

December 8, 2023

Dear friends:

“The voice of one crying out in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the Lord; make his paths straight.’” (Mark 1:3)



Cay Holbrook's Advent Message

Cay Holbrook, Chair of the Board, writes: “I would like to begin with an expression of deep gratitude. As some of you know, in early November I was quite ill and was



unexpectedly unable to follow through on some church tasks. I immediately felt warmed by the love, concern and prayer coming from my family of faith. I appreciate how fortunate I am to be a part of the St. David's community all the time, but, if possible, you were all cherished even more during this time of need.

This is such an exciting and busy season. I love Christmas and the time leading up to it. Advent's meaning and message holds particular importance for the world during this turbulent time. As we move closer to our celebration of the birth of Christ, I hope your lives are filled with hope, peace, joy and love.”

A Candle of Peace, December 10, 2023, 10.30 a.m.

We light the Candle of Peace in our worship service this Sunday (Advent 2), which is also a service of Holy Communion. As before, we'll warm up with a favourite Christmas carol and sing some familiar Advent hymns. Monique Creber will sing a solo "A Grown-up Christmas List" and she will be joined for the hymns on the organ by Sam Balden. You'll hear readings from the Book of Isaiah and the Gospel of Mark, where we shall find John the Baptist "preparing the way of the Lord". I'll be offering you some thoughts on how to prepare for the coming of God's grace on Christmas Eve. We hope you'll be free to join us on Sunday and, if possible, stay for coffee and a time for fellowship afterwards. Guests and friends are always welcome!

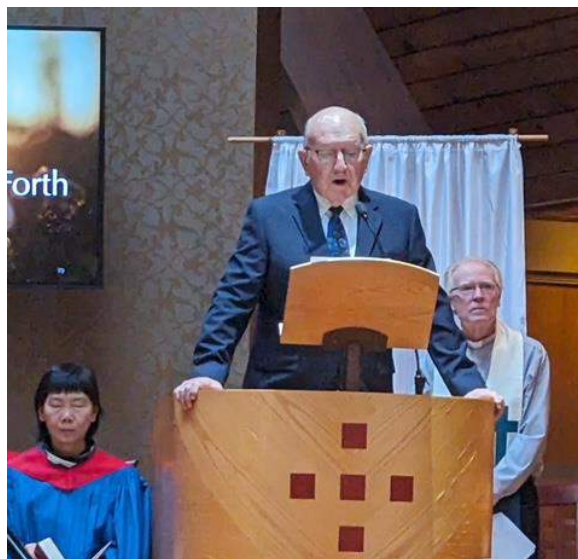
Last Sunday, First United Sunday, December 3rd

We were joined by Amanda Burrows, Executive Director, and Heather Clarke, Chair of the Board, in our service last Sunday, in which we celebrated the inner-city ministry of **First United Church**. Thanks to Amanda for her "Message from First United" and to Monique and the St. David's Choir for the musical program, including a lovely solo version of "The Streets of London" by Ralph McTell.

