

# NEWCOMBE NOTES NOVEMBER 2025

## MANY THANKS TO THESE AMAZING BOARD MEMBERS AND OTHER VOLUNTEERS

Music Director ..... Kathryn Whitney  
 Assistant Conductor..... Kristina Stevens  
 Accompanist..... Robert Dukarm  
 President ..... Lorne McLash  
 Vice-president .....Peter Beliveau  
 Treasurer ..... Keith Beange  
 Music Librarian .....Norma Jee  
 Membership .....Norma Jee  
 Donations campaign head.....Ellen Godfrey  
 PR “Wizad” .....Myrna Fisher  
 Newsletter editor .....Marilyn Crump  
 Grant Committee Head .....Marilyn Crump  
 Graphic Design..... Beverly van Druten-Blais  
 Secretary ..... Cathy Stevenson  
 Piggy Bank..... Cathy Stevenson & Sheila Randall

Webmaster & Livestreaming..... Rebecca Battilana  
 Score PDFs for the website, voice tracks and video streaming .....John Sease

## FROM OUR NEW PRESIDENT, LORNE MCLASH

As we begin the 2025-6 year, I want to introduce myself as your new president. Having been raised on the prairie on the cowboy songbook, my musical journey with the Newcombe Singers has been a real ear and eye opener. Learning the intricacies of a choir has brought me so much joy that I hope I can further spread the magic of this choir.

Though I come with few years of musical experience, I have years of experience in project management and speech-language pathology along with abundant enthusiasm to support our choir while assisting our members. A hearty welcome to all our new members. I’m sure you are in for an enjoyable year of singing with our fabulous director, Kathryn Whitney. Our music will be challenging as we highlight new music, female and Indigenous composers. We’ve been fortunate to do some premieres of Canadian music, too. A big welcome back to the many continuing members, too. I’ve been enthused by your proactivity within this group.

I would like to encourage you all to volunteer your talents and experience in helping with the many endeavours in the choir such as grant writing, PR/communications, and web management assistance.

Speaking of the website, I highly recommend you sign in as a member and utilize all of the resources that are available to you. Our volunteers have included sound files which I find useful, along with a song schedule for our rehearsals, and many other resources, our history and past newsletters. If you have any difficulty using the website, please contact your section leader who will be pleased to help you.

Mark your calendars with our Christmas performances and encourage family and friends to do the same. We aspire to always have our concerts well supported

Please feel free to contact me at [allenby1@gmail.com](mailto:allenby1@gmail.com) if you have further queries. I’m not in the habit of checking my email daily, but will respond. Have a wonderful year. I’m really looking forward to the performances as I’m fascinated to see how it all comes together after hearing the small sections of our rehearsals.

~ Cheers, Lorne 🎵

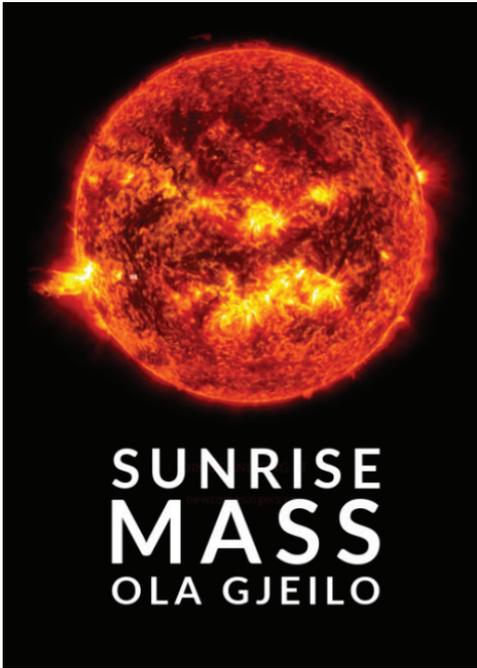


## MUSIC DIRECTOR'S CORNER



It's my pleasure to have this chance to write some musings on the musical journey we are taking together in our 2025-26 Season. Read to the end of my

message to you all to hear a resounding thunderclap in the history of this very special choir.



Our December concert, SUNRISE, is a hymn to dreaming, to hope, and to the positive power we find around us in the natural world. Despite the considerable challenges we may face, whether personally, locally, or as part of the global community, the rising sun gives us a metaphorical, physical, and spiritual fresh start. Our desire to fill the world with our light is affirmed every single morning. Every day is truly a new day. As Ola Gjeilo writes about the Sunrise Mass:

I wanted the musical journey of the work to evolve from transparent and spacey to something earthy and warm; from

nebulous and pristine, through more emotional landscapes, to ultimately solid groundedness—as a metaphor for human development from child to adult, or as a spiritual journey.

