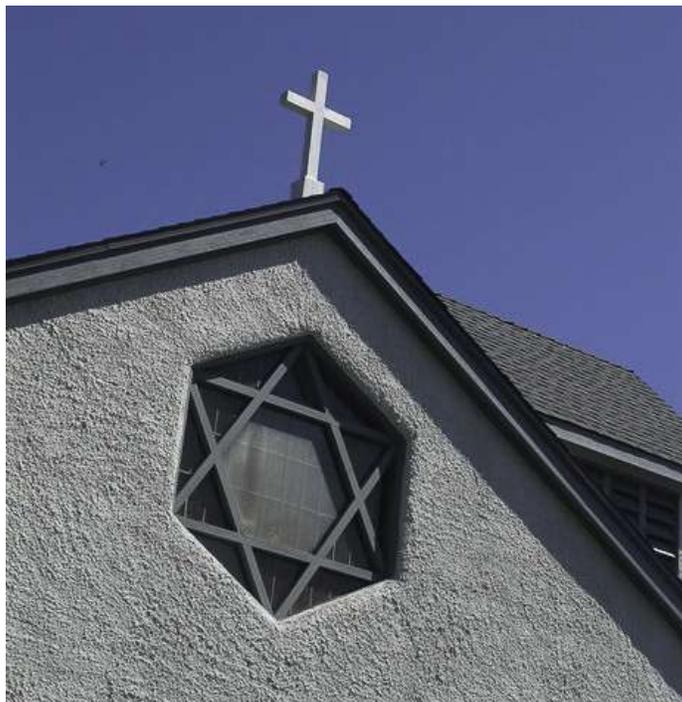




Parish Profile

Diocese of British Columbia

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Our Mission Statement

To know God the Father as revealed in His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour, and to make Him known through word and deed by the power of the Holy Spirit.

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We are...

Rooted in the Word...Reaching for the World

We are a parish of about 250 people in the beautiful Comox Valley. We worship together with scripture, music and prayer. We participate in Bible studies, discussion groups, activities and volunteering. We share in each other's lives in both grief and joy and strive to grow a community with Christ in the centre.

The compilation of this Parish Profile included input from 2017 visioning activities, our recent transition evening with the Bishop, a questionnaire, letters and emails and a series of two 5-hour interactive open house sessions for parishioners. The members of the parish have been passionate and engaged in this time of transition. It has been a challenging, exciting and hopeful time and we are full of gratitude for all our blessings.

The Comox Valley



We live in the Comox Valley which includes the Town of Comox, the City of Courtenay, the Village of Cumberland, south to Royston, Union Bay and Fanny Bay and north to Merville and Black Creek. This is an area of 1700 sq. km with a population of 66,527 with a median age of 44.3. Up until this year our parish included St Saviours on Denman Island. They have become a stand-alone parish on a trial basis. The Parish of St John the Divine in Courtenay is a 10-minute drive away. We are located 3 hours drive north of Victoria, 1 1/2 hours north of Nanaimo and 40 minutes south of Campbell River. The Comox Valley is a popular retirement and vacation destination.

We have many seniors, especially in Comox, but the area has one of the fastest growing populations of families too. There are 3 high schools and 16 elementary schools including French Immersion and a Francophone School. There is a Kindergarten to grade 12 Christian School in the

Town of Comox. At the post secondary level we have North Island College. There is a new 153 bed hospital that opened in 2017.

Canadian Forces 19 Wing Comox is located in town and brings people with short-term and long-term postings. There is a strong agricultural base in the area and several families in the parish farm for a living.

For recreation we are fortunate to have the ocean, rivers and mountains. We border Strathcona Provincial Park and are a 40-minute drive to the ski resort at Mount Washington. There is fishing, hiking, boating, mountain biking, golf, recreational facilities and many sporting activities. A rich art and cultural life includes festivals, museums and theatre. Local products and produce are available year-round at the Farmers' Market.

We are served by an international airport in Comox, Highways 19 and 19A and BC Ferries. Comox harbour is home to a large commercial fishing fleet as well as a sizable number of pleasure craft.

<https://www.bcmag.ca/50-things-to-do-in-the-comox-valley/>

<https://www.bcferrries.com/>

Faith in Foundation



The Church and Grounds

St. Peter occupies 1/2 acre in the heart of the Town of Comox. The parish of St. Peter, established in 1871, built the original wood-frame Church in 1891. In 1939, it was replaced with the current building. The Sanctuary seats 150 people. Renovations to the inside of the church were done in 2007, opening up and brightening the space. This included the commissioning of two stain glass windows at the front of the church called Garden of Eden and New Jerusalem, made by a local artist. A carving at the front of the church of the resurrected Jesus, with His arms open wide welcoming all into the church, was carved by a parishioner in the 1980's. The church has an up to

date audiovisual system that can be controlled with an iPad and includes VHS for the hard-of-hearing. The church has a bell, from the original building, which is rung 8 times at 8 minutes to 8 o'clock and 10 times at 10 to 10 o'clock on Sunday morning by the Greeters so that it reverberates the Love of Christ and announces the Good News and a 'welcome' to all in range.

