain an active member of First Met and that I am in good health.

I recently received an email from the United Church of Canada that stated “treasurers like you are the “evergreens” of the church—the ones who offer steady, reliable support regardless of the season”. While I am not sure how I feel about being compared to a tree, I know that the “steady, reliable support” aspect that I bring to the Treasurer role is causing concern for both congregants and staff as to what will happen after April 30.

The Board has made progress in looking at the non-Treasurer tasks that I have been doing. A particular area of concern was my support of Information Technology projects. The Board created an Information Technology Liaison volunteer position responsible for liaising between church staff, Board members and the information technology support team (currently Total Solutions). More specifically, this volunteer position would be responsible for tracking information technology issues brought up by the staff, the Board and Total Solutions and working with the relevant parties to resolve them. As well, this position would take recommendations from staff to Total Solutions and vice versa on information technology topics such as fully using the capabilities of current hardware and software, hardware replacement options, and software upgrades or replacement options.

The Board attempted to find someone in the limited pool of people that would have the interest in filling this volunteer position but was not successful. At that time, the Board decided on a different approach. The current 16-hour per week Administrative Assistant and Letting Coordinator job description was transformed into a full-time (35 hours per week) Administrative Assistant and Facilities Booking Coordinator job description. Included in that job description is a section on Information Technology which covers assisting other staff with technological difficulties, liaising with the church’s Information Technology support provider, and making recommendations on ongoing issues. The new position also includes some support to the communications team including maintaining some areas of the church website, preparing PowerPoint slides for Sunday services and perhaps even providing audio-visual services as an emergency backup. The one drawback to this new position is the increase of payroll burden between a contract part-time position and a full-time position of approximately \$18,000.

The hiring of a new person will take place in coordination with the planned retirement of the Administrative Assistant and Letting Coordinator Fiona Weber and the departure of the Treasurer during the second quarter of 2022. Fiona will be very busy during that time assisting with the hiring and training of the new person and has asked that no fuss or recognition be made of her departure.

Apart from the Treasurer role, the Church Board is still looking for three new Board members. Please contact any Board member to find out more about the role and responsibilities and/or to discuss the Board’s approach to my eventual departure as Treasurer and any suggestions you have.

Liane Clark



On Jan 23, we celebrated the birthdays of Kelly Charlton, Annalisa Tylor and Zach Young with a gluten-free cake.

First Met Financial Results 2021, Budget 2022 and Restricted Funds

Your church Board has approved draft versions of the 2022 restricted fund, capital and operating budgets. The Board is hopeful that an in-person congregational meeting can be held in the April to June timeframe so that you can approve the 2021 annual report and 2022 budgets. Prior to that meeting, you will be receiving via snail mail or congregational email a copy of these draft budgets along with explanatory notes and will have the opportunity to discuss these budgets with the Treasurer.

Those budgets include a year end projection for 2021 for the Operating budget. The projection shows revenues approximately \$54,000 above budget mainly due to the fact that the Inter-Cultural Association stayed for the entire year instead of leaving at the end of August 2021 as budgeted. This projection shows how sensitive the church's finances are to letting income. The projection also shows expenses approximately \$18,000 below budget necessitating a withdrawal of \$276,500 from the Foundation compared to the \$323,000 budgeted. The Foundation Board of Directors continue to provide much appreciated support to First Met's cashflow by enabling timely withdrawals when needed.



Since more details about the 2020 year-end and the 2021 budget will be sent to you, the focus of this article is on the restricted funds. The Board is looking to you to identify opportunities within or outside First Met for these funds to be spent particularly in areas impacted by the pandemic. These funds, their specific criteria for use, and who to contact for more information include:

E Mayne Fund: This fund's purpose is to enhance First Met's audio-visual equipment. Please contact Joan Mason, Worship and Christian Spiritual Development Team Member for more details.

H&G James Fund: Reverend Howley James' family established this fund to provide financial assistance to First Met congregation members looking into ministry or training for ministry. Please contact Edeana Malcolm, Board Liaison to the Worship and Christian Spiritual Development Team for more details.

Library Fund: This fund's purpose is to buy books and other supplies for the Mountford Library. Please contact Denise Holmen, Library Team Leader for more details.

Margaret Cameron Fund: This fund's purpose is to assist people in need which it has been doing throughout the pandemic. Please contact Sharron Higgins, Spiritual Care and Wellness Team Leader or Shelagh MacKinnon, Lead Minister for more details.

Music Fund: This fund's purpose is to support, when the Operating fund cannot, music workshops and special presentations, choir expenses and some instrument maintenance, repair or upgrading. Please contact Mary Byrne, Music Team Leader or Kelly Charlton, Director of Music Ministry for more details.

Health Bursary Fund: This fund provides bursaries to support individual participation in any health-related program and to support community health initiatives. Please contact Edeana Malcolm, Board Chair or Shelagh MacKinnon, Lead Minister for more details.

Please get in touch the appropriate person listed above to discuss your ideas. If you are uncertain where your idea might fall, please feel free to contact any Board Member including myself for guidance. Any questions on First Met finances at any time, please contact me.

