

SPIRIT

MAGAZINE

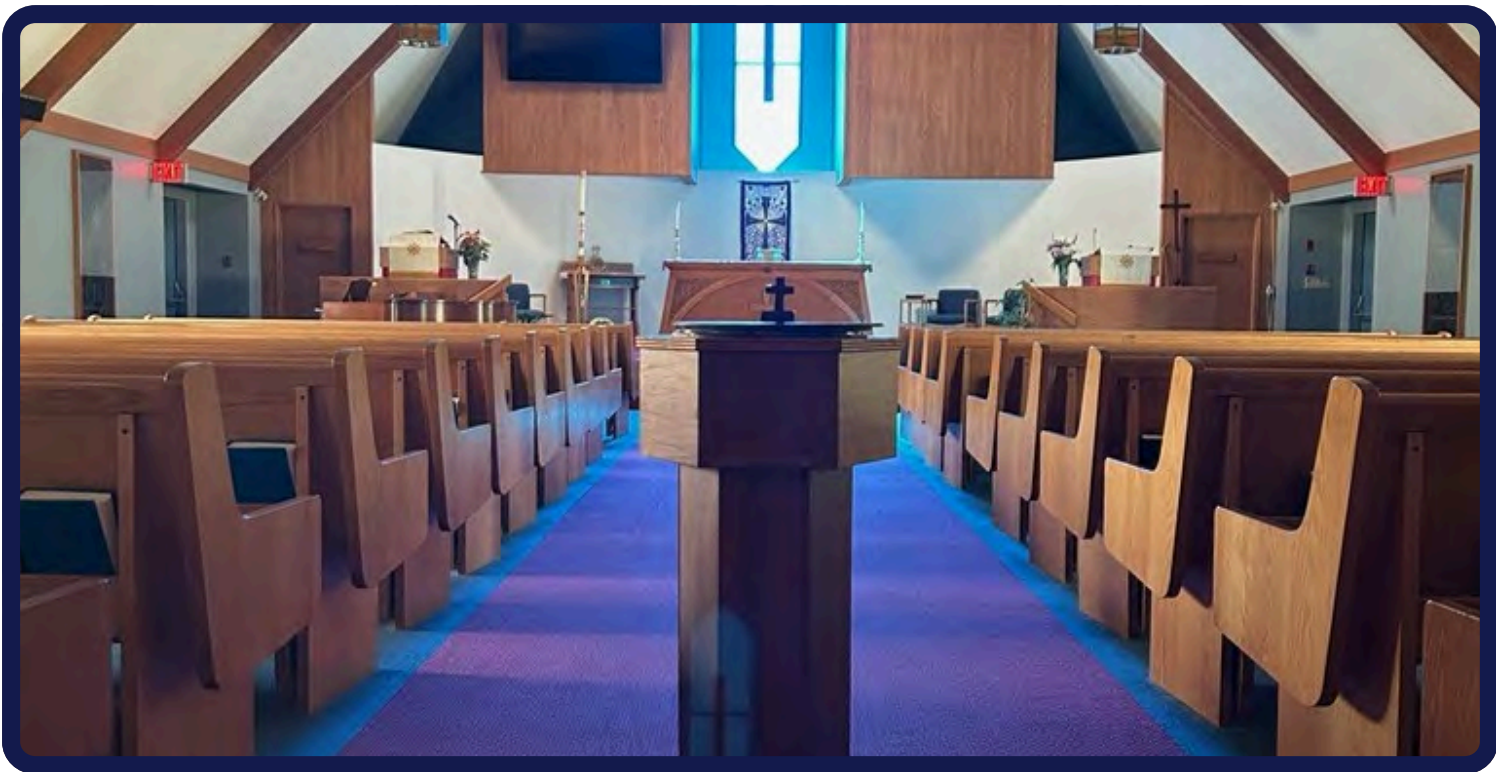
Why I Believe



SPRING/SUMMER
EDITION

2025

Issue 1



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Spring/Summer 2025-Issue 1

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Notes From the Editor

As I write this introduction to this issue of Spirit – Spring 2025, the sunshine is streaming in and lighting up our kitchen and family room; and the backyard is a whole variety of shades of green! My neighbour's cherry tree is in full bloom; the Plant Sale is next week; and the birds wake me up every morning at 5:30! Spring is here!

Many reports reflect how we are doing and what we have been doing as a congregation. There are several inspiring articles from our Treasurer and Rector's Warden on giving, ways to give and church finances. There are sections on: what's been happening and ongoing events.

In our Interest and Reflection section, be sure to check out the articles on "That's Why I Believe!" They are powerful, thought-provoking articles on belief. Many thanks to all who responded to the theme for this issue of Spirit. I am sure all of you could have written such an article. Think of your own faith. Were you raised in the church? Are you a "cradle Anglican"? Did you experience God in Nature or were you in the "wilderness" when you experienced God? Maybe you attended a healing service or the 10:00 service on Sunday morning when God spoke to you? Did you come to believe while gaining knowledge of your faith through reading, taking a course?

Or perhaps all it took was being with others who said to you, "That's why I believe!"

Jane

Mark 9:23 Keep the faith and believe that God will do the impossible in your life. All things are possible for one who believes.

With Gratitude, the Diocese of British Columbia acknowledges that for thousands of years the Coast Salish, Nuuchahnulth, and Kwakwaka'wakw peoples have walked gently on the unceded territories where we now live, work, worship, and play. We seek a new relationship with the first peoples here, one based on honour and respect, and we thank them for their hospitality.