The Parish Hall building has a kitchen, washrooms, a library, a nursery, basement storage and two meeting rooms, the larger of which seats 100 people. As well as being used for congregational activities it is lent out or rented to community groups including Alcoholics Anonymous, a Tango group, a home-schooling group and Newcomers Bridge Club. Thanks to generous donations and a sizable bequest, the kitchen, two washrooms and the two hallways in Corker Hall were modernized and the entrance to both the Sanctuary and the hall were made wheel-chair accessible.

The Parish House, built in 1896 as the rectory, now serves as offices, and has three meeting rooms upstairs, a board room, a kitchen, bathrooms and basement storage. It is the location for our Unity cupboard food bank.

The grounds are a combination of manicured planted areas and wild spaces. It is kept up thanks to the dedicated grounds maintenance ministry, including two work parties per year. We are blessed with large patches of snowdrops that come up in very early spring. There are six grave sites and a Memorial Garden for the purpose of spreading ashes. The church property backs onto the municipal golf course. Deer roam freely and bring their fawns in the summer. There are two memorial benches, a covered bench for quiet contemplation and picnic tables made by a parishioner that are used on many occasions.

Communication

Communication occurs through both formal and informal means including Sunday post-service announcements, post-service coffee conversations, weekly service bulletin, potluck meals, vestry meetings, bulletin board displays, and fellowship groups as well as an e-mail prayer chain and a weekly e-mail newsletter called "Parish Happenings". There is also an up to date and informative website stpeterscomox.ca. Our *5:40 Express*, Saturday night service, has a Facebook page. The local newspaper called the Record is open to articles about events and is a good way to communicate with the community. Our church logo has recently been developed by a parishioner.

Having a church that is safe for all, especially vulnerable people, is very important to us. We have many volunteers and ensure compliance with the Diocesan Safe Church policy. We work towards kind and wise communication with everyone and strive to extend grace to one another.

Finances

St. Peter's annual financial statement for 2017 recorded an income of \$311,078 and operating expenses of \$315,634. We are supported by the free will offering of our parishioners for our day-to-day operation and not on fund raising.

Faith in Formation



Our Worship Services (average attendance)

- ❖ Sunday morning 8 o'clock traditional Eucharist service based on the Book of Common Prayer (27)
- ❖ Sunday morning 10 o'clock contemporary Eucharist service with praise music based on the Book of Alternative Services. This is the service with Sunday School. (82)
- ❖ Saturday evening 5:40 *Express* is a non-liturgical, 1- hour contemporary service with leadership and homilies provided by lay members of the congregation with the support of Clergy. It is a creative service with videos, skits, drama, speakers and readings. This format reaches out to those who may not be used to a liturgical service, may not feel comfortable in a formal setting or cannot attend on Sundays. There is a shared meal after the service. (35)
- ❖ Thursday morning there is a Holy Communion service with a dedicated group of worshippers (6)
- ❖ St. Peter's Clergy also participates in scheduled worship and pastoral care services at Cumberland Extended Care Center. (13)
- ❖ Christmas Eve includes widely attended services. This includes a family service with nativity scene and a late-night candlelight service. Including the Christmas Day service, the attendance averages a total of 250.
- ❖ St. Peter joins with other churches in the Comox Valley for a joint ecumenical service on Good Friday and for an outdoor interdenominational service at the Comox Marina Park on the August long weekend, both inviting the local Christian community to gather.
- ❖ For a number of years, our Easter Sunday service has been held in the Comox Community Centre as an outreach into the community. (192)
- ❖ The church calendar gives a Christ-Centred rhythm to our year. The special services are Shrove Tuesday, Ash Wednesday (29), Maundy Thursday (28), Good Friday (20), Thankfulness Service (75), Advent and Christmas carols (79).

Worship Resources

Lay Ministries to support the church services include: Altar Guild, audio visual technicians and operators, Chalice Bearers, coffee makers, collection counters, communion bread bakers, Greeters, Praise Team, Prayer Desk, Prayers of the People, Readers, Servers (Acolytes), Sidespersons and Sunday School Teachers/helpers.

The members of the Altar Guild have decades of experience between them and are dedicated to the ministry in a deep and prayerful way. They maintain the sacred vessels and linens, decorate the church for special festivals and change the liturgical hangings.