Liane Clark, Treasurer

The Power of Prayer: Exploring Prayer Connections at First Met

In the Fall of 2008, a former First Met Pastoral Care Minister started a weekly intercessory prayer circle in the Chapel. A few members met for several months, then shifted to become an at-home group, each member praying in their own time for the needs of the congregation. The group officially launched in the Spring of 2009, under the name of the Prayer Connections Team, as they wanted to build strong spiritual connections in the church community. Four of the current members have remained with the team since the beginning.

Anne Sikstrom is a founding member and the longstanding Prayer Connections Team coordinator. Anne says, “I feel so passionate about the importance of this ministry. It has always felt like such a privilege to have people share their personal situations with us, in confidence, and then to hold them or those they care about in our prayers, in times of need. It feels like an act of tangible, loving connection. And it has increased my faith to see God giving people comfort and inner strength. We have received so many expressions of gratitude over the years, from people who have felt supported and cared about. This is also an outward-looking ministry: many of the people and situations prayed for are beyond our congregation.”



The Prayer Connections Team has made important impacts on members of our congregation. **Robin Breckon** shared: “One Ministry that stands out for me is the Prayer Connection Team. This dedicated, deeply spiritual group of people has been holding me faithfully in their hearts and prayers for a very long time. And doing it with unfailing love and care. It has made a very positive difference in my life. I can’t claim to know or understand how prayer “works” but I do know that I benefit from being held in prayer. I feel loved and uplifted and my heart feels better for it. I also have added family members and friends to the prayer list so that my loved ones can feel the healing power of prayer just as I have. I am deeply grateful to the Prayer Connection Team for bringing the love and the healing power of the spirit into my life.”

The First Met Ministry Team works closely with the Prayer Connections Team (PCT.) Lead Minister **Shelagh MacKinnon** and Health & Wellness Advocate **Kyla Morrison Morgan** both frequently forward prayer requests on behalf of individuals in need of prayer. It is especially meaningful to know the PCT is available to offer prayers for those who are experiencing grief and loss or changes to health. In an aging congregation this has been a common concern. The PCT is a vital Ministry at First Met, which provides an invaluable resource for the staff, church family and broader community. The power of prayer is far reaching.



Continued on p. 9

“Prayer is the world’s largest wireless connection.”

— Anon.

As First Met staff member **Katya Rumyantseva** reflected “I had a very difficult time when my father [in Russia] was diagnosed with prostate cancer. That was a new territory for me and my family, a very scary one. I was quite touched when the Prayer Team approached me offering prayer support. Knowing that someone cares for you and having the opportunity to share my fears and updates on my dad's situation gave me huge comfort and helped me to go through the bad times. Your support is invaluable.”



Ours is an aging congregation, and like other church groups, the Prayer Team numbers have been reduced. We are seeking to welcome new members to the team. Don't think you have to be especially “holy” to join! Prayer looks different for each person and the great thing is you will have support from the team as you go. The two main prerequisites are compassion for others, and a pledge to keep the prayer requests in **strictest confidence**. There is flexibility about how and when you pray: you do it as you are able. If someone is interested, they can meet with Kyla or Anne to find out more. You can arrange to try it out for a month, to see if it feels right, before committing to join. We invite you to consider becoming a part of this rewarding ministry. Please contact Kyla by email or phone if you're interested.

Look out for Part 2-Power of Prayer in the Summer 2022 Newsletter

Spiritual Care and Wellness Team Welcomes New Member

We are very pleased to welcome Alva Jenson to the Spiritual Care and Wellness Team this month.

In 2012, Alva and her husband Earl, moved here from Vancouver to be closer to their son Carl, his wife Kim and granddaughters, Lily and Rowan. Their daughter Karen moved to Victoria six months later. Sadly, Karen passed away from cancer in 2019.

Alva's interests are singing, reading, continuing education, family history, walks in nature and travelling. She enjoys celebrating life with family and friends.

Sharron Higgins, Spiritual Care and Wellness Team Leader



Our Blue Christmas service was held December 16 .

Spiritual Care and Wellness Visitation Ministry

This January, CBC radio's "All Points West" featured our First Met Visitation Ministry as a good news story happening amidst the Pandemic. Kyla, our Health & Wellness Advocate and David Bray, one of our visitors, were interviewed about the Visitation program. You can listen to the wonderful interview by clicking <https://www.firstmetvictoria.com/news/first-met-volunteer-visitation-program-on-cbc--492>

The Christmas season brought meaningful visits. Care packages were delivered, including a church calendar, candle, devotion, newsletter and Christmas card. Some folks also received Communion. Visitors had a great time connecting in person and by phone.

In the New Year, we were keen to get started once again. Our first meeting was held by zoom and worked very well, with 100% of the volunteers in attendance. Fifteen of us were on zoom, including two on zoom via phone (for the first time). We shared and reflected on "What gives you joy and energy in your daily activities?" and had a confidential discussion about our individual visits. I am very impressed with our First Met visitors, who have been very faithful and sincere in following up each visit.

In February volunteers also delivered or sent donated Valentine cards (see picture at right).

Sharing God's love with the people who are not able to come to church is our Ministry. If you know someone who is homebound and would benefit from a volunteer visitor or if you would like to become a volunteer, please contact our First Met Health and Wellness Advocate Kyla Morrison Morgan or myself to find out more.