CONTENTS

- 02 EDITOR'S NOTES
- 04 STEPHANIE'S STORIES
- 05 WARDEN'S WORDS
- 06 SPIRIT OF FINANCE
- 07 CHURCH FINANCES, A FOUR LEGGED STOOL
- 08 BUILDING MATTERS
- 09 MINISTRIES
- 10 COMMUNITY OUTREACH
- 11 ONGOING ACTIVITY
- 12 INTEREST & REFLECTION
- 12 Why Wouldn't I Want to Believe, H. Finn
- 12 If You Ask in My Name, P. Woods
- 13 To Everything There is a Season, B. Henshall
- 15 A Garden, The Spirit that Keeps on Giving, G. Armitage
- 16 My Journey to Faith, K. Fitzsimmons
- 17 Meeting God on God's Terms, K. Melvin
- 18 PHOTO PAGE
- 21 ANNOUNCEMENTS
- 22 STAFF & LEADERS

THE PROMISE OF JOY



REV. STEPHANIE WOOD

“Isaiah 35:1-10

The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad;
the desert shall rejoice and blossom;
like the crocus it shall blossom abundantly
and rejoice with joy and shouting.
The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it,
the majesty of Carmel and Sharon.
They shall see the glory of the Lord,
the majesty of our God.

Strengthen the weak hands
and make firm the feeble knees.

Say to those who are of a fearful heart,
“Be strong, do not fear!
Here is your God.
He will come with vengeance,
with terrible recompense.
He will come and save you.”

Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,
and the ears of the deaf shall be opened;

then the lame shall leap like a deer,
and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy.
For waters shall break forth in the wilderness
and streams in the desert;

the burning sand shall become a pool
and the thirsty ground springs of water;
the haunt of jackals shall become a swamp;
the grass shall become reeds and rushes.

A highway shall be there,
and it shall be called the Holy Way;
the unclean shall not travel on it,
but it shall be for God’s people;
no traveler, not even fools, shall go astray.



As I contemplate this reflection about ‘why I believe’, I am somehow struck by the inevitability of death. Not my own, but of a good friend’s Mom who’s been recently diagnosed with cancer. She isn’t doing well. From what my friend shares with me it doesn’t sound like her Mom is long for this earth. So, when I come to the words of Isaiah 35, and the picture they paint of the joy that awaits God’s redeemed, perhaps this is why the words that stand out to me are words like wilderness, desert and parched land, feeble hands and fearful hearts. I think this is why I’m grateful for the reminder this passage brings, that the promise of joy is for the ones who know deep grief, longing and struggle.

Indeed, in our struggle for justice, in our advocacy and activism, we are naturally drawn to notice what is broken and in need of repair. In our Advent season, we prepare to celebrate the birth of Christ, this good news of great joy and God’s reign. Isaiah 35 points to joy we can know, even in waiting. This is joy that doesn’t gloss over our struggles and sorrow, but is the redemption and restoration of these very things! In this way, joy is not only our hope for the future, but also our courage in whatever circumstances we face. When we are tempted to hide our face from sorrow, be that our own or that of our neighbours, joy gives us the strength and resolve to look and see things differently. This indeed, is ‘why I believe’.

Spring has sprung and another year is upon us. The dark, short days of January and February are gone, and we are now enjoying the longer days of light.



Warden's Words

PAULINE WOODS

A time to celebrate life, the awakening of nature with vibrant colours and endless opportunities to refresh our mind, body and spirit; a time of growth and renewal. And we at St. Peter are brimming with growth. To say we are an active parish is an understatement. So many do so much to keep our parish alive and well and we are blessed. Your talents do not go unnoticed.

We are so grateful for our rector, Stephanie, and her spiritual guidance and the many opportunities we are given to continue to learn to open our hearts and minds and receive God's grace. It is so lovely to see new faces joining our congregation. Did you know that it only takes 37 seconds for a person to pick up the "vibe" when they enter a new church? The door greeter and sides people play a very valuable role.

At our AGM we welcomed Rick Monchak as Deputy Peoples' Warden and Zenon Garnett as a new parish council member. We give thanks to Pam Hedderson and Sue Vickery for their time and contributions last year.

Our rentals play a huge role in the church financials. Updates of our finances and ways to give are in the Sunday bulletins. Your offertory is used for the maintenance of our church. "Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For the measure you use, it will be measured to you." *Luke 6:38*

As Bishop Anna reminded all of us at Wardens' Day in March that we can have a bright future if we have an open mind, open heart, and an open will. Let's try things, let's experiment with an active mind and let's iterate by bringing mind, will and heart together. There is no "we should" but "we will" with God's help.

May the blessing of God continue to shine upon us as we continue to do His good work.

WE WILL!



THE SPIRIT OF FINANCE

HOLLY FINN

***“Give with a Joyful Heart.
Tithing is not merely an
obligation but an act of joy
and gratitude towards God.***

***When we give with a
cheerful heart, we
acknowledge the blessings
we have received and share
our abundance with others.***

***Let a sense of joy and
thankfulness drive your
generosity.”***

Then:

I was born, raised, baptized, and confirmed at St. Alban’s Anglican Church in Brooks, AB. I sang in the junior choir and was married there as well. After our marriage, there was a big gap in church-going until after our daughters were born and then we had them baptized at the Anglican Church in Sherwood Park, AB. We moved to Airdrie, AB in 1983 and I started attending St. Francis of Assisi Anglican Church. I taught Sunday School, sang with the music team and was even a lay assistant and reader.

We moved to Campbell River in 2011, and I started coming to church, probably in 2012. I had a chat with Blair Haggart and, because I had been a treasurer at St. Francis, I offered my services as treasurer. He was very glad to have Jill Cook and me as co-treasurers. We switched to using electronic accounting, and a few years ago, Jill resigned from the position and so here I am, a lifetime and loyal Anglican.