St. Peter's praise teams provide music for the 10 o'clock service and the *5:40 Express* with singing, keyboard, guitar and percussion. At the 8 o'clock service we have a keyboard player. The teams pull in people of all ages and give opportunity to people with the gift of music. They prayerfully choose songs every week, so the congregation can sing praise to God with all their hearts. A high-quality keyboard was generously donated in a parishioner's name and a stand was lovingly built for it. The music at St. Peter is a mix of traditional and contemporary. We also have an organ that is used occasionally.

Our library is extensive, well used and lovingly cared for. The resources are available to be signed out. This library contains 1000 titles. These are mainly print materials with a collection of approximately 75 DVDs. Our librarian uses author's last name, the Dewey Decimal Classification System and a computer catalogue called ResourceMate. At any time approximately 50-100 titles are in circulation. Parishioners are encouraged to suggest titles that may be of current interest to others. The parish provides a small budget that covers the purchase of new titles and miscellaneous library materials. Our parish library strives to provide materials to challenge and nurture the soul, novels with a Christian message, study materials to help us grow in our faith, classic and "new" works and DVDs for all ages.

The Congregation

St. Peter has about 140 registered parish families with a mixture of retirees, working adults and young families. The majority of the congregation are "young at heart" seniors. Parishioners come from a cross-section of Comox Valley residential locations and socio-economic backgrounds. Weekly attendance, combining all three services, averages around 150.

To welcome people we have Greeters to engage with new people and show them around. We have newcomer cards they can fill out if they want. Many in our congregation have the gift of hospitality.

Much informal caring happens amongst the members, especially in the numerous small groups.

There is a high level of individual volunteerism out in the community, including, but not limited to, the Sunshine Lunch Club at the United Church in Courtenay, Rotary Book Sale, Pregnancy Care Centre, L'Arche Comox Valley, the hospital and Hospice.

We are blessed to have the core members of L'Arche Comox Valley attend St. Peter sometimes and many of our Parishioners support L'Arche financially and are volunteers with them. L'Arche Comox Valley is a community of people with and without developmental disabilities, sharing their lives fully and helping each other to discover their hidden gifts.

We value having the three services that are liturgically different. We also value coming together as a parish for social and special events and Bible Studies, in fact, every other aspect of church.

There is a growing interest in our parish to connect with other Christian communities within our region and to participate more fully in our Diocese. The Transforming Futures campaign, stemming from the development of a Diocesan wide vision, will give us the opportunity to develop more fully a vision of our future as a parish and encourage support for both our local and diocesan initiatives.

Though we are a diverse group in both theological understandings and denominational backgrounds, we are united in a desire for sound biblically based teaching and a strong commitment to follow Christ in our attitudes and actions.

Our commitment to each other is paramount. We rely on prayer and the guidance of the Holy Spirit to help us manage our differences and share the love, forgiveness and acceptance of Christ with each other and the world around us.

Youth and Family Life

Sunday school is well resourced with an on-line curriculum and enthusiastic support from the congregation. We have six teachers and helpers who commit to a monthly rotation. Attendance ranges from 1 to 8 children. The older children are encouraged to train as Servers helping them grow and finding their place in the community of believers. We currently have four dedicated young Servers.

Our annual Vacation Bible Camp has been running for 30 years. It takes place for 4 half days in a week each summer. Last year's Theme was *Shipwrecked; Rescued by Jesus*. We had 48 kids and 39 youth and adult volunteers. With the goal of welcoming new families, we decided to hold reunions over the course of this year at the church for the kids who attended VBC. We have held one already with 12 children attending and have another coming up in December.

We have a youth group for high school age kids called SPY, St. Peter Youth, which meets for special events. We have about 20 young adults out of town in and newly graduated from University and College. The congregation keeps in touch with them with letters of encouragement twice a year.

At the family Christmas Eve service, we have a Nativity scene in which all the children who are at the service can take part. There is an Easter egg hunt during our Easter Sunday service at the Community Centre.

We take part in a teen camp at Camp Homewood on Quadra Island every February. This year we took 8 teens from our church.

Prayer Life

A small dedicated group of people gather on the first Friday each month in the church. They seek God's will and offer prayers on behalf of the church. On Wednesday evenings there is prayer time hosted by a parishioner to "seek the Holy Spirit in Prayer for revival in the Valley". We have a very active email-based Prayer Chain. Parishioners visit those who want prayer or there will be a gathering at the church to pray for someone in need. We have many people who are gifted in the area of healing prayer. Prayer desk ministry provides one-on-one prayer time for people during communion on Sundays. Clergy provides communion and pastoral care for people at home, in the hospital and in care homes as needed.