We look forward to more special visits throughout the Lent and Easter season.

Megumi Matsuo Saunders, Visitation Ministry Coordinator 250-896-3876



Heart Gifts

It's not the things that can be bought that are life's little treasures

It's just the little "heart gifts" that money cannot measure.

A cheerful smile, a friendly word, a sympathetic nod

Are priceless little treasures from the storehouse of our God.

They are the things that can't be bought with silver or with gold

For thoughtfulness and kindness and love are never sold.

They are the priceless things in life for which no one can pay

And the giver finds rich recompense in giving them away.

Author unknown

This poem, submitted by Sharron Higgins, expresses the hopes and aspirations of our Spiritual Care and Wellness Team. The members, indeed, share their heart gifts with all of us.

Children and Youth Ministry Update

Hope was the word as First Met families celebrated the season of Advent with renewed wonder and excitement. During worship in early December congregants received a paper star from the Sunday School and were invited to record the things for which they were hopeful, plus the things that gave them hope. Earlier, our Confirmation group youth had recorded their thoughts on holly leaves, and both garlands decorated the sanctuary.

Our Confirmation youth planted miniature cedars as part of learning about the earth, and their small forest popped up on the chancel. . The forest was joined by a BIG BOX, which at first was mysteriously empty (but full of promise) and soon filled up with the congregation's generous donations of children's books and toys for the Compassionate Warehouse.



Heartfelt thanks to the Vowles-Tuey, Rainsberry, Biederman, Breckon-Oliver and Krawciw families for lighting Advent wreath candles at home, with a recording for our livestreamed worship.

Our Confirmation group

were hosted by Reverend Daniel Fournier for a visit to St Luke Anglican Church and explored "Whom am I" with the enneagram and mask-making with Minister Emeritus Megumi Matsuo-Saunders. Confirmation takes place in the outdoor chapel at Camp Pringle in May.

Sadly, our families once again tolled the church bells, this time in for the 93 unmarked graves discovered in Williams Lake.

In February families received Faith at Home kits as well as prayer bowls, cards (cover design by our co-op Zach) and chocolate for Family Day. Victor's Pink Pyjamas, by Laura Alary, was our picture book for Children's Time on Pink Shirt Sunday.

We're excited about our Lenten Lantern Outdoor Scavenger Hunt in March, featuring a mitten rainbow, to celebrate our Affirming Church status. Then our annual outdoor Easter Event in April, and Camp Pringle Family Camp in May! Our thanks to the staff, volunteers and congregation for helping to keep hope alive in the hearts of our families.

Micia Kanstrup, Sunday School Coordinator



Bless those who are preparing to honour the children with sacred ceremonies and those who work to protect burial sites, in keeping with the traditions of Indigenous peoples across this land.

We pray for the families of these children and for all who loved them. Envelop them in the warmth of your infinite care and give them peace.

(from the Memorial Prayer for Children of This Land, <https://united-church.ca/prayers/memorial-prayer-children-land>)

Our Place Family Receives 748 Gifts!

Angel Gifts is a program that gives us an opportunity to give Christmas gifts and greetings to members of the “Our Place Family”, who might not otherwise have any kind of Christmas celebration. This program began at the Open Door Inner City Ministry more than 20 years ago! Later, when the Open Door and the Upper Room Society merged to create Our Place, the Angel Gifts tradition continued as a seasonal project. Over the years it has grown and continued; many donor groups describe it as a “beloved” project.

In 2020, when the COVID pandemic was still something of an unknown to all of us, the Angel Gifts program had to adapt its processes to protect the health and safety of both donors and recipients of the gifts. This resulted in significant changes with a result that, while successful, the program did not have the sense of personal contact that had been so important. However, in 2021, with more understanding of COVID, and with vaccinations available, we were able to return to a process similar to what we did in pre-pandemic times.

In recent years, with more shelters and housing becoming available, Our Place’s services greatly expanded. Instead of being primarily a drop-in centre on Pandora Avenue, Our Place also took on management of shelters, transitional housing venues and the Therapeutic Recovery Community. This resulted in 11 different sites, with members of the Our Place Family spread out all over the Capital Regional District. There were many new staff members, who had no previous experience with the Angel Gift program. All involved – staff, volunteers, donors and recipient – were learning new ways of making the program successful in this different reality.

Here at First Met, 49 gifts were purchased and wrapped by their donors. In addition, some First Met folk chose instead to donate financially to the Santa Stocking fund, set up by Our Place staff separately from Angel Gifts; this fund was used to purchase gifts for Our Place Family members who had not signed up in advance.

The overall result was that everyone who wanted a gift received one. A total of 748 gifts were donated to people who might otherwise not have received any gifts or seasonal greetings. This was a greater donor response than in any previous year!

First Met deserves great thanks for its gift donations. In addition, members and staff of our congregation donated time and energy to support this project. Thank you to the office and custodial staff for their work behind the scenes, to the Communications team for their promotion of the project, and to Rev. Shelagh for her strong support of Angel Gifts. In 2021 this included permission to use the First Met sanctuary as the location for the final sorting of the gifts from all over the region (from the Western Communities to Sidney, to Shawnigan/Mill Bay, and everywhere in-between). Very special thanks go to Robin Breckon, Lianne Clark, Andrea Hofmeyr and Mlcia Kanstrup for efficiently and patiently working long hours on the final sorting.