Now:

I love working for you in this position and hope to continue for many more years to come. As mentioned at the AGM, we are doing okay financially. We do have money in the bank and have set aside \$80,000 in cashable GIC’s. I am worried however about our weekly donations and hope that you will consider reviewing your offerings. For example, our envelope offerings for the week of Feb 21-28 were just \$265.00. We do collect \$6,600/month with the PAR program (auto withdrawals) and that is a blessing.

I want to thank the ladies of the ACW for their hard work and dedication as well as those of you who work in the background, baking, fixing, Zooming, and providing us with such great music and singing. I want to thank Stephanie for her smile, leadership, and spiritual guidance. We are fortunate to have such an amazing congregation, and I always look forward to Sundays. How about you?

In Christ, Holly



CHURCH FINANCES AT ST. PETER AS A FOUR-LEGGED STOOL

TONY SMITH

Over the years I have lived in different locations and attended a wide variety of churches. Some were big and some were small. Some were Lutheran and some were Anglican. One thing they all had in common was concerns about their finances. Although it is a good idea to pay attention to finances and practice good stewardship, I noticed that none of the churches ever closed because the money ran out. A few of the churches did close but all for reasons unrelated to the church finances.

This got me to thinking about the framework for a church's finances and the analogy came to me of the four-legged stool. A four-legged stool is stable and very difficult to overturn. You can get by on a three-legged stool, but the stool is less stable. So, what are the four legs? The first leg, as you would assume, is the giving of the congregation. The second leg is fundraising events; either solo or ongoing. The third leg is fees and rentals for use of the church buildings. The fourth leg is investment income coming mostly from bequests.

It should be noted that the legs should be of roughly equal length. If one leg is much longer than the others, then the stool is extremely unstable. In other words, the financing, like any good investment portfolio, needs to be balanced. An example may illustrate what I mean. My late father-in-law was called as an interim clergy to a large church in a major Canadian city. The church building was very large but not the congregation. Demographics had changed the neighborhood to a commercial area and the congregation had dwindled to about a dozen on any given Sunday. The only thing keeping the doors open was a very large investment fund accumulated over the many years of that congregation's existence. Eventually, the decision was made to sell the building and use the funds to finance the establishment of congregations in areas of growth. That church had a very long leg but was unstable and ultimately unsustainable.

At St. Peter, we are on the three-legged stool. Our congregational offering is growing; we have several fundraisers over the year, and we have robust rentals of the church buildings. What we lack is any investment income. The stool is holding up, but we would have a lot more stability with the addition of the fourth leg, the investment income. It would provide the long-term stability that we lack, and which causes some of our church family members to worry about our viability. This year, as part of the budget, the council has established a reserve account as a first step and some of our rental income will go into that account. At present, we receive no investment income other than a small amount that was used to support the church on Cortes Island.

If anyone reading this article is interested in finding out about bequests, please let me, a warden, or the treasurer, know, and we can arrange for an expert to come and present information on this subject. Or, if you have one, talk to your financial advisor or accountant about how to set this up.

In conclusion, I would be remiss in not also letting you know that our Diocese sees us as one of its more stable and vibrant parishes. That addition of a fourth leg will provide longevity as well.

BUILDING MATTERS



Floor After



In Progress



Kitchen After

BUILDING UPDATES!

1. Users have provided highly positive feedback about the newly installed hall floor and the freshly painted kitchen.
2. In February, we faced a malfunction with the Sanctuary WiFi thermostat, which required the unit to be replaced.
3. A new, much simpler Irrigation system control unit was installed in April and is ready for the 2025 watering season.
4. This winter, we were fortunate to experience fewer snow events than usual, resulting in less need for snow removal plowing. However, there was an increased requirement for salt applications in the parking lot, as temperatures frequently dropped below freezing, creating slippery conditions.
5. In January, an incident occurred where a Canada Post delivery person accidentally struck and damaged our parking lot light due to driver inattention. The replacement is scheduled for May, as we have now received all necessary materials.



*Tire marks the spot
Observe Caution.*

Zoom Ministry

TONY SMITH



Most of us got familiar with Zoom when everything was shut down during the COVID pandemic. Zoom became an important tool to keep up our social interactions. Though the lockdown is well behind us, Zoom still fulfills that function for members of our congregation. People who are home sick or are housebound are still using Zoom as their access to worship and to keep in touch with their church community. So, keep that in mind when we pass the Peace during worship. Look up at the big screen and wave. Those attending the service by Zoom see you and are waving back. They really appreciate it.

If you are interested in getting more involved in the Zoom ministry, please talk to me. I'll gladly show you the setup and how the whole thing works.

Prayer Ministry

Prayer Chain Requests

Let the Prayer Chain know if you have a prayer concern. You may contact the church at 250-286-1613 or email the office at prayerchain@stpeterscampellriver.com. There is also a box in the Narthex where you may leave a prayer message. Prayers will be offered for one month, if you wish longer, please contact the Prayer Chain.



John 1:5: The light shines in the darkness and the darkness did not overcome it.

1. Welcome and opening meditation.
2. Chat about how the group can be helpful both to ourselves and others.
3. Light the candles.
4. Discussion topic 'what helps us and others'.
5. Prayers.
6. Blessing Rev. S. Wood.

Matthew 11: 28-30

Come unto me all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly of heart; and you shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.

We have diversified our healing service to create a monthly meeting of fellowship and faith where we can pray and talk about health concerns for ourselves and/or others. We aim to build up a faith community that stands with each other.

We will meet on the last Sunday of each month at 4 pm in the Sanctuary. Everyone is welcome especially if you would like prayer for your health concerns or for someone you know who is ill. We will also be discussing ways to cope with illness from a spiritual viewpoint. All are welcome to come and light a candle, pray, find and give support from and to others for their own health concerns or of those they love. Individual anointing with oil for healing will be available from Rev. Stephanie at each meeting.