Bible Studies and Community Building

- ❖ Men's Breakfast is once a month on a Saturday in the hall. A hearty traditional breakfast is cooked and served by the men and, along with fellowship, a guest speaker often provides much food for thought. It has an average attendance of 30.
- ❖ Monday Men's Bible Study
- ❖ Tuesday Study Group in the Hall
- ❖ Tuesday morning Women's Bible Study
- ❖ Thursday Men's Breakfast at a local Café
- ❖ Henning's Home Fellowship Bible Study on Thursday evenings
- ❖ A weekly Thursday evening Pastorate Gathering & Potluck dinner in the Hall
- ❖ The St. Peter Walkers hike many of the local trails, experiencing fellowship and God's creation.
- ❖ In the spring we go to Camp Homewood on Quadra Island for a Parish weekend. Together we take part in camp activities, worship, singing and a half day workshop of learning and community strengthening, and we don't have to do any dishes!
- ❖ We have had several group art projects. One was Images of the Kingdom of God. Another was a giant jigsaw puzzle that was put together over the weeks of Advent.
- ❖ There are day long reflective women's retreats a few times per year.

Faith in Action



Designated Outreach Support

St. Peter contributes financially to a number of missions and community groups: Africa Community Technical Services, Comox Valley Pregnancy Care Centre, Youth For Christ Comox Valley, Grace Life Ministries, L'Arche Comox Valley, Sonshine Lunch Club in Courtenay, Dancing Waters (A ministry to Indigenous communities) and to InterVarsity Christian Fellowship. This support totals \$1050 per month.

Reconciliation

We acknowledge that for thousands of years the Coast Salish, Nuu-chah-nulth, 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 in honour and respect, and we thank them for their hospitality.

We recommit ourselves to an ongoing shared journey with First Nation people of all nations and cultures, especially those who feel hurt or abandoned by the church. We held a workshop at St. Peter called Building Bridges Through Understanding the Village and also hosted a Blanket exercise.

Outreach to the Community and the World

The Unity Cupboard at St. Peter is a drop-in foodbank. In 2017 it provided 413 adults and 99 of their children with groceries, toiletries household essentials and small articles of clothing, particularly during the winter season. It is open twice a week for those in need of a helping hand in a difficult time. It is set up for people to stay and have a coffee and conversation if they so wish. Local bakeries donate bread, sandwiches, pizzas and baked goods.

On Remembrance Day we have an outreach in the hall for those attending the service at the Cenotaph. We extend an invitation to drop in for fellowship, a hot drink and some baked goodies or quiet reflection in the church. The washrooms are open for the public. This year a parishioner, joined churches around the world, and rang the bell at sundown 100 times to mark the years since WWI ended.

The 20/20 group of women was initiated by a member of the church. Last year, among other pursuits, they hosted a very successful event with a silent auction to raise funds for Christmas hampers. It was very well attended and enjoyed by all.

Hallowe'en Outreach is organized and carried out by SPY – St. Peter Youth. Members of the church provide the necessary goodies to go into the treat bags together with information about St. Peter and the services and programs we have to offer. The youth put the bags together, dress up and hand them out at the local mall.

The Advent Christmas Carol service is advertised to the broader community and is well attended.

In the last few years numerous parishioners and members of the wider community have successfully sponsored and welcomed refugees to the valley. The most recent family to arrive came within the last few weeks. The personal and financial commitments invested in this are outweighed by the joy in giving a new life and hope to these families. St. Peter provides administrative support to some of these sponsor groups.

We also participate in Operation Christmas Child with 47 boxes going out this year.

Many individuals support the Widows Project in Uganda, co-ordinated by a member of our congregation.

Where We Want to Go

We believe God is calling us to:

- ❖ be a community growing in both our personal and corporate life through the exposition of the Word
- ❖ welcome all by reflecting the love of Christ through our words, attitudes and actions
- ❖ provide leadership and resources for the development of ministries for families and youth
- ❖ build on what we currently do to reach out and serve the needs of the Comox Valley
- ❖ have a greater visible presence in our community to connect with and attract our Comox Valley neighbours
- ❖ strengthen our relationships with the diocese
- ❖ develop discipleship and recognize, value and encourage the use of our individual gifts
- ❖ be open to exploring new ways to worship while valuing our traditional Anglican roots
- ❖ build up our strong, loving and caring parish community by providing more opportunities to build interpersonal relationships

As we go forward, we rejoice in the heritage of our parish and continue to build using the foundation of prayer, relying on the leading of the Holy Spirit.

What We Can Provide

The Parish of St. Peter will welcome our next Priest with prayerful and practical support in what ever way possible including the following:

- ❖ Our Bishop's Consultation Team will remain in place as a support group for any needed assistance for a family or individual making the transition to our community.
- ❖ St. Peter has a well-structured organization with experienced groups and strong leadership in areas of administration, finance, buildings and grounds and parish council.
- ❖ An engaged congregation who have carried and cared for each other for many years.
- ❖ A vibrant community with fabulous recreation, arts and culture.
- ❖ There is an excellent bakery with stone oven baked pizza right across the street and about the time you arrive the new pub next door to that will be opening. 😊