Looking beyond ourselves, I sometimes ask myself: 'what would happen if we looked to the natural world, instead of each other, for advice?' Now, while it might not be the best idea to seek council from a cougar or a bear, it is worth considering the 'perspective', as it were, of the greater community of beings and objects that exist around us. They do appear to be very well organized.

As we slip toward the darkest night of the year, counting time in a series of Tuesday night rehearsals of these exceptional musical works, I hope you will take a moment to consider the clockwork of the heavens, articulated on our part of the earth through the slow turning of the seasons. What thoughts and feelings, and what actions, might your singing about the 'big hand', the sun, and 'second hand', the moon, inspire in our audience and our community?

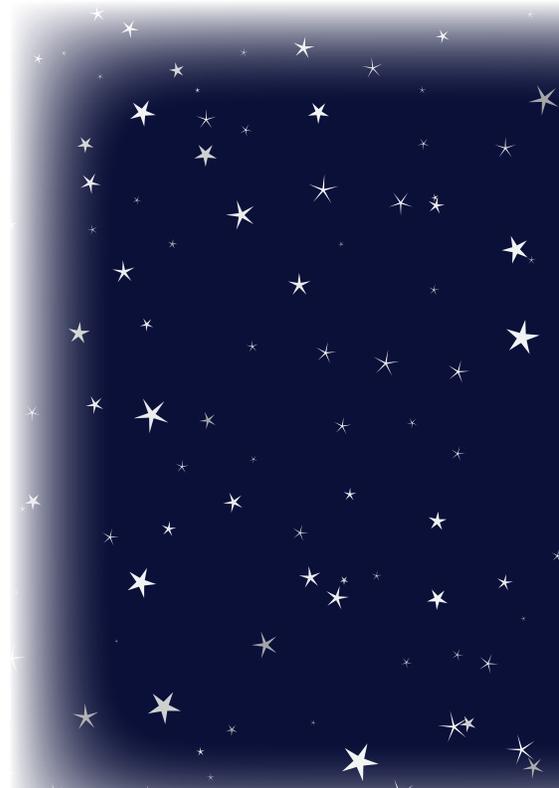
A few things come to mind when I think about how well our SUNRISE concert's music reflects the very special season in which our concert takes place. The slow pace, sparse texture, and stop-and-start tempos that characterize 'Goodnight Moon' by Eric Whitacre are beautiful depictions of the slowing of time and heavy-headedness we all feel when the dark creeps in, encouraging drowsiness and cuddles with little ones or those who need comfort.

With night fallen, we look to the night sky in 'Anang! (A Star!)' by Andrew Balfour—one of the most charming pieces I know written in recent years. Here we sing of the Cree creation story in which the stars are both the origins of life and the place where ancestors reside.

The 'star people', are said to live among us for a time through the hearts and minds of little children. They retain the dreamy and imaginative, other-worldly idealistic and innocent residue of their homeland, the mysterious stars themselves.

There can be no piece that captures the mystery of constellations than 'Stars' by Latvian composer, Ēriks Ešņvalds. As you're singing, can you sense that he studied at the Latvian Baptist Theological Seminary before beginning his work as a composer, singer, and professor of composition? He sang with the State Choir of Latvia, the largest professional choir in the Baltic region. The depth of feeling and the spectacular use of slow time in this piece is, well... out of this world!

As moving as it is to sing, I can't wait until we begin our experiments with the 'glass orchestra' (follow this link to make one of your own: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fSvZpIVwcWk>) If you would like to play a glass in our concert (with your music on a stand), please let me know!





## MUSIC DIRECTOR'S CORNER CONT'D

### WHAT WE WILL BE SINGING?

Our EARTH SONG concert presents balanced program bringing together superb choral music about the land by non-Indigenous composers such as Stephen Chatman (Trees), Katerina Gimon (Air), Ola Gjeilo (Tundra), with Indigenous composers Andrew Balfour (Cree – Four Directions), Sherryl Sewepagham (Dene-Cree – Sleepy Song), Russell Wallace (Lil'wat – the Gift), and Alex Vollant (Inuit - Auss).

At the centre of the Earth Song concert will be the world premiere of a new work, written specially for the Newcombe Singers, by Rebecca Hass. Full concert announcement coming soon!

What will our Earth Song concert sound like in musical terms?