On a personal note, I have been the First Met Angel Gifts coordinator since the very beginning. For the past four years I also have been the Our Place Angel Gifts coordinator. Now I have retired from that responsibility and look forward to continuing as First Met’s coordinator with the hope that I can give my own congregation all the attention it deserves for this important project.

Penny Bond

United Church Women News

We express our loyalty and devotion to Jesus Christ in Christian witness, study, fellowship and service.



MEETINGS IN THE Doreene McLeod Rm: We look forward to meeting together again!

Mildred Mossop: March 14, 2022 at 10:00 am.

Unity Group: March 17, 2022 at 12:00 noon.

The UCW held a special Mission and Service fundraising meeting on November 8. Guest speaker, Allan Saunders, gave a presentation on the work of *Our Place* Society. It was enlightening to learn about the work in which the society is involved at this time. The First Met UCW shared a Christmas luncheon and celebration of the season. We collected socks for *Our Place*.

Other Interesting Activities

Congratulations to Marion Denton for her sale of Christmas cakes. Profits were donated to the UCW.

Thank you to Janet Harper for continuing to connect with First Met young adults with cards and handmade gifts. Janet also volunteered to write to our two ROTOM elders in Uganda, Africa.

We grieve the loss of Joan Dowse on December 12, 2021. Joan was such an active UCW member, one who shared her faith and was an inspiration to her fellow UCW members and the whole congregation. We miss her!

Marie McKee



The Mildred Mossop Unit met to organize sewing supplies to be donated to the Compassionate Warehouse. (Photo taken by Joan Wilkinson.)



**Celebrate PIE Day
with us as we become
an Affirming
congregation**

Sunday, March 13, 1 pm
First Metropolitan United Church
Quadra St. and Balmoral Rd.
(use Balmoral entrance)
(vaccination required)

RSVP: office@firstmetvictoria.com



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

Check out our
website

firstmetvictoria.com

Cultivate Self-confidence

Self-confidence is having faith or trust in yourself, feeling worthy, recognizing your good qualities and using these qualities to benefit yourself and other people. How do you develop self-confidence? The following practices are recommended by Dr. Rick Hanson, psychologist, author and Senior Fellow of the Greater Good Science Center at UC Berkeley:

1. Feel cared about.

Think about people who care about you today, and who have cared about you in the past. Recall situations in which you were included, seen, appreciated, valued, liked and loved. Let these feelings, body sensations, and thoughts of being cared about sink into you to grow a solid base for confidence.

2. Be aware of self-criticism.

Recognize your inner critic. Step back and observe. Dis-identify from self-criticism.

Consider something that happened in the past or a mistake and remember your reactions, sorting them into two piles: wise pile (with a perspective on events) and inner critic pile (with negative reactions). Ask: how do I want to be for myself with this particular challenge? Choose a pile to identify with and take it in.

3. Build up your inner nurturer.

Remember that the inner nurturer is protective, self-compassionate and encouraging.

Build up the inner nurturer to stand up to the inner critic. Do not beat yourself up.

Use a supportive or encouraging approach when dealing with faults or mistakes.

Consider a caring committee inside yourself with different characters on it who represent various kinds of support and wisdom.

4. Feel like a good person.

Consider what people see is good about you: things that are likeable, worthy of friendship, worthy of love. Open to well-deserved feelings of self-worth. Feel that there is much to appreciate about you. Think of things to respect about you. You are worthy in legitimate ways of respect. What is praiseworthy about you? You are worth praising from time to time. Recognize your good intentions. Think of people who see your good intentions. Feel like a well-intended person. Let good feelings spread inside you.

Let go of old feelings of inadequacy. Open to dealing with a good person. You owe it to yourself. Say to yourself: "I am a good person. I recognize that I am a good person. I feel the qualities of a good person sinking in." Feel it and open to it. Let the feeling spread inside you. There is goodness here.

Centering Thoughts:

- I am cared about.
- I am a good person.
- I stand up to my inner critic.
- I reflect on my accomplishments and good qualities.
- I exercise my capacities. I use my talents and skills.
- I spend more time with people who like me.
- I treat others as I wish to be treated myself.

Quotes

"True confidence is much more than mere self-esteem. It's a bone-deep sense of your own worth, that others care about you, and that you can be caring yourself." Rick Hanson, Ph.D.

"No matter what has happened to you in the past, you can become more secure inside yourself. You can look for opportunities to feel cared about and take them into yourself, building up an inner nurturer to push back against the inner critic."

"When you have a foundation of lasting confidence, whatever happens outside you or to you cannot shake the knowledge that there is goodness at the heart of you." Rick Hanson, Ph.D.

