

Red Door Chronicle



A newsletter of Saint Andrew's Presbyterian Church

www.godshouse.ca ✨ Email: knockknock.godshouse.ca@gmail.com ✨ Apr. 2022

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A BRAND-NEW CHOIR REHEARSING FOR EASTER SUNDAY. A Good Friday Service, with sacred Communion. The presence of flowers. New faces. The sound of laughter from the pews. A church-hosted funeral. Long-lost friends coming to call. Weekly prayer. Sunday prayer. A new website. Phone calls and messages and tenderly-framed greeting cards. Coffee hour. Concerts, and play readings, and exciting new plans for teas and dinners. Bible study in person and by Zoom, soon to be re-launched. Hugs, and the falling of blessed tears.

“Where has our church gone?” someone asked, despairingly, only weeks ago, as if we were on the

cusp of death. My answer? “Nowhere.” In fact it’s still here. It’s always been here, and bit by bit all that we have known and loved about St. Andrew’s is coming back, just as God promised it would. Covid and conflict and faithlessness (and demographic change) have deep-sixed some churches, and brought still others to the brink of extinction—but not us. Nope. *Nada. Nicht. Not.* We have refused that fate, in Jesus’ Name.

Yes, some folks are still staying at home. But even that is okay, as we are now well-in-the-groove of livestreaming services, a key compo-

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ment of the new and future church. We are not going back, but going forward, God being our helper! So don't despair—that's an order!—for it is not God's will for you, nor God's will for us as a congregation. Instead, **Hope (!)** with a capital 'H' and a pair of bracketed exclamation marks: a new imperative for a new age, an age of healing and faith and forward-looking ministry. ("My he's pushy." You better believe I am.)

And so in honour of the newly-emergent St. Andrew's, I am going to conclude this article with a blast from the past, i.e. one of the most creative acts of ministry I have ever undertaken at Easter, a piece of Reader's Theatre I performed with the Rev. Laura Turnbull at one of our joint Easter Sunrise Services at the Japanese Garden. (Sorry but I have lost its author's name.) Yes, creative. It's a delightful—not a dirty—word. Read and enjoy and dream and hope, in Jesus' Name:

Wife: Why don't you come back to bed, dear? You're never going to get to sleep by pacing up and down.

Pilate: Two nights now. Two nights I have been unable to sleep. His words echo in my mind, invading my thoughts.

Wife: He's dead now! Try to forget about him.

Pilate: Infernal man!! Dead since Friday. Why can't he just leave me alone!!?

Wife: Why didn't you just leave him alone?

Pilate: Don't give me that "don't say I didn't warn you" speech. Not now. Not ever.

Wife: But I knew from my dreams. I knew you should have nothing to do with that man. And I did warn you.

Pilate: Yes, but you don't understand the pressure I was under, "dear." I couldn't ignore what the Jewish leaders were saying. The political ramifications would have been too great.

Wife: So you just acquiesced to their demands??

Pilate: (*angry*) I did NOT acquiesce. Caesar's appointed governor does not yield to any, save Caesar himself. These Judeans have no authority over me.

Wife: (*being nice again*) I know, Pontius. I just don't understand why you sentenced him to death.

Pilate: Well, because he posed a threat to Caesar's authority.

Wife: Do you really believe that?

Pilate: Well, he said he was a "king."

Wife: **You** said he was a king, the King of the Jews.

Pilate: I know what I said. And I know what **he** said.

Wife: And did he speak the truth?

Pilate: (*incredulous*) Truth????!!? What is truth?

Wife: Come on, Pilate. **You** spoke to the man. **You** looked into his eyes. And so **you** tell me.

Pilate: The truth is—I ordered that he be flogged; I agreed that he should be crucified, this Jesus of Nazareth in whom I could find no fault.

Wife: So you feel guilty, responsible that injustice has been done?

Pilate: (*aside*) I roll my eyes. (*to her*) You know me better than that. What do I care for a simple Jewish miscreant?

Wife: You care enough not to sleep for two nights.

Pilate: I am innocent of that man's blood!
(*Centurion enters*)

Centurion: Forgive the intrusion, Governor Pilate, but I bring news. Troubling news.