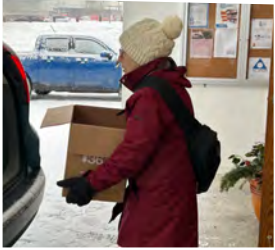
COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Make a Little Noise!



This Winter, Georgia Smith once again spearheaded a Winter Food Bank Drive to support our local food bank and those in need.

In addition to spare change and cash donations, we gathered groceries and essential dry goods, including scarves, socks, jackets, gloves, and hats. When it came time to deliver the funds and groceries to the food bank, neither snow nor a missing delivery truck could deter the team. The minister's car was filled with enthusiasm (and snowflakes), and the collected items were on their way to the food bank.



Thank you all for your generous support.



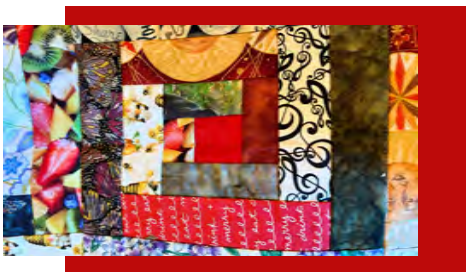
Community Kitchen

For many years, our church has been involved in the community program at Hama?elas, located next to Kwesa Place. Since 2020, Kwesa has been providing care for 80 to 120 individuals each day. However, the City of Campbell River has acquired the building with plans to redevelop the downtown area. As a result, Kwesa Place is now in urgent need of a new location. Please pray that a suitable new home can be found so that these essential services can continue.

A heartfelt thank you goes out to Diana for her unwavering dedication in organizing, preparing, and serving meals for approximately 65 people! We also extend our gratitude to the members of our congregation who assisted in providing and serving these meals.



Quilters



Thanks to the kind-hearted quilters at St. Peter, residents in local care homes will receive a beautifully crafted handmade quilt. Our dedicated volunteers generously offer their time and skills to create quilts infused with love and warmth in every stitch. When a family loses a loved one, they can take the quilt home as a cherished keepsake. Each quilt serves as a heartfelt gift, providing invaluable comfort to the residents.

Monday Morning Coffee Hour

You are invited to meet in person for Monday Morning Coffee Hour at St. Peter Anglican Church. All you need is yourself and a travel mug of coffee. We meet in St. Matthew's room. Also, for those who are unable to attend in person, or you want to join us from home, we have a Zoom link. Meeting ID: 81205874273

Every Monday from 10 to 11 am is the time to gather, chat and share 'what's happening'. No reservations required.

Chat & Chill Hospitality Morning

Life is more enjoyable when shared with friends. Whether you're eager to engage in a conversation, meet new people, or simply have a friendly chat over a cup of coffee, this is the perfect place for you!

- This group is dedicated to fundraising for the church and proudly sponsors the Christmas Market.
- They actively participate in the church garden and are enthusiastic supporters of the Plant Sale.
- Some members create quilts that are donated to residents of local care homes.
- They also play a vital role in organizing exciting events such as the Salmon Supper, drive-in sundaes, and trivia nights.

The group gathers every Friday for planning, coffee, camaraderie, and laughter. Why not join them for some coffee and delightful conversation?

Mindfulness Meditation Practice

The mindfulness group meets at 3:30 pm every Wednesday in the library (or outside on nice summer afternoons). They meditate for about 40 minutes using meditations from different traditions. New members are always welcome. Do drop in and see if mindfulness is helpful for you.

Salvation Army Kettle Fundraiser

Every Christmas season, our volunteers continue to support the Salvation Army Fundraiser. The following is a 'Seasonal Anecdote' from our coordinator, Pam.

"A lady gifted me the jacket I am wearing in the picture, right there on the spot. My sister wore it at the next shift then we donated it to the Salvation Army Thrift Store. Tammy, the coordinator of the Kettle Volunteers knew the owner of the jacket. She used to supervise the Kettle in Willow Point. I received so many comments about it. People truly are so kind."



Interest & Reflection

Trina and Stephanie had a recent conversation which ended with one of them exclaiming, 'And, that's why I believe!' Out of this conversation came the theme for articles for this Spirit, Spring 2025. We passed this onto you as a theme and you responded with some powerful, reflective pieces of writing. Thank you so much for sharing your faith with us. In no particular order, enjoy the following.

WHY WOULDN'T I WANT TO BELIEVE?

HOLLY FINN

Ever since I was a little girl, I have gone to church. My parents were very active in the Anglican Church. I was baptized and later, confirmed as an Anglican. I sang in the junior choir, went to church camp and was married (50 years ago!) at that same church, St. Alban's, in Brooks, Alberta.

I kind of fell off of attending church but after we had children, we wanted to have them baptized and did so at the Anglican Church in Sherwood Park, AB. As they grew, church attendance faltered, as our lives got busier (I am sure you can relate).

We moved to Airdrie, AB and something was missing. I remember walking in the doors of St. Francis of Assisi church, feeling shy and a bit uncomfortable and being greeted with a smile and a handshake by people who, eventually, became very good friends. I taught Sunday School (for a VERY short time), sang with the music team, was a member of Council and also was the Treasurer.

I don't quite remember the sequence of events, but I went to Cursillo and found such support and love from the team that participated – The Worship Team, Music Team, Table Team Leaders and the Kitchen Team. This just increased my love for God and I went home very moved and excited about my faith journey.

Shortly thereafter, we had a prayer session with Charles Alexander. We stood in a semi-circle at the front of the church, and he told us to ask God for help with our heart's desire. What I wanted, really wanted, was to speak in tongues. It sounds silly, I know, but that is what I prayed for. Charles wandered around the circle, tapping each person on the head. Suddenly (it still gives me goosebumps), as I was praying and he came around to me and tapped me on the head, out of my mouth came a sound – words that didn't make sense, but the Spirit was upon me and it was amazing! A gift given and received.

