

FEBRUARY 2026

FAITH TIDES



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Lay-led parishes rising to the
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February 2026

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By Faith Tides

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The proper order of things



Photo Credit: J. Abram Photography

By Anna Greenwood-Lee

On Sunday, Jan. 4, 2026, at an evening prayer service at the cathedral, Jenny Repogle was collated as executive archdeacon. “Collating” is a very funny word that most of us associate with photocopying. It means to put things in their proper order.

As part of the service, we sang “The Cantic of The Turning,” a paraphrase of “The Magnificat,” which reminds us that the “proper order of things” in the Kingdom of God is the reverse of the order in this world. In the world, the “proper” order of things is hierarchical and patriarchal, favoring the rich and the powerful; in the Kingdom of God, the mighty are brought down from their thrones, the hungry are filled with good things and the rich are turned empty away.

In my sermon at Jenny’s collation, I reminded those present that in the church those with the most authority must always and everywhere be the ones with

the most humility. Their work must always and everywhere be in service of the most vulnerable, of the least among us.

Jenny began her work in this diocese not long ago as the canon for lay-led parishes and parishes-in-transition. Her ministry over the past 16 months has been largely among the parishes that might seem to be the least of us, the smallest ones, who don’t have and likely will never have full-time clergy.

My only real hesitancy in moving Jenny into the role of executive archdeacon is that I don’t want to take her away from that work. In becoming the executive archdeacon, she’s not being promoted *out* of her work with lay-led parishes and parishes in transition, but rather the work of lay-led parishes and parishes in transition is being promoted *into* the centre of our life as a diocese. I have been so pleased by the tremendous response to this year’s Bishops Dinner, which highlighted the “mighty ministry” that is being done by these lay-led parishes in their communities. They do us all proud.

My friends, 2026 is not proving to be a simple or straightforward time in human history. There are tyrants who need to be brought down from their thrones, hungry that need to be fed and the least among us who need to take their rightful place at the top of the hierarchy. Let us remember that the proper order of things involves turning the world on its head.

Lay-led parishes rising to the challenge



By Pamela Day

In this article we hear from two parishes in the diocese navigating life without an incumbent — and the many challenges it brings — while continuing to grow and flourish.

Trinity Anglican Church, Port Alberni

By Pamela Day

In December 2023, Trinity Anglican Church in the heart of the Alberni Valley faced a defining moment. With the retirement of its long-serving incumbent, the parish stood at a crossroads. The cost of hiring a full-time replacement threatened to overwhelm the parish's finances. Yet, despite the odds, Trinity chose not to fade away — but to rise.

Trinity is one of the few churches located in downtown

Port Alberni, offering regular Sunday worship and services for feast days, weddings, funerals and special events. It also serves as an official emergency gathering centre — a role that underscores its importance to the wider community.

Faced with uncertainty, a dedicated team of parishioners, lay leaders and volunteers stepped forward to ensure the church's survival. Our efforts were rooted in both faith and practical stewardship, drawing on strengths long nurtured within the congregation.

Key to Trinity's success was the financial support of loyal parishioners, alongside steadfast backing from the diocese and the Lutheran British Columbia Synod. The parish was also blessed with a growing team of lay ministers — one already serving, and two more in training — supported by skilled volunteers with decades of experience in church leadership, music, administration and building maintenance.

With guidance from Bishop Anna and Jenny Repogle, executive archdeacon, and the help of supply clergy and a part-time interim minister, Trinity maintained its rhythm of worship. Two Sunday services were led by visiting clergy, while lay ministers took responsibility for others — adapting traditions with care.

Outreach continued without pause. The Food Cupboard remained stocked. The Mitten Tree warmed winter months. Fundraisers supported local causes. Carol sings, teas and markets brought people together — testaments to a living, serving church.

Behind the scenes, the administrative burden was immense. Without a full-time priest or paid secretary, volunteers managed everything: service planning,

communications, hall rentals, financial reporting and liaison with the diocese and city officials.

It was hard work, but it was also deeply satisfying. And the results speak for themselves.

Over the past two years, attendance at both regular and special services has grown — drawing both parishioners and members of the wider community. Sunday School has expanded. Hall rentals have increased. And, remarkably, the parish has ended each year with a balanced budget — surplus in the black.

What has Trinity learned?