Spectacular! It's no exaggeration to say that the music in this concert shakes me to my core. I feel it in my feet, in my legs, and in my heart in ways that I haven't experienced before, and I hope you will, too. It's like being plugged into a socked that funnels the electricity buzzing in the natural world around us here on Vancouver Island straight into my body. What special feelings and insights about the land you live on will you be singing about? I'm looking forward to going on this journey with you all.

### THUNDERBOLTS



Commission. The Board of the Newcombe Singers has voted to commission Canada's most

prominent choral composer, Sarah Quartel, to write a large-scale work for our 60th Anniversary Season, 2027-28!

Thanks. What a wonderful opportunity it is to be able to communicate with you via this newsletter, which has been so carefully prepared by Marilyn and Beverly – thank you both for making this important publication possible.



## GRANT WORK FOR THE NEWCOMBE SINGERS

As we come to the end of our second Choral Bridges Donation Campaign, I must wholeheartedly thank Ellen and Myrna for steering this wonderful effort for the choir.

A huge thank you to everyone who's been able to donate, too.

This is the third year we've sought outside grant funds to support all the wonderful "additions" to our choral year. This money allows us to enrich our performances in so many ways.

Happily, we've had increasing success in securing grant funding, and I continue to look for new funding agencies to approach. I recently put in a grant proposal to the Hamber Foundation for funds to support our May "Earthsong" concert. Fingers crossed. I am very hopeful of continued success as I research other foundations and agencies.

The CRD Arts & Culture group has helped fund our last two May concerts and seem very impressed by the interesting music we perform along with the many bridges we've built into the local arts community. The young, outside our group musicians we hire for our concerts add tremendously to everything we do and attract both new singers and bigger audiences.

Grant work provides a nice balance to our donation campaigns, too, allowing us to raise funds from within and without the choir.

If you are interested in helping with this all important grant work, please let me know as I'd appreciate the support. Training is happily provided!

~ Marilyn Crump, *Grant Coordinator*   
*Newcombe Notes Editor*



## NEWCOMBE SINGERS MUSIC LIBRARIAN (AND MEMBERSHIP) REPORT

Welcome to my world of scores, copyright and ethical lending/borrowing practices. Also to my fascination with databases. Once a Librarian...



For those of you who may not know me well, I was the Librarian at Victoria High School before I retired. It was the oldest library in the District and badly in need of weeding. That's the toughest part of my "job" with Newcombe Singers library because it involves difficult decisions. My previous District experience included opening Rogers Elementary School - the newest school and library in the province. The parallel is striking because Newcombe Singers Library now has some of the newest and most sought-after music in the province.

Other local choirs are borrowing our music as word gets out. John Sease has recently found a new home for all those Broadway type scores languishing in our Library and taking up space. Those 7 stuffed filing cabinets of scores are nice and dry in Kristina Stevens home. Thank you Kristina!

We always hold enough legal scores for all current members, including those far away. At the moment that is 80 members and 5 extra copies for choral scholars or other guest singers, plus Kathryn and Robert.

We have a collaborative approach to choosing our music. Kathryn presents her ideas and the Music Selection Committee meets to suggest or sometimes ask her to modify choices. She is always willing to work with us and

listen to our concerns. But ultimately it's Kathryn's direction and choices that lead to our wonderful concerts.

My job is to research where we might purchase or borrow scores, keeping in mind that every purchase helps composers make a living and every borrow helps to expose that music to our audience. It's a balancing act. I book borrowing as early as I can and am responsible for returning everything to other provincial choral groups right after our concerts. I tend to buy mainly hard copy scores because there is increasing concern about the legality of "sharing" digital scores. The choral federations are discussing this.

You'll see my name on some scores we are using. That's because John and Heini need to get working on making those marvelous music tracks long before our season opens. I buy as few as the company allows in digital format and purchase the remainder from Long & McQuade, which is a 100% Canadian owned family business.

When I first took on the job, it was more about saving money and making sure that we were adhering to International Copyright Law. Now it has evolved to include borrowing across Canada, but being mindful of the ratio of Purchases to Borrowed scores. That has risen steadily. We are now approaching 75% purchased where it was only 50% or less even a short time ago. Obviously our music budget has grown apace.

All this to say we are building our Library according to our mandate which includes supporting living composers, especially Canadian and those from under represented groups, such as Indigenous, female, or ethnic groups whose music is not often heard in Victoria. We still perform those works from our Library which fit Kathryn's vision.

It is important to realize that we are making a huge commitment to supporting living composers from around the globe, but to do so means we have a very real responsibility to abide by the law. As choir members, we need to destroy any music we have copied or stored on our devices once the concert is over. Of course, you can always buy your own copy if you really want to "collect" what you've sung.