Pilate: What other kind of news do I ever get in this insignificant backwater of our mighty Empire?

Centurion: It concerns one of the criminals we crucified on Friday—a Jesus, of Nazareth

Pilate: What of him?

Centurion: His body, sir—it's missing. The tomb is empty.

Wife: These Jewish dogs stoop to grave-robbing now?

Pilate: Impossible!

Centurion: Indeed, sir. We had a squad of eight men guarding the tomb in case of an attempt to steal the body.

Wife: (*to Pilate*) You expected something like this would happen?

Centurion: The Jewish religious leaders anticipated that this man's disciples would try to snatch the body.

Wife: Why on earth would they want to do that?

Centurion: They say that this Jesus had claimed that he would rise from the dead. The priests wanted to disprove such claims by ensuring the body was securely guarded.

Pilate: That worked well, didn't it! Explain to me, Centurion, how a rag-tag bunch of religious maniacs managed to overpower eight of Rome's finest warriors?

Centurion: There was no battle, sir. They say they ... 'fell asleep.'

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Pilate: For one Roman soldier to fall asleep on duty is regrettable, but believable. For eight (!) to fall asleep simultaneously is preposterous!!

Wife: All of them are aware of the punishment for such dereliction of duty?

Centurion: Yes, ma'am. They all know that for falling asleep on duty, the punishment is death.

Pilate: And yet, all eight of them confessed that this is what happened.

Wife: And were executed accordingly?

Centurion: Not exactly.

Wife: Not executed? Pontius, this is insubordination.

Pilate: I don't believe these soldiers are telling the truth about what happened. All eight? Asleep? At the same time? Never. They have witnessed something that supersedes even their fear of death. Centurion, make sure that they are (ahem) suitably "persuaded" to tell you the truth.

Wife: 'Truth?' It's your favourite word Pilate!!

Pilate: I'm beginning to wonder.

Wife: If these soldiers are lying, and the body was not stolen by the disciples, how else do you explain that the body is missing?

Pilate: Something he said . . .

Wife: Surely you don't believe that he somehow survived the crucifixion and managed to escape from the tomb?

Pilate: Absolutely not. After the blood loss from his scourging, he died more quickly than most – they even speared his side to be sure. He was very dead.

Wife: How, then, do you explain the empty tomb?

Pontius!! Are you listening to me?

Pilate: "My kingdom is not of this world..." he said.

Wife: What are you talking about?

Pilate: That's what he said to me—"My kingdom is not of this world." This was no ranting of a lunatic. I asked him where he was from, and he refused to answer me. I told him that I had the power to kill him or free him. Do you know what he said?

Wife: You tell me.

Pilate: "I could have no power against him unless God gave it to me." I believed him. I didn't want to kill him; I wanted to release him . . . In any case, what else have to you to say, soldier?

Centurion: Well, they have confessed; the eight have confessed, that the Jewish priests bribed them to say that the disciples stole the body.

Pilate: As I expected!

Wife: The audacity. So what really happened?

Centurion: They are also saying ... ahem.... they are also saying that angels came down from heaven, broke the seal, rolled the stone away—and that ... he came out!!

Wife: More lies. Torture them again!