That while many still long for the eucharist every Sunday and clergy-led rites, financial realities require new models. That clergy remain essential spiritual guides, but that lay leadership can carry much of the pastoral and administrative load. That delegation, trust and empowerment are not just practical necessities — but signs of a healthy, mature faith community.

We've learned that when people are called to serve, they rise to the task. And we've learned we must now prepare the next generation to carry on into the future.

Looking ahead, Trinity embraces the promise of team ministry — a shared model of leadership and resource-sharing across parishes. There is excitement about collaboration, about learning from others and about building something sustainable for the future.

Above all, the people of Trinity give thanks. At a time when many churches face decline, Trinity Anglican Church stands as a quiet beacon: a testament to what faithful people, grounded in tradition and open to change, can accomplish together.

St. Christopher and St. Aidan, Lake Cowichan

By Selinde Krayenhoff

St. Christopher and St. Aidan in Lake Cowichan has been without an incumbent for almost three years now. The parish has come together, as it has had to in the past, to run the church collectively. And things are going well.

Our little parish is growing and has been hard at work, taking care of our buildings and finding fun ways to reach out to the larger community. Last year we put a new roof on the church, refinished our two entrance doors and put in three heat pumps to cut down on heating costs (our third highest budget item).

Cellar Treasures is nestled in the basement of our church hall, a thrift store that has served as a gathering place and a source of affordable household and clothing items for 20 years now. Revenue from the store is donated to various charities in the community, as well as to special church projects, like the new roof.

We like to sing! Our music ministry has grown from one volunteer to a team of six dedicated musicians who are learning together. Once a month we host a karaoke evening. The response has been enthusiastic and donations generous. Various choirs book our church for concerts, which brings in the neighbours. On Christmas Eve 2025, we welcomed in the community for carols and candlelight. Almost seventy folks showed up.

We like to eat! The first Sunday of the month is potluck Sunday. Our attendance goes up that Sunday, people come in off the street, and we enjoy amazing food and conversation together.

We like to connect! On Saturday, Oct. 18, 2025, we invited the members of two churches in Lake Cowichan — Lake Cowichan Christian Fellowship (Pentecostal) and St. Louis De Montfort Catholic Church — to a potluck supper. Forty folks showed up to enjoy good food and conversation. Before dessert was served, one of our members encouraged people to get up and sit beside someone they didn't know — everyone obliged. The volume went up as people seemed genuinely interested in getting to know someone new. The evening was so successful that it has been proposed that we rotate through the different churches every four months.

We like to worship! Our Sunday attendance has been steadily increasing as people invite friends, family and neighbours to come check us out. We are a community church worshipping in the Anglican tradition.

So, if you are planning to visit Lake Cowichan for a daytrip or a holiday, please come worship with us! We look forward to welcoming you.

Churches open their doors to feed the lonely on Christmas Day



Eating lunch at Church of the Advent's Christmas Day Home Alone lunch. Image courtesy of Ingrid Andersen.

By Naomi Racz

A ministry of belonging

In 2023, faced with the prospect of spending Christmas Day alone, without her family, Sister Ingrid Andersen, Franciscan and incumbent at Church of the Advent, Colwood, was inspired to start a “Home Alone” Christmas lunch.

Ingrid thought there had to be others out there who would be spending Christmas Day alone and that no one should have to be alone on a day that is typically one of communal celebrations. So, Ingrid raised the idea of hosting a potluck style lunch on Christmas Day

at the church.



Some of the volunteers who helped make Church of the Advent's 2025 Christmas Day lunch possible. Image courtesy of Ingrid Andersen.

In 2023, the first “Home Alone” lunch saw around 20 guests and 10 parishioners and volunteers eating, mingling and having fun together. In 2024, those numbers doubled and in 2025 the lunch catered for 60 people, predominantly from the West Shore area of Greater Victoria.

Close to 40 parishioners sign up to contribute towards the 2025 lunch, and guests could choose from ham, turkey, dressing, gravy, mashed potato, veggies, cranberry sauce and dessert, with gluten and dairy-free options. Volunteers helped decorate the tables, and attendees pulled Christmas crackers and sang carols.

Ingrid says the feedback has been positive and that while the event is not religious in nature, it is an important ministry of belonging for the church and a way to act out its principles of love and welcome. “Many of the people who come have heartbreaking stories of why this is their first Christmas alone, and they end up enjoying themselves on the day they had dreaded,” she adds.

Generous and willing hands



Colleen Lissamer (second from the right), the incumbent at St. Matthias, with some of the volunteers who helped with the church's Christmas Day lunch. Image courtesy of Colleen Lissamer.