Wally Lazaruk, February 2022

Sources and References: [Rick Hanson, The Foundations of Well-Being Resilient - Dr. Rick Hanson](#)



Christmas Treats Appreciated by Shelter Users

Thank you to all who generously contributed to the Our Place Adult Shelter Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve treats. With your support we prepared 60 Christmas Eve gift bags for Our Place family members staying at the First Met shelter and at the Cool Aid Downtown Community Centre seasonal shelter. Each gift bag was filled with warm socks, chocolate, an orange, a candy cane, fresh home-baked cookies from our generous congregants, and a McDonald's gift card. We also provided pizza and pop for both shelters on New Year's Eve. Erin Gesner, the Our Place Site Supervisor of Transitional Housing and Night Shelters, passed along the following note of thanks: "The staff and shelter users really appreciated this kind gesture! The holidays are often a very difficult time for the folks we serve, so it is so kind of you and the church to add some joy to their lives during this time of year."

Thank you again for helping to make this annual project a success!"

Kate Breckon



National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women



After an absence of one year due to COVID restrictions, our annual interfaith service of remembrance was held again on December 6, 2021. This service remembers the 14 young women who were slain at L'École Polytechnique in Montreal in 1989 and brings together the Victoria community to pledge action against violence directed toward women.

Representatives from the Anglican, Jewish, Muslim and Hindu faiths participated and spoke on this issue. Our featured speaker was Mayor Lisa Helps of Victoria. A highlight was a song sung and accompanied on drum by Rose Henry, who represented Indigenous women.

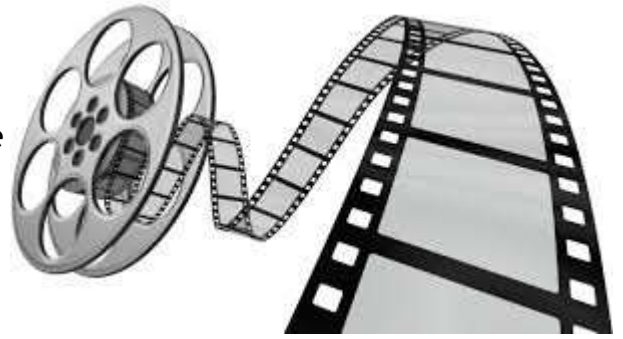
The service was organized by Minister Emerita Megumi Matsuo Saunders. Musical accompaniment was provided by Amy van Wensum, a former choral scholar at First Met. The December 6th service was livestreamed, a first for this service, and has been viewed more than 120 times.



ABOVE LEFT: Rose Henry sings a song honouring the victims of violence.

LEFT: The sanctuary was decorated with red dresses, remembering the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women. Red ribbons were tied on the railing at the entrance to the sanctuary in remembrance.

Movies at the Met



While many COVID restrictions have been removed, many still enjoy watching films at home. Here are some films that you might like to view. These have been suggested by fellow congregational members. Grab some popcorn and enjoy.

You can check out: www.rottentomatoes.com to get

info on the films; 🍅 indicates rating: %=critics score / % = audience score. Sources will be indicated where available.

The Good Liar (Netflix) 🍅

(Helen Mirran) Career con artist Roy Courtnay can hardly believe his luck when he meets well-to-do widow Betty McLeish online. As Betty opens her life and home to him, Roy is surprised to find himself caring about her, turning what should be a cut-and-dry swindle into the most treacherous tightrope walk of his life.

Wild Rose (Netflix) 🍅 92 / 87

“Rising star Jessie Buckley shines as an ex-con and wannabe country star from Glasgow, in this affecting British film that’s definitely a bit grittier than *A Star Is Born*.” “The balance between crowd-pleaser and cliché is a fine one, but *Wild Rose* manages the former while also delivering a timely message from a voice we desperately needed to hear.”

Munich: The Edge of War (Netflix) 🍅 86/78

(Jeremy Irons) Convincing characters, real-life dilemmas and immersive production values enhance this spy thriller set during events leading into WWII. Although we know the ending, this thriller keeps us on our toes.

The Hope Gap (Netflix) 🍅 64/70

Grace lives an idyllic life in a British seaside town, but her world soon comes crashing down when her husband of 29 years tells her he’s leaving her for another woman. Through stages of shock, disbelief and anger, with support from her son, Grace ultimately regains her footing while learning it’s never too late to be happy. (Bill Nighy, Annette Bening)

If you have some suggestions for the next newsletter, please send to Barry Rolston: bwrolston@telus.net and he will put them in future newsletters. Indicate how each film can be accessed where possible.

Starter Kits Help Adults Moving to Housing

Good news! A kit went out on February 9th to a man who is leaving the Therapeutic Recovery Centre and moving to community housing. We wish him well in this positive transition. That same week, we had a call for a kit for a woman moving into assisted living. That kit went out February 16.

We have most of the needs for 3 or so more kits. These kits are greatly appreciated by those moving from shelter or transitional housing to more permanent housing on their own. Thanks to all who have so generously donated to this work. Please consider us if you are tackling spring cleaning or downsizing. Call me if you have any questions

Joan Mickelson, 250-385-4033



Flatlander Walking Group



The Flatlander Walking Group met February 5 for a walk along the Dallas Waterfront, followed by refreshments at the Breakwater Bistro. As you can see from the picture, there was an excellent turnout.

Join them March 5 from 1:00 to 3:00 pm for walk around Cattle Point, followed by coffee/tea at Ruth and Dean's Café in Estevan Village. The Flatlander group meets the first Saturday of the month, weather permitting, and everyone is invited. Upcoming dates are April 2 and May 7. Contact Vicky at Vicky.Attwell@outlook.com.