It is a privilege to be member of such an exciting choir and a community of welcoming people. I've never been part of such a willingly hard working board. None of this work happens by magic. If you have any talents to share, please let us know. Thanks for being part of the team!

~ Norma Jee 

HAVE A  
holly  
jolly  
CHRISTMAS!



## REPORT FROM THE PR GROUP

Our group of Ellen, Marilyn and Norma, backed up with help from Kathryn and Peter, have two goals for our fall season. One is to run the Build Choral Bridges donation campaign and the other is to promote the choir while selling tickets for our winter concerts.

We are thrilled with the support to the Bridges Campaign that we received (are receiving?—depends on date of release of newsletter) from our singers. We set ourselves a goal of \$5,000. Last year we raised \$4,500, \$1,500 more than our goal. We were thrilled, but we didn't know if our success was subject to the fact that it was the first donation campaign and some of the donations had been meant as one time only. Could we count on another successful year? We're about to find out! (another time sensitive sentence.)

Our goal is make the Bridges campaign yearly. That way we will build a fund that the board and Kathryn can count on to support the growth of our choir, as well as its support of contemporary composers, rising soloists and local musicians. We know that our singers love this mix of old and new music, young music students and local stars joining our choir for our concerts.

Other communications projects where we provided feedback backup were designing the Eventbrite page and poster design. Beverly van Druten-Blais and John, Norma and Kathryn make this happen and we are so thankful! Our role was to admire.

Right now, we are at the final lap of our Bridges campaign but next week we will turn to promoting selling tickets for our Sunrise Mass concerts. We welcome suggestions for reach-out to local media. If you have any contacts, please email Ellen (ellen@ellengodfrey.com). (NB Marilyn, Myna might start these emails earlier than you newsletter)

This is the time when all need to inform our friends and family about the concert and to sell them tickets. Or course, some of our singers love to buy tickets for family and friends. How about holiday gifts of tickets to our Sunrise concert for music-loving family members? A gift of glorious music and our joyous faces singing these beautiful songs!!

~ Ellen Godfrey 🎵



## FROM THE VP..



After 4 years as President of the Board of Directors, my role will be changing to some extent now that Lorne McLash has been elected as President. I will continue the role of Choir Manager which involves opening and closing of St. Mary's on Tuesday evenings as well as setting up the lighting and chairs for the rehearsals. I thank those that faithfully arrive early to help me do the preparation.

The role of Vice President also involves the booking of venues and sing outs and the setup of those venues.

At last year's May concert, we were fortunate to have the help of Roxanne Brydges as Stage Manager. As our programs become more complex it would be wonderful to have a couple of volunteers to join me in dividing the work of staging the concerts. An example would be organizing personnel for front of house.

Finally, I will be handing to Lorne, the role of updating the choir of any information that the Board needs to communicate with the members as well as sending out welcoming info to prospective members.

Although most of the information of coming events, call times, and venues are available on the website I will continue to email info to members as well as make announcements at rehearsals.

I hope everyone enjoys another season of wonderful choral music. 🎵

~ Peter Beliveau- Vice President



## NEWS FROM ROBERT



Hello Newcombe Singers. I recently recorded my first CD. The CD contains various dances for piano by Franz Schubert and is produced by a distributor in Toronto called Indie Pool.

If you would like a CD, the cost is \$20.00 for one CD (and \$15.00 for each additional CD). The price is what it is because there are production costs. You can purchase a CD in person, download the music or purchase a CD at the web page link below.

Please let me know if you are interested and thank you for your support

**Schubertiade: Dances by Franz Schubert/Robert Jan Dukarm** <https://robertjandukarm.bandcamp.com/album/schubertiade-dances-by-franz-schubert>

(Editor's Note: Christmas is coming and Robert's CD would make a lovely gift)

**St. Cecilia's Day Musical Open House at Christ Church Cathedral**

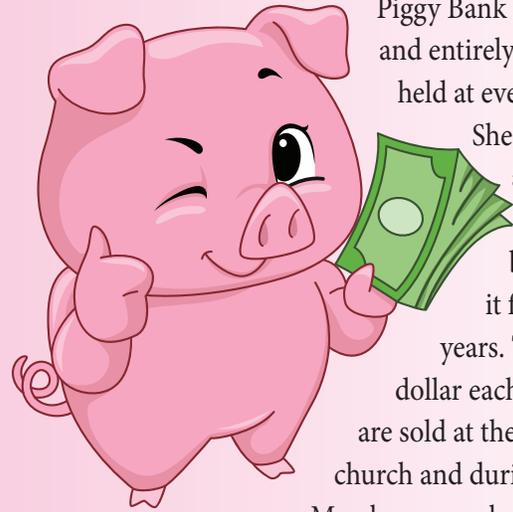
Robert will be playing the organ at the cathedral on Tuesday, November 25, 2025 for their St. Cecilia's Day Musical Open House. Several organ students, including Robert, will be performing that day early in the morning between 9:30-10:30 for about half an hour.