Across the city, another church was also hosting a Christmas Day lunch. St. Matthias held its first Christmas Day lunch in 2022. Colleen Lissamer, the incumbent at St. Matthias, says the parish discerned a desire for a community meal on Christmas Day, rather than before Christmas.

A Christmas Day meal was felt to be especially important for those without a family gathering to attend. However, Colleen says the event has attracted a broad range of people including single people, couples and families. Residents of Rogers Court, the housing for seniors on the St. Matthias property, have also attended. The event is open to anyone and free of charge.

Members of the community sign up to contribute in various ways: setting up, cooking, serving and cleaning up. Some of these volunteers also sit down to eat a turkey dinner with all the trimmings and dessert.

Colleen says the response has been positive, and that

participants have expressed their appreciation for the community aspect of the lunch, as well as for the meal itself. “It’s always a joyful event. It’s not difficult to arrange or prepare and there are always generous and willing hands ready to pitch in.” says Colleen.

Getting curious when conflicts arise at parish AGMs



Photo credit: J. Abram Photography

By Lisa Alexander

It’s the season of spring buds, early cherry blossoms, new daffodils, longer days and parish vestry meetings. Depending on your personal preferences, some of these things might be more exciting than others. I know we all love a good meeting but if you’re anticipating a slightly bumpy ride at your parish AGM, read on.

The business of the church can bring up a lot of

different feelings. Some of us find business matters exciting and easy, while others find it a necessary but tedious chore. Let us take a moment to give thanks for the saints among us who prepare reports and budgets, format information in a (hopefully) understandable way, organize the rooms where the meetings will take place, provide childcare, clean up after the meetings and do all the other things that are necessary but often invisible.

However, our gratitude might start showing some gaps when we’re presented with ideas that don’t match our hopes for how our parish might use its sparse funds. Or when someone attacks our brilliant idea — the one we’ve worked so hard on for months.

How come they don’t understand the importance of this program to our parish? How on earth does someone think it’s a priority to label the Tupperware with specialty stickers, so it is returned to the church kitchen, and why are they wasting my time with this motion? Why hasn’t everyone read all the materials? Why are they asking stupid questions and talking about how things used to be three incumbents ago? Can’t the others in the parish see things the way I see them and behave the way I think is appropriate!?

Last month I invited us to commit to curiosity. The need for curiosity is especially great during situations where we find ourselves getting reactive and angry. It is also important for the times we are bored, impatient, dismissive, weary, sad or wanting to give up in exasperation. I am not suggesting that these reactions are typical in annual vestry meetings and planning meetings, but I would be very surprised if every person in the room was having a calm and peaceful meeting.

When a conflict is arising in a big group meeting like

an AGM, it tends to go one of two ways. If it moves into an external conflict, people may start reacting verbally. Often these reactions are of the unhelpful variety. Communication shuts down quickly and people are unable to listen clearly, give space to each other, explore information productively or make united decisions.

In the other direction, people do not voice their concerns or ask questions, often out of a sense of futility, or not wanting to rock the boat or be seen to be argumentative or ignorant. This silence masks their very real concerns, all of which they will voice to their friends after the vote has been taken, jeopardizing unity in the parish and often the decision itself.

We must master the skill of pausing and getting curious when we find ourselves starting to react internally. This is an inward focused curiosity. It might sound something like this: Oh, I can feel myself starting to react. What is it am I reacting to? We are training ourselves to create space internally so we can decide on next steps.

Pausing and being curious creates the necessary gap so that we do not wound ourselves or others. Strategically used, curiosity helps us slow down so we can speed up. If a bell is ringing inside you, likely it is ringing inside others. Are you noticing that information is missing? Are the explanations not making sense to you? Are you realizing that what looks like anger is masking fear or grief? Getting to the root of the actual issue rather than rushing to chaotic problem solving helps clarify conversations and surface genuine issues and useful information.

I can think of endless potential internal dialogues that might arise in tricky AGMS, but here are a few

illustrations:

I can't believe we're talking about the tree again. What a waste of time! We dealt with this years ago. Wait — I'm assuming that we're talking about the same issue as years ago. Is that correct? Do I have all the info I need here? Should I risk looking stupid and ask a clarifying question? Maybe I could ask what is important about this tree and this proposed course of action?