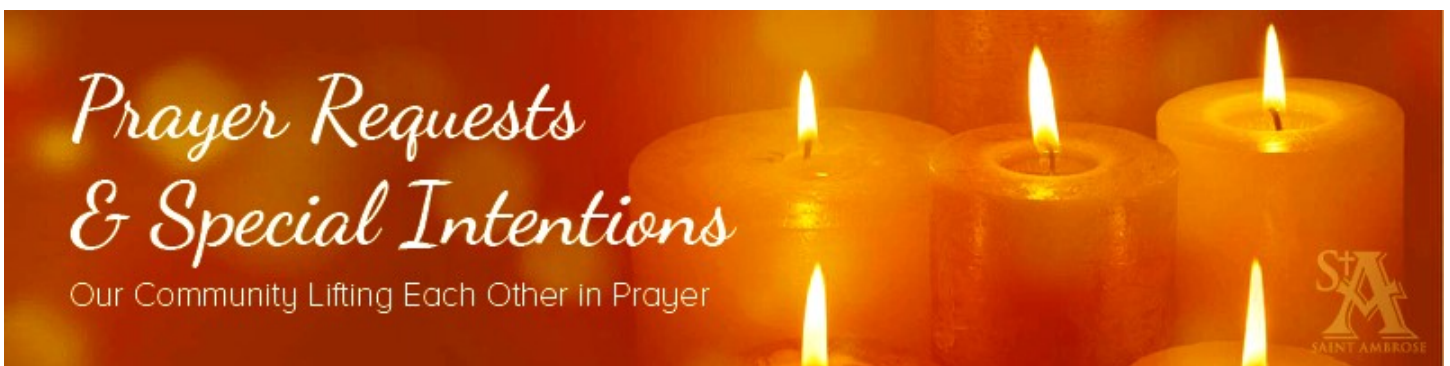
Pilate: They are saying that he rose from the dead?

Centurion: We spoke to each of them separately – all of them told the same story. They have no reason to lie any more.

Pilate: So you believe they are telling the truth?

Wife: (*musings*) I don't know . . . I really don't know. To quote a certain someone, "What is truth??"

- Colin



GOD IS GOOD AND WE KEEP PRAYING! AND YES!

GOD IS ANSWERING. JOIN US FROM WHEREVER YOU ARE & PLEASE PRAY:

- For Jan Higgins and her nieces, Marlee and Meghan, as they grieve the loss of their father, John, Jan's beloved brother. Also for Jan's comfort as she grieves the loss of her son-in-law, Mark; and for Mark's wife Elizabeth and their daughter Samantha, who survive him.
- For the family of Linda Middlestead's friend, Jennifer, that God would minister comfort as they grieve her loss.

- For Debbie Norris to have a quick recovery from a very serious car accident. Also pray for her grandchildren and great grandchildren, Alexa, Oswald, Avianna, Arian, Jaxen, Sophie, Adreanna, Emma and Lily. Also for her daughter, Jolene.
- For ongoing recovery of health for Fraser and Iza MacDonald.
- For recovery of movement for Joan Vant Geloof as she recovers from a broken femur; and for Tony's recovery from an undiagnosed health problem.
- To thank God for all the people who are helpers for Gwen Sulz as she deals with vertigo; and thanks for her faith that gives her comfort in this difficult situation. Also for her safety and protection from falls that could cause injury; and for recovery from eczema.
- To thank God that Phil Morrison ear infection has been cleared and he is able to hear again; also for restoration of his sense of balance.
- For Marlene Lane to breathe more easily and be protected from acquiring Covid.
- To thank God for Anna Proudlock's improved health; and for the improvement to be maintained.
- For Kathleen's son Sean, that as he interacts with people whose primary way of relating to the world is through conflict and aggression, Sean would find opportunities for spiritual and relational growth; also that Sean's calmness and peace would deepen and have a positive influence on everyone around him.
- For Ashlin Vant Geloof, that she would make good decisions that bring healing to her life; also for her boyfriend, Raven.
- For seven-year-old Charlotte (and her family) who has been sent home from Children's Hospital in Vancouver as doctors now believe that further surgery and/or additional medical intervention may no longer help her condition.
- For Terry Stewart's friends, Wendall and Sherry, who live in Golden, BC, as Wendall deals with poor health, and as they both struggle to sort out where to live.
- To thank God that Fraser and Iza's niece Cindy and nephew Allan are both feeling better. Cindy had a cancerous lung removed, and Allan, a portion of his heart, following a viral infection. Pray for their continued improvement. Also for the encouragement and uplift of their nephew Brad, who has lost his career as a pilot after developing an undiagnosable, and untreatable, hand ailment.
- For a close friend of Jean Forbes who awaits a call from her doctor about how long she may have left to live; that Jean's daily conversations with this dear lady may bring much needed consolation and uplift.
- For Gwen Sulz's neighbor's grandson who has been diagnosed with cancer. He is only three years of age.
- To thank God for the safe delivery of Carol Hayhurst's grandson, William, in eastern Canada.
- To thank God that Pat Mesic's daughter's very latest tests show that her heart continues to be stable, and thus not requiring surgery; for the ongoing stabilization of this condition.
- That God will bring more and more new folk into our ministry, to help us answer the call of the Gospel.
- That God will bless both in-person, and livestreamed, ministry.
- That God, who knows our needs and concerns, may bless, and keep, each one of us safe in His tender loving care (from Elizabeth Bullock).
- For our indigenous brothers and sisters who have suffered so much; that there would be reconciliation and healing between native folk and the churches (from Pat Mesic).
- To thank God for the rebirth of the choir, and all its new members; for their ministry.
- For the innocent people in the Ukraine who are suffering so much.
- For the Christians in Russia, that by the Spirit they will see through Putin's false and deluded claims to be a "Christian saint" whose intentions are noble, i.e. to restore his country to some sort of "holy empire."
- That God will compel Putin to stop his unjust war of aggression.