I still use that gift when I need to speak to God and don't really know what to say. I prayerfully spoke in such a way to God when my father-in-law was passing away. I like to think that it helped his journey. When our daughter converted to Islam, I gave my worries to God and He helped me accept that which I could not change.

I have been blessed with so many, what I call miracles. Why wouldn't I want to believe? The Spirit of God moves amongst us all – invite Him in and enjoy the peace. God bless.

Going Through the Storms of Life with God's Grace and Mercy



IF YOU ASK IN MY NAME...

PAULINE WOODS

I was always a believer...or was taught to. My church life started at the Lutheran church in Vancouver at Sunday school with the neighbours. My mom thought it would be a good thing for me to go with them although my parents never attended. Then in grade four I attended Little Flower Academy, run by the Sisters of Saint Ann where I graduated in 1980. The school would have Catholic services in the gym throughout the year which always made me feel a bit uneasy. The priests, to me, were stern, strict, scary and old. I could not receive communion as I was not baptized. When I asked my mom why, she told me it was not her decision to make, it was my choice to decide as I journeyed through life.

Fast forward to April 1997. Up to this point I went to church occasionally with friends. Any church that they attended. I enjoyed it. My daughter Jaclyn was 2 years old.

This is the year I was in the shock of my life...I was 34 years old and diagnosed with breast cancer. I remember that day like it was yesterday. I was going to die and who was going to look after my baby girl? Why me? There was no history in my family. I was too young. And so, my journey of believing really began.

My treatment was the "whole meal deal;" many tests to ensure it hadn't spread, chemo and radiation. For six months my motto was bald is beautiful! I dove into every book I could get my hands on. The 'Cancer Conqueror, medical books, relaxation book: but the best was "Love, Medicine and Miracles" Ultimately love is the healer I read. I needed the medicine, but the love opened many doors for me. My parents had retired to Campbell River and my best friend moved here after we graduated and was a member of St. Peter. I spent my whole summer in Campbell River and was lucky enough to have my chemo treatments here at the hospital during that time.

My girlfriend told me about a healing service at St. Peter and that she wanted to take me. Peter Parker was the rector at that time. I sat in a chair beside the altar with Peter, my girlfriend, and others praying over me. There, at that moment, my life changed. I really, for the first time, felt the presence of God. I thought he had always been with me, but I never really asked for his fellowship, never committed myself 100%.

Jaclyn and I were baptized in this parish by Peter Parker. I was 42 and Jaclyn was 9. When we attended Peter's last service here, I was very emotional. When I said my goodbyes to him, I told him he healed me from my cancer. He looked at me and smiled and said, "I didn't heal you. God did." And heal me again he did. In 2020 I was diagnosed with breast cancer again. I was in shock as I had been cancer free for 23 years! Every emotion came flooding back. When you believe you surrender yourself to Him and ask for His healing spirit upon you. I believe in the power of prayer. I am here today 28 years after my first cancer diagnosis. Jaclyn is now 30 and I am going to be blessed with my first grandchild in September!

IF YOU ASK IN MY NAME...



The word faith means belief or to have absolute trust. The Lord listens to all who believe in Him. John 14:12-14 "Truly, truly I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do and greater works than these will he do because I am going to the Father. Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask me in my name, I will do it". This is Why I Believe!

I feel the Lord's presence every day leading me in the path he has set out for me. He has taught me to know the fruits of the spirit. To be not only a listener, but a doer. To be a participator not a spectator. He also gently reminds me when I do not exercise his spirit.

When my mom was getting rid of old things she gave me my report cards from Little Flower Academy. As I was reading through them, I came across my grade 8 religion report card from 1975. The program was "The Spirit of the Lord. God's call to growth in Holiness". Sister Gallagher wrote: "Pauline is a peacemaker. I hope many will learn her secret". What did she know then that I did not.



Pauline



My great grandfather was a rector in the Church of England, so in the tradition of my family I was presented for infant baptism at St. Stephen's, Calgary. My parents took the vows seriously as it was part of their way of living so I was brought up in a faith-based life. The first time I remember going to a church was when I was about 3 or 4, sitting beside my Granny on an Easter Sunday. The church, St. John the Divine, in Maple Ridge, was decorated with wild bleeding hearts and trilliums but what filled me spiritually was the song, "Jesus Christ is Risen Today!" I always look forward to singing that hymn on Easter Sunday.

As I grew, I remember that there was always something to look forward to at the church Sunday School with those beautiful classic photo cards that depicted the Bible story of the day and a memory verse for next week. They were "collectibles."

We also had our own pump organ and sang lots of easily-learned children's songs. There was Junior Auxiliary for those in intermediate grades where we learned values. There was a sense of belonging and having fun with friends. There were pageants and how special you felt to participate as an angel in the birth of Christ. Of course, confirmation was when we were in our mid-teens. No veils were available so we went to the Roman Catholic store in Vancouver to purchase them. The day arrived, the Bishop came, blessed us, and we took our first Communion.

During high school we were involved with the Anglican Young People's Association (A.Y.P.A.). As I recall there were 50 teens in that group and we met for sports such as volleyball. There was also a time for prayers and of devotions. The memorable stories always presented in a different manner that kept one's interest. We travelled to other churches with programs suitable for teens. We went to Anglican churches in Burnaby, Vancouver's Christ Church Cathedral and the church on Gore Street. There were homeless people in that area, even at that time.

Also, we also travelled to Trail one weekend.