New Book in the Mountford Library

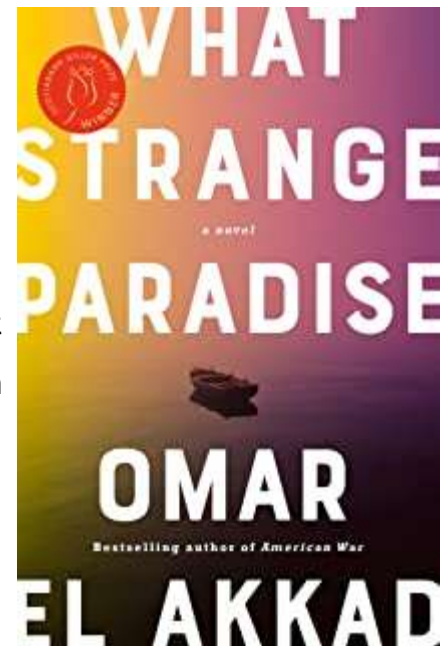
What Strange Paradise: A Novel
by Omar El Akkad, 2021

WINNER OF THE 2021 SCOTIABANK GILLER PRIZE

“Great literature about migration should rehumanize the discourse surrounding it. *What Strange Paradise* does a fantastic job of that. Touching, gritty, and told in a unique voice that places childhood at the center of the discussion, this is a tender, haunting work about refugees everyone should read.” —NPR

According to the United Nations High Commissioner on Refugees:

- **82.4 million people** were forcibly displaced worldwide as a result of conflict, persecution, human rights violations and violence. Now, humanity is witnessing the highest levels of displacement on record, including **26.4 million** refugees, **48.0 million** internally displaced people and **4.1 million** asylum-seekers.
- Syria, Venezuela, Afghanistan, South Sudan and Myanmar account for two-thirds of people displaced across borders.
- **42 per cent** of forcibly displaced persons are **children under the age of 18**.
- **Between November 2015 and April 2019, 63,938 Syrian refugees were admitted to Canada**, according to Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada.



Omar El Akkad is the author of *American War*. Born in Cairo, Egypt, he was raised in Doha, Qatar, until he moved to Canada with his family. He is an award-winning journalist and author who has covered the NATO-led war in Afghanistan, the military trials at Guantánamo Bay, the Arab Spring revolution in Egypt, the Black Lives Matter movement in Ferguson, Missouri, and many other of the most important events of the last decade. Formerly of the *Globe and Mail*, he is the recipient of Canada's National Newspaper Award for investigative reporting and the Goff Penny Memorial Prize for Young Canadian Journalists, as well as three National Magazine Award honourable mentions. He lives in Portland, Oregon.

Denise Holman

Hubert Norbury, photographer

It may be hard to picture our church buildings in the context of architectural modernism of sixty years ago, but photographs by Hubert Norbury do just that. Norbury was born at Liverpool, England in 1897 and came to Canada after service in World War I. During WWII, he served with the Royal Canadian Naval Volunteer Reserve and continued as an officer with the photographic branch of the Pacific Coast Command at Naden until 1958.

Of great interest is Norbury's photographic work after military retirement. From 1958 to 1965 he was an architectural photographer in Victoria, serving Farmer Construction and other clients. Almost 1800 negatives and 600 prints are held in the Hubert Norbury fonds at the University of Victoria Archives.

Norbury's work has been studied and exhibited. The 2009 Maltwood Gallery exhibition <https://bit.ly/3vepXLE> was accompanied by a catalogue of essays and photographs. Allan Collier, guest curator, writes about the importance of Norbury's work.

"Norbury succeeded in documenting a building boom that transformed Victoria from a sleeping retreat to a vibrant city, rejuvenated by progressive town planning, a new university campus, and an international airport. His photographs serve as a rich and detailed record of a unique era in Victoria's architectural history when modern ideas and new building technologies were embraced by its architects and increasingly accepted by the general public." (Introduction, p.5)

Our First Met archival collection contains a number of Norbury photographs dating from 1962 to 1964. Whether Norbury was contracted or volunteered to make these images is unknown. He was a United Church member at St. Aidan's in Victoria. Sixty years later, Norbury's tack-sharp architectural images put familiar parts of our church in a new light.

Margery Hadley, Archives and Heritage



Fellowship hall, First United Church / Hubert Norbury, 1962 (*First Met Archives / FUC_2004-1006-1*)



Fellowship hall interior, First United Church / Hubert Norbury, 1962 (*First Met Archives / TF_2004-1006-2*)

More Norbury photos, p. 17

Vision is the art of seeing what is invisible to others.

—Jonathan Swift



Sanctuary, First United Church / Hubert Norbury, 1962
(First Met Archives / FUC_2004-0833)



Fire damaged Sunday school wing, First United Church /
Hubert Norbury, 1962 (First Met Archives / FUC_2004-1011)

Thank You to the City of Victoria

The City of Victoria exempts registered charities and other non-profit organizations providing services in certain categories defined by the city from paying property taxes for a period of three years upon approval of those organizations' applications. First Metropolitan United Church continues to appreciate the City of Victoria's granting of a permissive tax exemption for the 2020 to 2022 taxation years. As per the table below, this exemption is worth just over \$50,000 per year:

Type of Tax	2020	2021	2022	Total over 3 Years
Total Exemption	\$48,800	\$50,264	\$51,771	\$150,835

In 2022, First Met will have to submit a request for another three-year exemption. With the services that First Met offers to the North Park community located in the City of Victoria including an overnight sleeping shelter and a food hamper program, the request will probably be granted though there are no guarantees.