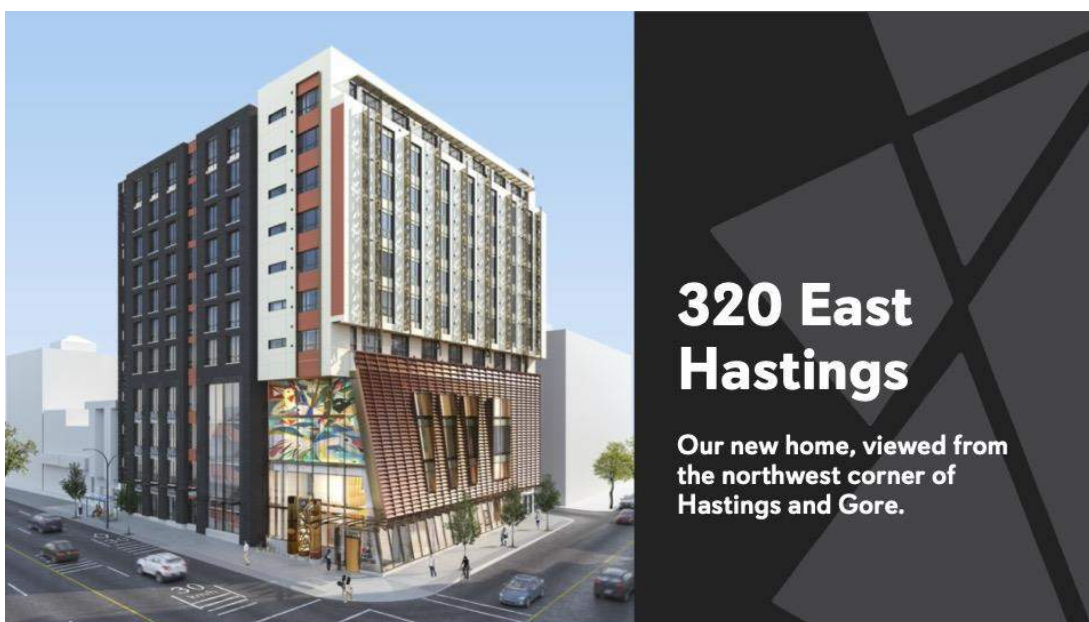


We were also pleased that Joan and Rev. Bob Burrows were able to join at this service in honour of First United. Bob is a Minister Emeritus of St. David's, a former minister here (1991-1999) and Superintendent of First United Church (1968-74) - photo by Chris Nowell. Special thanks to Bob for blessing and sending us forth with the following words:

“Go gladly into the world,
with its pain and wonder,
remembering who you are
and to whom you belong;
be the living expression of God's kindness,
bringing peace and comfort and joy
to all who yearn for a sign of hope.”

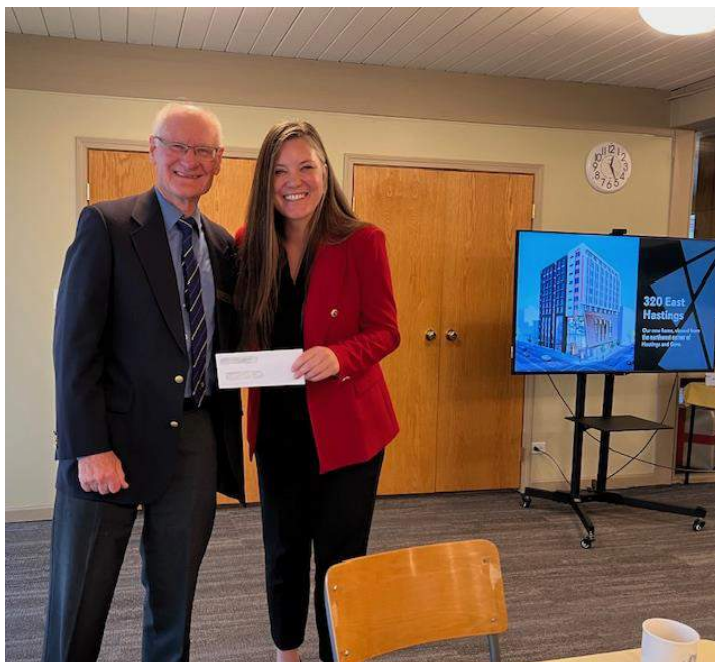


Following the worship service, Amanda Burrows led a presentation in the Lounge on the First Forward Campaign, with an update on the development plans for a new home for First United on the existing site (shown below). The “old” First has now been demolished, excavation is underway, and the new First is planned for completion in the Fall of 2025. The total project cost is estimated at \$92 million, with \$37 million being First United's portion. Over \$27 million has been secured to date with approximately \$9.5 million still to raise (photos courtesy of Heather Clarke).