*Let us kneel before
the Lord, our Maker!
Psalm 95:6*

Easter with all your Heart, Soul, Mind & Strength

BY BOB PUSHAK

*Love the Lord your God with all your heart
and with all your soul and with all your mind
and with all your strength.* MARK 12:30

JESUS IDENTIFIES THE ABOVE QUOTE AS THE greatest commandment and therefore this verse deserves some unpacking about what is meant by the words “heart,” “soul,” “mind,” and “strength.”

LOVING THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART . . .

is about prayer. It is about an orientation of one’s whole being towards God. There are however aspects of this commandment that slide by us modern readers. When modern Christians think about the use of the word “heart” in the Bible, they usually assume it refers to sentimental emotions in contrast to logic or thinking. But in the Bible, the word “heart” is never contrasted with conceptual thinking. The Biblical word “heart” refers to using the heart that beats in your chest and it was this beating heart that is connected to ancient Jewish and Christian prayer. This practice is referred to in Proverbs 4:23:

Guard your heart with all vigilance,
for from it flow springs of life.

The role of the heart in prayer might make more sense if you realise that our hearts are part of a bidirectional neural brain processing system. There are neurons in our hearts that are identical both in type and in function to the neurons in our brains. This

connection between heart and brain explains why we experience something happening in our hearts when we are confronted with something that is powerful or vitally important. In the Bible, the heart is the organ of spiritual perception. In Ephesians 1:18, Paul prays that the people reading his letter will have the “eyes of their hearts enlightened.” So, did you realize the Bible talks about enlightenment. Jesus says, “Blessed are the pure of heart for they shall see God.” You cannot see God with your physical eyes. There is, however another type of seeing and when this seeing is “single and sound” (more on this below), true spiritual enlightenment arises.

Most of you have probably heard something about the neurotransmitter/hormone oxytocin which is related to our experience of love and connectedness. Our heart is one of the organs in our bodies that manufactures and releases oxytocin. When you experience deep feelings of love for your spouse, for your children, for your friends at church and for God, I can assure you, oxytocin is being released from your hearts. On the first Easter the two disciples who spoke to Jesus on the road to Emmaus felt their hearts burning within them. People who practice silent prayer on a regular basis experience their hearts burning while they

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pray. The more you practice silent prayer the experience deepens until your whole body feels full of light:

When the eye is single (and sound)
the body is filled with light.
(Matthew 6:22)

and a similar experience is described by Paul when he refers to light overflowing and shining around the body like spiritual armour (Romans 3:12).

Just to be clear, I am not suggesting that we should pursue exotic spiritual experiences for their own sake. The purpose of true prayer is life transforming union with God through Christ. With the ultimate goal that we become the true light of the world and our lives shine like a city on a hilltop (Matthew 5:14).

LOVING THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR SOUL . . .

Traditionally many Christians have interpreted the word “soul,” as referring to a nonphysical and eternal aspect of humans that resides within our physical bodies. The KJV of Genesis 2:7 use to read:

And the LORD God formed man
of the dust of the ground,
and breathed into his nostrils
the breath of life;
and man became a living soul.