Being a charter student at Simon Fraser University, 60 years ago, we got to initiate the "Varsity Christian Fellowship" where I met my life-long friend, Pene. We met others of all denominations including some of the singers from "Hymn Sing" as were seen on CBC black & white TV which my family looked forward to each Sunday. We finished our Professional Development at SFU and headed to a remote Old Colony Mennonite school 75 miles from Fort St. John in a homestead community. We had stepped back 50 years with no modern amenities. While helping each other, the colony built their houses and church from wood they had logged to clear the land and cut into boards. They had faith to live in this extreme climate without roads, radio phone, electricity, and often impassable roads. It had a profound influence on us. On Sunday morning they piled into their black trucks to go to the church. Since we had no curtains it was a perfect time to bring in the round tin tub, haul and heat our water, and have our weekly heavenly bath. All this worked out well until Henry stayed home one Sunday morning, rode his bike back and forth by our kitchen window. That was the end of those gorgeous baths!

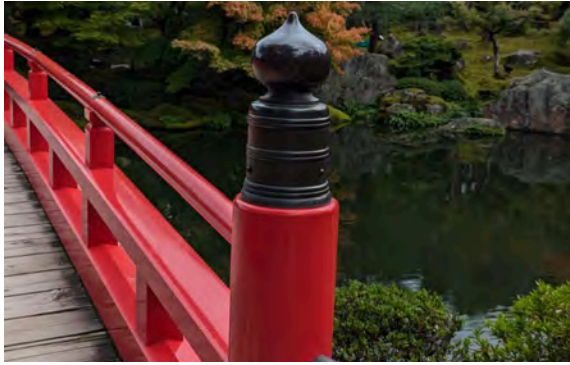
One day we woke up to severe weather and our hair was frozen to the wall behind the bed. It was bitterly cold, -60 F. below. No students arrived but the Grandfather, head of the Colony, walked the half mile to make sure we were okay as propane jells at extremely cold temperatures. Two maintenance men arrived later and they banked the propane tanks with snow to insulate them from the frigid air. We were well-cared for! Others had put themselves at risk for us. In spring, "break up" came during the day and everything turned to deep water. The snowy fields had turned into rivers. Barry piggy-backed the students across the deep water on to higher ground and we sent them home. Later in the spring the Mennonites invited us to the Beaton River to pick wild strawberries. It was a miracle that out of this frozen land these more than delicious berries had grown over a hillside. Much can be written about this "season in life" but faith in God had brought us there and always walked with us.

"Our Lord has written the promise of resurrection, not in books alone but in every leaf of springtime."

Martin Luther



The photos are of my aunt's confirmation during the late 1920's and were probably sent from England by their grandmother, my great grandmother. Their names were Stephanie, Gertrude and Marian. Stephanie and Marian were twins. My confirmation (middle photo) was at St. Michael's All Saints, Strathmore, Alberta. These photos show the changing times of clothing. I loved looking at these photos! The other photo is me (left) and friend Judy. The straps don't show up. Too bad it wasn't in color, as the dress was a green of the times.



A GARDEN...

THE SPIRIT THAT KEEPS ON GIVING

GLENNA ARMITAGE

The joy of watching the hummingbirds. Graceful, precious, little souls that scold you and buzz by your head as you walk by their feeders. Thank God for the happiness of enjoying their presence.

My backyard is a little Oasis. Peace is always within it. My special place here calms my soul when I need renewal. God's garden, our world, is a gift that keeps on giving. Every spring as one gets out in the garden, you think, "WOW, there's lots of work to do out here." Then you start turning the soil and cleaning up those things you didn't get to in the Fall. Energy seems to come to me as I go. I get a rewarding feeling as I clean up the space. New beginnings. Start of a fresh slate. Thank God for his gifts that keep on giving. Renewal, peace, exercise, joy! Wow! A quiet place filled with bird song surrounds your everything. You can see the picture of growth at your feet.

Last fall, I traveled to Japan again. It's a place I really love. Their gardens are so beautifully designed. Peace and serenity fill your soul as you walk with old friends through the sculptured spaces. Look at the dahlias floating in the pond. I went all the way to Japan to enjoy more dahlias!

God is everywhere. His gentle love fills the earth with growth, lasting beginnings for tomorrow.

Life has its ups and downs. We have all lived them. God gives us belief in tomorrow through his love and presence. Always walking our roads together.

This is my belief in God.





MY JOURNEY TO FAITH

KATE FITZSIMMONS

I started the journey to faith when I was a child. My parents didn't attend church. I had a school friend whose father led a small church and she asked me if I would like to come. My parents gave permission and that was the beginning of attending Sunday school. I loved the Sunday school leaflets with their coloured illustrations and the stories of Jesus that I learned, the hymn singing, and attended for a couple of years. But one Sunday the story was from the Old Testament, and in it I encountered a picture of a God which I found hard to reconcile with the God I had met in the New Testament. In my disappointment and outrage, I decided that I didn't want anything more to do with God if that's what God was like. I never went back.

I attended high school in the 70s, when the world was in the throes of the Jesus movement. I saw a paperback book entitled "Good News for Modern Man" on many of the desks of my fellow classmates. I was curious as to what this book was and why it was so popular. When I borrowed a copy to see what it was all about, I was stunned to find it was the New Testament written in easy-to-understand language. This ignited a new curiosity and a second look at Jesus as I read about him in the pages of this exciting book; revisiting the stories I had heard as a child afresh. He sprang off the page, new to me, and compelling.

I began to attend informal gatherings with friends led by the youth minister at the United Church, where Saturday after Saturday we sang praise songs, asked questions, discussed, and learned about God. Jesus and faith began to come up in conversations among friends at school and anywhere we gathered. This seeking led to attending a Christian coffeehouse and Sunday evening youth service where speakers spoke about Jesus and the life of faith. It was there one night amidst the music, the singing, and the worship, with hands and hearts lifted up, that I had the sensation of being in a different dimension so to speak, a heavenly dimension, where the sense of the presence of God was vivid. Psalm 22 v.3 says, "God inhabits the praises of his people." I believe that's what I was experiencing in that moment, the real, felt presence of God. We were standing on holy ground.