When she starts criticizing this motion we've worked so hard on, I feel immediately defensive and want to shout "Why don't you step up and figure out something better?" Is she genuinely being critical or is she pointing out things we potentially missed? Even if I don't like her tone, are there any helpful things that are being pointed out?

I am so annoyed that we are dealing with this issue again. I can't even be bothered to speak up. I know my friends feel the same way as me. Oh — I recognize this pattern. I check out and then complain later. That's starting to feel like a dishonest way of being in community. What am I scared about that makes me not want to speak up?

I'm shocked by how angry I feel right now. What's going on for me? Oh — anger reminds me that the things we are talking about really matter to me. What is it that matters most to me? Can I break it down into simple parts? How could I participate constructively right now and voice how much this matters to me?

May the God who loves us and calls us to love each other bless your curiosity and strengthen your ability to pause before reacting.

From the diocesan archives



St. Stephens, Saanich, ca.1880s.

By Justine Soles

Hello from the archives! My name is Justine Soles, and I have been the diocesan archivist since February 2025. I have the responsibility and pleasure of overseeing the historical collections of the diocese. My work involves facilitating access to records and ensuring their long-term preservation.

The collections of records held in the archives, such as parish reports, architectural records, journals, photographs and Diocesan Post newspapers, contribute to the religious and social history of Vancouver Island. While the repository for the archives was only established in 1980, the oldest materials date back to the 1830s from the Hudson's Bay Company settlement at Fort Vancouver on the Columbia River.

If this type of work interests you, the diocesan archives is seeking a volunteer who is available for a couple hours per week on Tuesdays or Wednesdays to work on

tasks such as data entry and inventorying records. Basic computer skills and an interest in history are required! Contact Justine by email at archives@bc.anglican.ca for more information.

The diocesan archives are open Tuesday and Wednesday 9 a.m. – 4 p.m. Researchers are welcome in-person by appointment on Wednesdays. The archives are located at 900 Vancouver St.

I look forward to sharing more highlights from the archives in future issues of *Faith Tides*!

Ripples: February 2026

By Faith Tides



Pictured (left) are (l-r) Norman Knowles, incumbent at St. John the Baptist, Duncan and St. Michael & All

Angels, Chemainus; Trish Vollmann-Stock, deacon; and Jenny Replogle, executive archdeacon at an Epiphany service held at St. John the Baptist, Duncan. Image by Jodie Phillips.

(Right) an Epiphany potluck shared by St. John the Baptist, Duncan and St. Michael & All Angels, Chemainus parishes. Image by Jodie Phillips.

St. Barnabas hosts a Fernwood Christmas tradition



Star Sunday crafting fair at St. Barnabas, Victoria. Image courtesy of Andrea Klassen.

On Sunday, Dec. 7, 2025, St. Barnabas Anglican Church in Victoria hosted the 17th annual Star Sunday, a beloved community crafting fair marking the Second Sunday of Advent. Families and friends are invited to enjoy hands-on craft stations where children and adults can make Christmas decorations and gifts from natural materials, including beeswax candles, wreaths, cards and beads.

The festive atmosphere continues outside with warm apple cider, waffles, caroling and a yule fire, offering a chance to connect and celebrate together. Around 20 craft stations are available, each supervised, making Star Sunday a welcoming space for all ages. Donations are gratefully accepted to support the church's community programs.

Star Sunday is a joyful way to celebrate creativity, fellowship and the Advent season, bringing the community together to share in the spirit of Christmas.

Chalking the door

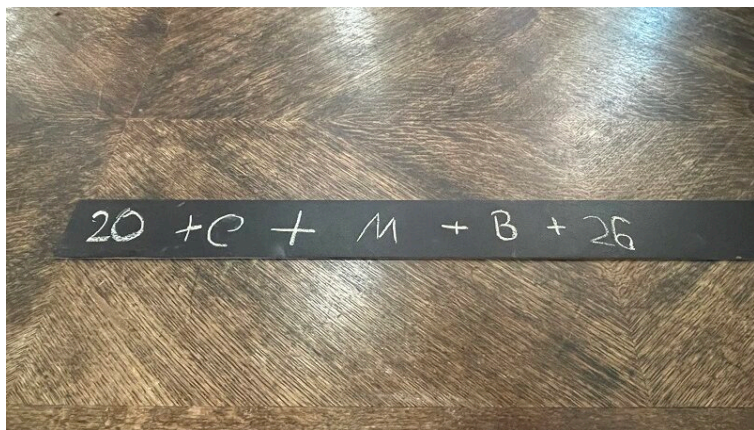
By Barb Prescott



Fantastic Friday participants at St. Luke wrote the gifts they are bringing to Jesus this year on stars. image by Barb Prescott.