Following the presentation and conversation, our Treasurer, Jim Morrison, presented a cheque on behalf of St. David's towards the First Forward Capital Campaign. The relationship between St. David's and First United goes back many years and we are planning other activities in the coming months to "kindle the flame" of an important partnership. Thanks to all who helped plan "First United Sunday" and to our friends from First who helped make this such an informative event. Please find enclosed a copy of my Reflection "Hope Lives Here" in case you missed it on Sunday.



Lots to look forward to in the weeks ahead – please make a note of the dates and times of upcoming events!

The annual **Lions Gate Sinfonia Family Christmas** is taking place tomorrow, Saturday 9 Dec, 7:30 p.m. at West Vancouver United Church. The concert features special guests: pianist Michael Creber along with vocalists Monique Creber, Michelle Creber and Natalie Sharp, combined with Cypress Singers, CM Singers and the St. David's Choir. Call the office for ticket information., visit Eventbrite.

On Tuesday 12 Dec, the **Pastoral Care Team** will be holding their Christmas Lunch in the Lounge at 11 a.m. We are all grateful to Becky Knapton and her team of pastoral caregivers for their faithful work this past year. They have brightened the lives of many in our community who have experienced loss or health challenges.

Later on Tuesday, at 2 p.m., the **St. David's Board** will be holding their final meeting of the year. We also thank Cay Holbrook and Mandy Zou for helping us navigate through the many issues needing our attention during the year and we hold the Board in our prayers as they discuss some important staffing and budget questions for the year ahead.

We are looking forward to the **Quiet Christmas** service this Thursday 14 Dec, one of the highlights of the Advent Season at St. David's. We will again be joined by noted Vancouver harpist, Rebecca Blair, with Monique accompanying on some quieter carols. The service is an opportunity to bring comfort and support to those who experience the Christmas season as a time of sadness rather than joy. For all who are looking for some un-rushed time in a busy season, this service invites you to slow down and gain some strength for the days ahead.



Next Sunday, 17 Dec at 10.30 a.m., we change musical gears and celebrate a service of “Lessons and Carols” accompanied by guest vocalist [Marcus Mosely](#). Marcus was inducted into the B.C. Entertainment Hall of Fame in 2016 and has deep roots in the Gospel tradition. Come and join us for a service that will bring you joy and new energy as we enter the Christmas week.

Coming Soon to St. David's

Tickets are now on sale for the **“Magic of Christmas – Let There Be Peace”** concert, at 7 p.m. on Monday 18 December, presented by the Creber family and sponsored for the first time by St. David's United Church. You will find details of the event, including how to order tickets, in the attached poster, and ticket information can also be found [here](#). We will give you details of the special discount arrangements for members of the St. David's community at our worship service this Sunday.

We'll include further details of our **Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve services** next week – this year's Christmas Eve services will be at 10.30 a.m. (all ages, including infant baptism) and 10 p.m. (candlelight with guest pianist, Michael Creber). This year we are designating Sunday 24 Dec as **“White Gift Sunday”** at St. David's, an opportunity to bring gifts for the community members of First United Church in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside. Gifts of items, in new and original packaging, or gently-used clothing items from the needed list, shown [HERE](#) are wrapped in white paper and may be placed under the Christmas Tree at the front of the sanctuary at either of our Christmas Eve services, and we will deliver them for you. Note that the items in highest demand this year are bar soap, razors and shaving cream, men's and women's underwear, sweat pants and lotion. First United are unable to accept items that are not shown on their “gifts-in-kind needed” list.

Thank you to all who are planning, rehearsing, baking and volunteering for these special events. There are still opportunities to lend a hand and we ask you to let us know if you are able to help greet, usher, offer hospitality or are willing to read at one of the upcoming services. We look forward to seeing you and your family and friends at some of these events and hope that you will enjoy the blessings of this Advent/Christmas season at St. David's - be well, with love –

Philip

P.S. The deadline for **Christmas Poinsettia orders** is this Thursday 14 Dec. The order form is in your worship bulletin or phone Leanne at the church office number below for assistance.

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