But virtually all modern translations and the New KJV reads, “and man became living being.” Most modern Biblical scholars agree this is the more appropriate translation. The early Hebrews did not see themselves as having bodies, instead they viewed themselves as being living bodies. There was no dualistic soul residing inside the body. This shift in understanding is important because the traditional dualistic view resulted in the

Western church, both Catholic and Protestant, underappreciating the important role our bodies play in prayer and spiritual experience. Someone might ask however, if there is no nonmaterial and immortal soul residing within our bodies does that mean there is no afterlife. Good question. After all, if the soul and the body are the same thing, then when the body dies our souls must also die. The Apostle Paul’s view appears to be that when our earthly bodies die then we are indeed dead. The after life is not about the continued existence of a disembodied soul, instead, for Paul, through the resurrection we are given a new body, which he refers to as a spiritual body:

... it is sown a natural body, it is raised a
spiritual body. If there is a natural
body, there is also a spiritual body.
(1 Corinthians 15: 42)

The reason this distinction between a non-physical, immortal soul and a new spiritual body is important is it means, in our present life, our bodies play a critical role in prayer and in our experience of God’s presence.

The Biblical words for “spirit,” “soul,” and even “mind” include the meaning of “breath” and sometimes “air.” We modern Christians usually think of these different meanings as being a homonym: same word, but different meanings. In the Bible these meanings are layered together in one word at the same time. In the Bible the “Holy Spirit” is the “Breath of God.” In John 20:22, Jesus, “breathed on them (the disciples) and said, “receive the Holy Spirit.”

So, prayer in general includes mindfulness of our breath. This is doubly true with the prayer of “guarding the heart,” because the heart that beats in our chests is physical enclosed by the lungs. If you are able to focus

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on the beating of your heart awareness of your breathing is virtually automatic.

**LOVING THE LORD YOUR GOD
WITH ALL YOUR MIND . . .**

is a reference to guarding and vigilance in prayer as referenced above in the quote about “guarding the heart.” In the parable of the 10 virgins, Jesus is highlighting the importance of staying awake and alert in the prayer of “keeping watch.” The phrases “guarding the heart” and “putting the mind into the heart” were interchangeable ways of speaking about prayer in the earliest writings of the church.

Both phrases are still used today by Christians from the Eastern Orthodox churches. One advantage the Eastern Orthodox churches have over us Western Christians is they were less influenced by a dualist split between the body and soul. And therefore, they have always had a better understanding of silent prayer and the body’s role in prayer.

But I digress. Let us return to “loving God with all our minds.” In fact, that is what “putting the mind into the heart,” is all about. When we practice silent prayer, our minds start to wander. This happens to absolutely everybody. And when it happens, we need to gently put the “mind back into the heart.” If our minds wander 100 times while we pray, then we direct our minds back to the heart the 101st time. It is this practice of repeatedly bring the mind back to the heart that builds neural path ways in our brains that improves attention and reinforces the connection between mind and heart. In recent years a lot of research shows there are significant health and mental benefits from meditation practices that focus attention on our breath and our hearts. This shouldn’t be a surprise, because mind, body, soul are not separate things. It is all one interwoven fab-

ric. It is important to gently return the mind to heart. If you become agitated with yourself when you realise your mind has wandered yet again, that will release the stress hormone cortisol which will make concentration harder and make it less likely that you can enter into the peace that surpasses understanding that Paul speaks about:

And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.
(Philippians 4:8)

**LOVING THE LORD YOUR GOD
WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH . . .**

Loving the Lord your God with all your strength refers to perseverance in prayer. In addition to continually refocussing the mind on God’s dwelling place within our hearts we need to practice silent prayer on a regular basis. The minimum should be at least 5 minutes per day, and preferably, 20 minutes per day. If you can practice for an hour a day all the better. You will make progress more quickly. Silent prayer is more difficult in the beginning, but with regular practice it becomes easier and easier. So “guarding the heart,” leads into the “peace that transcends understanding,” but over time, as Paul states above, the “peace that transcends understanding,” guards both the heart and the mind. Over time it will no longer be you who prays; it will be God who is praying through you. Easter is not just about something that happened long ago, in a far away place. The resurrection is also about something that can happen today and:

... you will do well to pay attention
to it, as to a light shining
in a dark place, until the day dawns
and the morning star rises in your hearts.
(2 Peter 1:19)

DO YOU HAVE HELPING HANDS?

by Jan Higgins

WITH THE RELAXING OF COVID RESTRICTIONS St. Andrew's is needing a bit more help from the congregation. Perhaps there is some area in which you might like to help.