We celebrated Epiphany at St. Luke this year with the radio play, “The Fourth Wiseman” at our 10 am Sunday service at the beginning of January. This play had us thinking about the true gifts of Epiphany. The theme at the January Fantastic Friday was also Epiphany and we wrote the gifts we were bringing to Jesus on stars and hung those stars in the church.

We also chalked the door. Because the children at Fantastic Friday love to help with the chalking, we have a board which we chalk and place above the entry door of the church. In the past we had to lift the children to do the chalking or had a ladder, but this works much better. If you don't have the tradition of chalking the door at your church, here's how to do it.



*The chalk board used to “chalk the door” at St. Luke, Cedar Hill.
Image by Barb Prescott.*

People are invited to inscribe the lintel of the home (the horizontal frame above the door) with the inscription shown below using chalk (hence, chalking the door). The letters C M B come from the traditional (9th century) names for the three kings: Caspar, Melchior and Balthazar. Some also suggest “Christus Mansionem Benedicat” which means, “May Christ bless this dwelling!” Each person is afforded a turn to make one or more of the marks: 20 + C + M + B + 26.

Victoria cellist performs at St. Luke’s Reflections service

By Barb Prescott

In January, we welcomed cellist Elena Antontceva to our Reflections series. Elena is an internationally known cellist who has performed in Europe and now lives in Victoria. Each Reflections service has a theme and features poems, prayers and readings, interspersed with music and times of silence.



Cellist Elena Antontceva performs at St. Luke, Cedar Hill. Image by Barb Prescott.

The theme of the January Reflections was “home” and the readings and music on this theme provided a time of peace and serenity. Reflections will be moving to the second Sunday of the month from February through June, starting at 4:30 p.m. in February and March and at 7:00 p.m. April – June. Music at the February Reflections will be presented by the Seabreeze Trio.

‘I would have entertained anything but priesthood’



Anna Rossi is presented with a stole, holy oil and keys to the cathedral at her investiture at Christ Church Cathedral, Victoria on January 11. Photos by Jeannine Friesen.

By Anna Rossi

My life began in Canton, Ohio, where my parents bought an unremarkable house in the barely middle class environs of an expanding hospital. My parents had been married just over 10 months, after my father was excused from the Roman Catholic priesthood, refusing to be laicized, or renounce his holy orders, convinced of his call to marriage. In the late 1970s in the Midwest, that was a thing. What they could no longer fully exercise in the church was directed toward the house and neighbourhood, which also meant organizing to limit the hospital's footprint.

Over time, our home would include my four biological siblings, two adopted siblings, myriad foster children, my grandmother, an aunt, cousins, exchange students, neighbours. There was always an extra seat at the table. Our faith was nurtured in guitar masses at a then-moderate Roman Catholic college, an upbringing where martyred Salvadoran archbishop Oscar Romero was a saint long before he could be canonized, and the gospel values of mercy and charity were practical and tangible.

From that childhood, I began university in France, ended up in San Francisco, and followed a winding road into The Episcopal Church. In the aftermath of the US invasion of Iraq in 2003, I wanted work that aligned with my values, and applied for a role at Grace (Episcopal) Cathedral that combined print production and administrative work. I was hired, and spent six years on the staff, first as a Roman Catholic, and then ultimately becoming part of the congregation.

Despite family history, having a quasi-liturgical role and preaching regularly at one service, ordination was nowhere on my radar screen. After six years, I left my staff position and was part of the team that was hired for the opening of an Italian restaurant, subtly named Credo. In the moments between lunch rushes and mixing amaro-centred cocktails, I realized that I would entertain just about anything except priesthood. And so I cracked open the door by telling myself it was just a conversation.

My discernment period included leading a multi-congregation jail ministry, several returns to Grace Cathedral in the liturgy department, an MA at the Claremont School of Theology, immigration organizing, disaster chaplaincy training, and a yearlong seminarian post in a small parish near where my wife,

Amie, and I were living with our two boys, then in middle school.

I was fully prepared to never going back to Grace Cathedral to work as a priest. But in my case, that was exactly what happened. Two amazing senior female clerics mentored and prepared me to navigate the institution as a priest, and move into a position of leadership. In that capacity, I enjoyed building a staff and developing volunteer teams, and finding ways to partner with diocesan, interfaith and civic institutions that enriched relationships without overburdening people and systems.