So once again, a big thank you to the City of Victoria!

Liane Clark, Treasurer



*"As we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the
highest appreciation is not to utter words,
but to live by them."*

— John F. Kennedy

Evolving Church Team

How we got started

A few years ago, some folks from First Met attended a weekend workshop called “Weird Church” led by Beth Ann Estock, author of the book *Weird Church*. Weird Church is a movement making church more relevant to the realities of the day. It asks the question: what would Jesus do? Following this workshop, we created a team called Weird Church, which “evolved” into Evolving Church, to work on some of the ideas from the book.

Why is it important to evolve?

We are in a period where churches are closing, and one report projects that by 2025 only 34,000 people will be attending churches in all of Canada. It has become for some a “club” and people can’t see the relevance any longer. Young people refer to themselves as “spiritual but not religious”. Some I’ve talked to see religion as the cause of war, and don’t want to have anything to do with it. The post-modern Christian movement questions the literalism of Bible stories. Unfortunately, many churches haven’t brought their congregations along with a new, more metaphorical understanding of these stories.

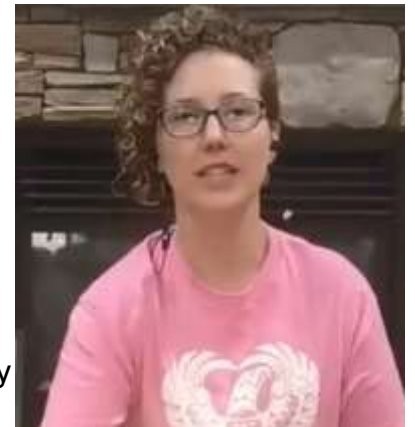
In Cumberland, Rev Ingrid Brown, a young minister, is reaching out to her community and finding out that people are yearning for spiritual meaning in their lives, but not in traditional church. She responded by doing church differently: having what she called Coffee and Conversations, Potluck, and Winter Walks in the Woods Church. The group developed these new ways of getting together with a spiritual dimension which seemed to respond to the needs of the community.

What will help us make some changes?

Our Evolving Church team has some ideas for change. We are working more closely with the North Park Neighbourhood Association, whose Executive Director, Sarah Murray, has an ear to the ground and the energy and passion of great leadership. Our congregation has been very supportive of giving something special to the children in the families who use the Grocery Hamper program run by the NPNA out of First Met. In the past, we also held free community BBQs, a free pasta dinner, provided some meals to the Tent city at Central Park prior to Covid, and gave some funding for the development of Tiny Town. Covid has kept us back from doing more, but we believe the end is in sight! We are not the first group to do some of these things. For many years, this congregation had turkey dinners in the Fellowship Hall for those in need. Perhaps we are an extension of that idea. And there are many groups in our church who quietly work towards filling many needs.

We in Evolving Church would also like to see some differently styled worship services, perhaps out in the open air, or on a different day or time, with newer ways of telling old stories and perhaps some modern music. We will be working with Rev Ingrid Brown of Weird Church in Cumberland for some new ideas. We will be bringing more information to the congregation as we move along, and want everyone to know that we welcome new members. We meet on the first Wednesday of the month at 10:30 am at the church. How do you see the church of the future unfolding?

Emily MacDonald, Team Leader, Evolving Church, emilymacd@telus.net or 250-886-9975



Rev. Ingrid Brown,
Cumberland Weird Church

“In any given moment we have two options: to step forward into growth or step back into safety.”

—Abraham Maslow

Repair Café

Come join us and the North Park Neighbourhood Association on March 26th for our very first Repair Café!

A Repair Café is an event free to all where people can bring their broken or damaged items and have them fixed by our volunteers while learning how to do the repairs themselves.

Why throw away good stuff? These days, we tend throw away anything as soon as it stops working perfectly, even things with hardly anything wrong that could have new life with a simple repair. By having our things fixed instead of thrown away, we can create a sustainable product life cycle and help the environment.

Would you like to volunteer? We have many volunteer opportunities at the Repair Café from fixing to greeting, donating cookies and helping with refreshments. Your support is greatly appreciated. For more information or to volunteering, please contact communications@firstmetvictoria.com.

Our Repair Café will be held on March 26th from 10am - 2pm in the Fellowship Hall.

Zach Young

Saturday March 26, 10am-2pm @ 932 Balmoral

REPAIR CAFE

path
READY TO THE COME

First Met
United Church

SATURDAY, MARCH 26
10AM-2PM
932 BALMORAL, FELLOWSHIP HALL

What to bring:

- small electronics and appliances (smaller than a microwave)
- small furniture (chairs, stools, etc)
- clothing
- jewelry
- outdoor gear
- computers & smartphones (computer training & troubleshooting)

WHAT IS A REPAIR CAFE?