A number of people have stepped up to re-form the Choir. We are so grateful for this addition to our services. If you are interested in joining please speak with Colin or any choir member. Rehearsals are 1 p.m. Thursdays in the Sanctuary.

Carol Hayhurst has provided a coffee break following the service these last few weeks. But she will need some help with clearing up the dishes.

Speaking of food, there is thought of once again offering dinners or lunches to increase social activities and raise some funds to support our church.

Eric Pringle has been opening the church and welcoming people for several months now and perhaps he would welcome some help there as our congregation grows.

For most of the past two years I have been processing financial offerings. If you are able to stay after church for about 15 minutes we could use a rotation of people to look after this important job.

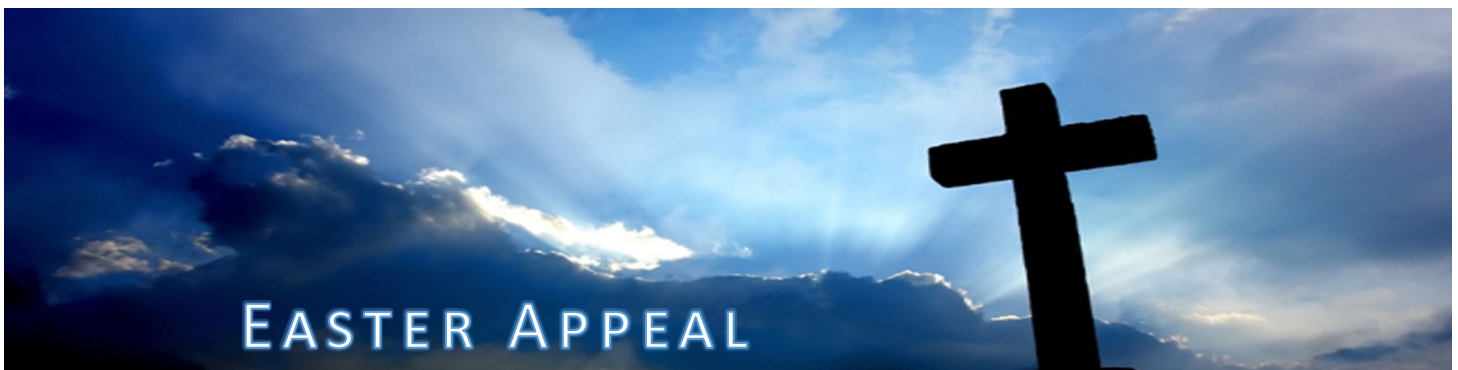


If you enjoy the flowers that grace the communion table, perhaps you could provide some from your garden or donate toward the purchase. Flowers are a beautiful way to remember some member of your family. Let the office know at least one week in advance, when you would like to provide an arrangement. We will be happy to assist. See phone number or email address below.

Various other maintenance jobs require attention as we have better weather. Again let us know you are interested by leaving a message by phone or email.

All of these jobs take a very little time and effort but we would like to share the work needed.

TO OFFER YOUR SERVICES SEND AN EMAIL TO knockknock.godshouse.ca@gmail.com or leave a message at 250 492 8304. The Session would very much appreciate any and all offers of help.



EASTER IS THE TIME OF YEAR WHEN CHURCHES frequently get behind in their giving. We are extremely grateful for the financial support you have all provided. We know that 2022 is proving to be a year of significant inflation; and we know that some of you providing extra financial support is difficult. And that is okay. We therefore do not want you to feel compelled in any way. Yes, we do have some

extra money at this time from the sale of the Annex and so we can afford to run a deficit. However we want to use these funds responsibly, and not have to dip into this account unnecessarily. Yes, fundraising is on the horizon and we hope to mount plays and dinners very soon. Thanks again for all your support you provide to each other and to the church.

- Faithfully, your Session