I think that coming to faith has at least two parts, a conversion of the heart, as I experienced through this moment of the felt presence of God, and a conversion of understanding in the mind. For me, learning the facts of the story of the resurrection was pivotal. I understood that both the established Jewish leaders in the temple and the Romans did not want a vigorous movement of believers following Jesus, for their own reasons. The Romans put guards outside Jesus' tomb to prevent anyone from interfering with his body. If they could have produced his body and disproven the claim that Jesus was resurrected, I believe they would have. But they didn't because they couldn't. To me this is significant proof of the truth of the resurrection. The truth of the resurrection is a truth to build a life on.

In the continuing story of the early church, there were many strong leaders and witnesses to the story of Jesus. There were miracles and appearances of the risen Lord before his Ascension. There was the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost. There were many disciples such as Stephen, who would not deny their Saviour, and who died for their faith, some in very gruesome ways. I don't believe anyone would give their life for a lie. They could not deny the truth of their Saviour and His resurrection to save their lives.

I could say more about the experience of God in my life and the lives of others I have encountered through the years, more evidence to me of the existence of God, but in a nutshell, that's why I believe.

MEETING GOD ON GOD'S TERMS

KRISTINA MELVIN

"The reality of God discloses itself only by setting me entirely in the reality of the world, and when I encounter the reality of the world it is always already sustained, accepted and reconciled in the reality of God." - Dietrich Bonhoeffer

In Romans 8:38-39, Paul tells us with some certainty that "nothing shall separate us from the love of God." Not distance or time, oceans or mountains, and most certainly not a desert far from home. That desert, the wilderness is where we meet God on God's terms. Where faith is formed and tested. As a familiar backdrop, deserts are where the Hebrews spent forty years wandering in search of a promised land being tested and failing and tested again, where John the Baptizer washed away sins in the river Jordan, and where Jesus was tempted before his ministry began. Often used as a metaphor, we enter our own season in the desert to overcome trials, temptations and the times that almost break us. My desert was a literal one. Where the spirit of God hovered over me, and those like me. It's a story where deep belief and faith in our awesome, redeeming and healing God is told and sustained.

In 2006 and I was deployed as a medic with 1st Battalion Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry Battlegroup to Kandahar, Afghanistan – Operation Archer it was called. I spent my days treating common, and not so common ailments in the Unit Medical Station (UMS). We assisted the surgical hospital across the way, just turn left at the Mr. Green Bean (A Starbucks by any other name) and you entered a plywood double door to the trauma bay where multiple NATO and civilian casualties when American "Dust-off" choppers set down were received. I accompanied resupply convoys, sitting in the oven-like heat of armored vehicles that smelt of sweat, diesel and chewing tobacco. The boys loved it and spat streams of brown tinged saliva peppered with tobacco pieces into clear water bottles. Even today the thought of it makes my stomach churn. Every time we departed the base, I recited the prayer Christ taught his friends, and us. Underneath and in these prayers on my heart I prayed we didn't hit an Improvised Explosive Device (IED) or a young man, indoctrinated by hate who chose that day to blow himself up in a crowd of women and children, intent on killing us, the infidels.

In the first two months of that deployment almost twenty years ago, I was part of a team that worked on, and unsuccessfully resuscitated a soldier whose armored vehicle had rolled. No enemy action, no IED, no suicide bomber; just a rollover. Something that could have happened in Canada. This was the first in a series of deaths in the desert where many believed God had abandoned. Hunger, death, disease and oppression lived there now, where The Accuser had taken up residence. But it was in that place, at 26 years old, amidst the dust, sand, sweat, bullets, and blood that cooked in the 60°C midday heat that I could feel the loving caress and calming presence of God surround me, viscerally within me and work through me. My hands were guided by part, spirit and skill. The Holy Spirit, She steadied my racing mind when placing tourniquets on bloody, broken cracked-open or blown-off limbs, placing IVs, administering morphine and other medications. God was there beside me as I held space in moments with frightened soldiers far from home, holding their pain at bay while we waited in anticipation for the



cyclones of sand and air-thumping rotors of the Dust-Off choppers. But sometimes, they were not fast enough. Sometimes God met them before the choppers had a chance to whisk them safely into the sky.

On May 17th, 2006, when Captain Nichola Goddard, an Artillery Forward Observation Officer died in combat, I was with 1 Royal Canadian Horse Artillery (1 RCHA), her unit. One day, as I was admonishing the boys over their daily scorpion fights, yes, actual scorpions, we heard the squawking of the radio- MedEvac request. And as the chaos of that day unfolded before us and helpless to do anything but listen, an officer, a friend, a leader, a daughter died. All I could offer was an ear to listen, a hand to hold and a voice to call out in the middle of the desert to God to send a healing balm of comfort for them, and respite for the soul of a woman taken too soon from everything and everyone she loved. I felt words of scripture, praise and lamentation come from my heart and my mouth that rested on the ears of those who grieved. The Spirit of God again hovered over us, making Her presence known – I was merely the instrument. God is the musician, and the Spirit his breath then I am like a flute resonating that music, a joyful sound, a healing melody. Again and again during my desert trial, God put me in the right place, at the right time, with the right words, falling from my lips, growing and galvanizing my faith as a servant-witness in a place filled with anything but holiness or righteousness.

By the time I had returned home to Edmonton in August of 2006, a friend had lost her husband; Canada had lost a daughter and 18 sons. As that first month passed and the Alberta summer turned to a salty Nova Scotia fall outside the bay window of my new home, the desert was still a heavy burden. One morning, coffee half-done, the scream of the phone startled me. After talking with my Dad who was on the other end for a moment and catching up, he got right to it, "Davis, does that name sound familiar to you, Kris?" Dad asked. I thought for a moment if I should answer and open a memory which would release a foray of more painful ones I was trying to keep at bay. "Mmhmm." "Well, his dad was hoping he could talk with you, since..." My dad's voice broke, "Since you were there when he died." My dad is not one to let on his emotions; I felt his unease.