A repair cafe is a community driven event that is free to everyone! Bring your broken or damaged items and work with a volunteer repair-er to fix it!

WANT TO VOLUNTEER?

We're looking for fixers and menders! If you have a handy skill you're willing to share, please contact communications@firstmetvictoria.com



Fiona unplugged the drain in the Balmoral Gardens Parking Lot after a heavy rain.



Our banner for our "Housing the Holy" Advent series.



Board Chair Edeana Malcolm posing with our Angel Wings backdrop.

Building a First Met Online Community

The COVID pandemic has changed things dramatically, in our work, in our schools, and in our churches. In March 2020, we were suddenly thrust into a socially-distanced world in which in-person attendance at worship was not possible. While many of us have hoped for a “return to normal”, it has become clear that we will not return to things as they were, but will find a “new normal”. One impact for churches is that we will not see a return to regular church attendance for all congregants. During the pandemic, some have become comfortable with the notion of online worship, perhaps with a cup of coffee in hand and wearing pyjamas and slippers. Still others have family commitments that preclude attending church on Sundays at 11:00 am, or are unable to come to church due to disability or caregiving responsibilities. The millennial generation is very comfortable with an online world. But what everyone has missed is the sense of community and interaction with others. This has led us to create a new way of being community online.

We invite you to join [First Met Online](#). Going to church should be simple, joyful and an option for everyone. So we are coming to you: if you have a smart phone, tablet, or computer, our church is at your fingertips.

Join our live chat during the livestreamed Sunday worship service to begin to take part. Following the church service, we have a virtual coffee hour in which you can meet with others and discuss the sermon or other topics that move you. Our conversations are hosted by Jodie Brady-Quinton, a fourth-year student in Writing and French at the University of Victoria, a leader of Inclusive Christians and a co-op education student at First Met in the summer of 2021. Jodie has recently become a member of First Met and is embarking on the initial steps of discerning a call to ministry in the United Church.

If you want to take part in the group chat, the resources, prayers, the Sunday gathering we call worship or other online activities, we are glad to have you with us. You can also contact Jodie directly at online@firstmetvictoria.com



Welcome Zach Young!

Zach Young, a second year student in Electrical Engineering at the University of Victoria is our Communications Technician (cooperative education) for the January to April 2022 semester. Zach is working as part of the technical team producing our livestreamed services and has taken on a special project to organize the Repair Café that First Met is co-sponsoring with the North Park Neighbourhood Association on March 26 from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm.



In Memoriam



Jonathan Beel
Died Dec 25, 2021



Joan Dowse
Died Dec 13, 2021



Agnes Lesyk
Died Dec 30, 2021

We also extend our condolences to Stewart MacKay and the extended family on the death of Murray Mackay on February 3, 2022.



Neil Drewry
Died Feb 24, 2022

Friendship Club Looking Forward to Meeting in Person



Like so many other groups in the church, the Friendship Club meetings have been “on hold” since we stopped meeting outdoors in the fall. As well as keeping in touch by telephone and email, we had a very happy gathering at the Four Mile Restaurant just before Christmas. It was nice to have the chance to greet old friends before the holidays. It was also good to see Ellwood Derbyshire with his daughter Mary at the church service on December 19, where we acknowledged his 98th birthday. We are looking forward to being able to be together again as weather and COVID restrictions allow.

EVERYONE IS WELCOME !

*Please
Join Us*

Caregiver Support Group

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

First Met Knitters

Meetings second Tuesday of each month Sept to June from 1:00 to 3:00 pm. For more information call **Joan Mickelson** 250-385-4033 or **Shirley Chatfield** 250-388-9401.

Men's Water Into Wine Group

Gathers the second Tuesday of each month from 7:00–9:00 pm via zoom or at the Bent Mast Pub. Email fmuc.men@shaw.ca for more information.

Ramblers Hiking Group

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

United Church Women:

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

Tai Chi

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

Women Exploring Spirituality

Meet 4th Monday of the month from 1:00–3:00 pm from Sep to Jun. (zoom) Contact **Rev. Shelagh MacKinnon** for more information.

Yoga in the Chapel

Gentle Yoga

Mondays, Thursdays, 10:30-11:45 am

Chair Yoga

Wednesdays 12:30–1:30 pm

NPNA Grocery Hamper Program

Thursdays from 8:00 am to noon in the Fellowship Hall. Contact NPNA to volunteer or receive a hamper: npna@npna.ca

Flatlanders Walking Group

Meets 1st Saturday of the month from 1:00 to 3:00 pm at various locations. For more information, contact **Vicky Attwell** at 778-433-6061

Sanctuary Choir Rehearsals

Thursdays starting Mar 3, from 7:00 to 9:00 pm. Contact **Kelly Charlton** at 250-388-5188, ext 231 or **Mary Byrne** at 250-370-1797.

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.



Parking Options

Week Days

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

Sundays

- Balmoral Road ~ Angle Parking
- Ground Level ~ East of Balmoral Gardens Apartments

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

First Metropolitan
United Church of Canada

*A centre for
spiritual growth and
community engagement*

932 Balmoral Road Victoria BC V8T 1A8
Phone 250-388-5188 Fax 250-388-5186