Our structures can ease or impede cooperative relationships. For me, there lie our biggest challenges and opportunities as a church, whether the Anglican Church here or The Episcopal Church in the US. Sometimes we have all the will in the world for two churches to share a part-time administrator, and at the same time lack the basic administrative structures to make it viable. Conversely, sometimes we can pilot a local ecumenical relationship with just enough knowledge and resources that it seeds a regional partnership. The task before us is at once a wide embrace and developing the supports that keep our metaphorical and virtual arms extended. At their best, cathedrals can do both to the benefit of the whole diocese — and that is work I hope to do here.

Using video to bring the local community in



St. Philip Anglican Church in Oak Bay.

By Naomi Racz

Before coming to Victoria and starting his incumbency at St. Philip Anglican Church in Oak Bay, Allen Doerksen was the incumbent at St. Matthew's in Abbotsford.

St. Matthew's was one of the parishes that left the Diocese of New Westminster in 2002 when then-Bishop Michael Ingham consented to allowing churches to conduct same-sex blessings. After the congregation vacated the church building, Allen was asked by Bishop Michael to restart the parish.

One Sunday, Paul and Melissa, friends of a parishioner, visited St. Matthew's. They came from an evangelical background and were impressed with how St. Matthew's was striving to be an inclusive church in

a largely conservative town.

Paul and Melissa own Post Meridian Productions and they offered to make some videos about Anglicanism and the church year. Those videos generated a lot of interactions and brought new people into the church.

So, when Allen joined St. Philip in 2023, he decided to see if video could work there too. Following a long rectorship under Christopher Page, the church had several interim priests and began to experience a decline in numbers. Allen thought video could be one way to draw in members of the local community.

Allen is clear that this is an experiment, but says that recent analytics have been encouraging, with one video receiving 500 views and over 60% of views coming from outside the church.

However, he also feels ambiguous about using social media. “I am under no illusion that social media is hugely deleterious. It’s not good in many ways. But then I remember that Paul used the Roman roads. He used the roads of the empire that the empire had built in order to get from town to town. So, at one level we can choose to inhabit it in a different way. Many people inhabit it in ways that are life bringing for others and create connections around the world.”

He also quickly realized that Victoria is not Abbotsford. While the congregation and parish council at St. Matthew’s was largely supportive, that hasn’t been the case at St. Philip. A few parishioners at St. Philip have questioned what the purpose of the videos is and whether the church is just engaging in a marketing exercise.

“Fair questions,” says Allen. “But I

think there’s probably 300 people in and around our wider community who, if they knew we existed, would at least come and experience who we are.

“It is like a soft version of marketing, there’s no doubt about it, if you want to use that word.

I don’t think that’s the right word to use for church. I think we have great news to share. And there’s these 300 people who, if they knew... I’m just picking that number out of midair, but when we have conversations with people who come, maybe through the invitation of a friend, they say, ‘Oh, we never knew this place existed. We would’ve come here a long time ago if we would’ve known that.’ So, that’s the impetus.”

St. Philip has been working with Post Meridian Productions for about a year and Allen, with parish council support, wants to continue this experiment for at least another year. He feels it takes a while to know if it’s working because the way information spreads online is very organic.

“It’s really dependent on the congregation beginning to share the posts,” says Allen. “And then following other organizations and them sharing posts. There’s this web that starts to get drawn and you’re part of this wider conversation.”

Another challenge is that Paul and Melissa are based in Abbotsford. They come over every few months to film for a whole day. They then edit the video and post it to social media or the church’s website. Allen says it simply wouldn’t happen without Paul and Melissa’s involvement since neither he nor anyone in the congregation has the time or expertise to edit and disseminate the videos.

Allen thinks any church looking to use video should

start with a welcome video explaining what their parish is about, which can then be used on the parish website. It could be just the priest, or it could be a compilation of people talking.



“We don’t have all the answers,” says Allen. “We’re trying to learn how to love each other and love the world and love God. So, if a little bit of that comes through and people are encouraged to go to church, even if they never come to our church, or they’re encouraged to realize that there’s people out there who may be envisioning church in a different way, then I think it’s been an experiment worth doing, even if only for a few years.”

To see more of St. Philip’s videos, visit their [Facebook page](#).