While I was on deployment my parents had started a support group for families of deployed members back home in Kitchener-Waterloo. Through this group my dad was contacted by another father. Weeks later, I sat in the living room on the phone with a bereaved father recounting the last moments of his son's life and the care given to his son's broken body because of an armored vehicle rollover. That he was not alone at the end of this life. This a gift to both he and I, and a moment that is neither coincidence or random, but God leaning into our brokenness and grief.

In the dark chapters of our lives as we wander through a wilderness filled with hurt, and angst, depression and even death, testing the resiliency of our faith, this is where God is most near to us. In all my struggles with faith, with God, with the Church and with my own self, God the Father – the Parent of Parents, has held me, where the Spirit has led me, and where Christ, my brother and Saviour, has healed me. Christ for me, and I hope for you, as you read this, you are reminded of the times that your hurt was dimmed just enough to see the dawn of hope cresting over the hill. That in our times in the wilderness God shows us repeatedly the boundless grace of His love and age-old promise to care for us throughout our lives. For me, God carried me through a desert, a war. And that while it is true that I encountered the face of death, and even as its echo lingered in my life, my faith was transformed – healed, renewed. That's how God works though, isn't it – reaching into the broken spaces and places of our lives and through the Spirit breathing new life.



Sunrise Service

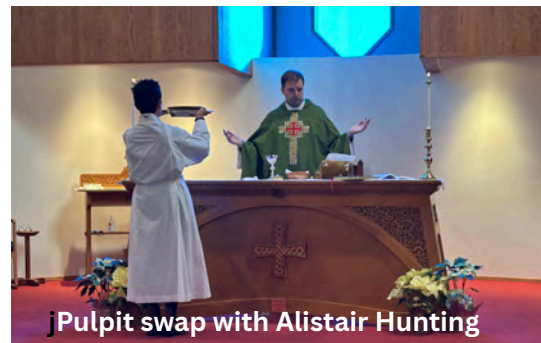


Ash Wednesday

Congregation appreciation Sunday



From Christ to Christianity



Pulpit swap with Alistair Hunting



Is the batter ready?



Shrove Tuesday...Yummm

A big appreciation 'Thank You' to all at St. Peter who make our church such a wonderful place to worship. A special thank you to our very amazing volunteers!

BREAKING NEWS

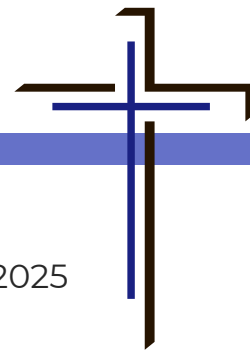
64TH ANNUAL PLANT SALE A HUGE SUCCESS!



On May 3rd, our amazing team of gardeners and volunteers successfully organized yet another fantastic plant sale!



ANNOUNCEMENTS



IN LOVING MEMORY

Edward Hartwell: September 10, 1917 - February 26, 2025

Samira Metias: May 6, 1943 - February 22, 2025

Esme Rombough: August 21, 1923 - February 9, 2025



My husband, Richard Mark Charlton, passed away 12 years ago in April. A friend of his, Rob, harvested and created the cedar cross in Mark's memory, Mark like to fish, hunt and be outdoors, going on many adventures. This cross, in his memory, will have the morning light and fresh air of the outdoors to give his spirit peace.

On-going at St. Peter...

Office Hours

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday - 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Closed Fridays

Worship Opportunities

- | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Sunday 10:00 a.m. | Holy Eucharist - Hybrid - Zoom and in-person, in the Sanctuary Services are from the Book of Alternative Services. |
| Wednesday, 12:30 p.m. | Midweek Eucharist, all are welcome, please join us. |
| Thursday, 12:30 p.m. | Meditative Eucharist, all are welcome, please join us. |

Weekly Events

- | | |
|----------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Monday, 10:00 a.m. | Coffee Hour - in-person in St. Paul's Room; outside in nice weather. Also via Zoom. |
| Wednesday, 3:30 p.m. | Mindfulness - in the Library |
| Friday, 10:00 a.m. | Chat & Chill - in the Library |

Monthly Events

- Prayer Chain - First Wednesday of the month, 10:30 a.m.
- Healing Support Group - The last Sunday of each month at 4 p.m.

Serving the Community

- Weekly: Seven 12-Step groups - in the hall or library
- Weekly: Yoga classes for adults and moms & tots

PARISH STAFF & LEADERS

Rector's Warden: Tony Smith
People's Warden: Pauline Woods
Deputy Warden: Lois Tirebuck
Deputy Warden: Rick Monchak
Treasurer: Holly Finn
Church Administrator: Trina Soltys
Communication: Trina Soltys
Custodian: Janice Kozak
Prayer Chain: Sue Vickery
Envelope Secretary: Frank Maga
Healing Prayer Ministry: Sue Vickery
Lay Assistants & Readers: Pauline Woods
Spirit Editor: Jane Monchak

Mindfulness: Jane Jennings
Coffee Monday: Jennifer Coolen
Librarian: Jane Jennings
Safe Church: Andrea Charlton
Alongside Hope (formerly PWRDF) Rep: Barb Henshall
Building and Grounds: George Wagner
Chat & Chill (formerly ACW): Frances Payne
Sides persons: Pam Hedderson
Zoom master: Tony Smith
Music Ministry: Kate Fitzsimmons, Georgia Smith, Lori Gooldrup
Altar Guild: Kim Jarvis
Community Garden Liaison: Rick Monchak





St. Peter
Anglican Church