**Family Christmas Singalong** concert with the Victoria Philharmonic Choir on December 22 at 7:00 pm at St. Mary's Church.

Robert will be playing the organ for this family singalong in late December.

~ Robert Jan Dukarm 🎵

## PIGGY BANK



Piggy Bank is an informal and entirely voluntary raffle held at every rehearsal.

Sheila Randall and Cathy Stephenson have been organizing it for the last few years. Tickets are a dollar each or \$2 for 3 and are sold at the door of the church and during the break. Members are asked to bring in

items to raffle. Wine, chocolates, cookies and preserves are always popular. If everyone made one contribution each season that would be ideal.

What started in the 1990's as a fun, social event has become one of our most important fundraisers. Between \$60 and \$80 is raised in ticket sales every week. Last year, together with gift baskets raffled at the concerts, this amounted to over \$5,000—a significant contribution to the cost of purchasing new music for us to enjoy.

Please bring donations and any questions to Sheila and Cathy. And start collecting your toonies! 🎵

You can email Cathy at [cathyongaliano@gmail.com](mailto:cathyongaliano@gmail.com)



## “HOW THE TRANSFORMATIVE POWER OF SINGING IS RESHAPING HEALTH CARE IN CANADA”

*Globe & Mail, May 26, 2025* by Graham Isador, Jessica Eblie

Earlier this month, patients and staff at the University Health Network (UHN) were treated to a special concert, not by a hospital music therapist, but by Toronto indie rock band, The Beaches.

Known for their viral hit “*Blame Brett*”, which boasts more than 90 million streams on Spotify, the band swapped sold-out arenas for a more intimate hospital setting, playing for just a few dozen attendees in one of their most personal performances. Moments of such visible joy are rare in hospital setting, and this one struck a powerful chord as the band played a relaxed set of tunes in support of UHN’s music healing programs, which assist patients with breathing challenges in rehabilitating and regaining control of their health.

“It was such an honour to perform,” said The Beaches’ guitarist and keyboard player, Leandra Earl, who used to play for her grandmother when she had Alzheimer’s disease. “How much music helps people heal—not only the mind, but also the soul, the body—it’s really just all encompassing.”

The band’s excitement reflects the increasing public interest in the link between music and health. Across the country, researchers, clinicians, and community groups are exploring how singing can do more than just entertain. According to some health experts, it can even physically heal.

Research indicates numerous benefits of singing for patients dealing with breathing challenges. According to a study by the British medical Journal’s Open Respiratory Research, participants experienced reduced shortness of breath and improved oxygen saturation during singing sessions.

“Lung disease is extremely challenging and takes a lot of determination to overcome,” said UHN Foundation CEO Julie Quenneville. “Music has an incredible healing power; the patients are doing physical rehabilitation and enjoying it.”

At UHN, two programs help patients with breathing challenges: **Sing to Breathe** and **The Tri Hards**.

**Singing to Breathe**, launched nearly a decade ago, brings together patients with chronic lung disease or those with pre- or post- lung transplants for biweekly singing sessions.

Meanwhile, every Friday, **The Tri Hards**, a band of health care experts, play a concert for patients at Toronto Rehab. At the shows, patients are encouraged to sing along, move and unwind. The UHN therapists love the group because it’s an easy way to encourage exercise. It also helps to create a positive and lighthearted environment during situations that are often challenging.

“Physiotherapy in these cases can be difficult,” Quenneville said. “So, incorporating songs into exercises provides an enjoyable means of achieving similar outcomes in health.”

While the UHN is quick to point out that neither program is technically music therapy—they’re voluntary groups for patients—they still highlight how music, especially singing, can be a powerful tool for mental and physical well-being. And they’re not alone.

**SingWell**, a Canada-wide research project led by Dr. Frank Russo at Toronto Metropolitan University, is studying the effects of singing on people with chronic conditions. SingWell collaborates with numerous community choirs and rehabilitation programs throughout Canada, focusing on individuals with lung disease, Parkinson’ disease, dementia and other disorders.

“Singing is interesting because it engages the body in ways that are kind of similar to physical therapy,” he said “It involves posture, breath control, using your core, and coordinating speech and movement. And so the physical activity of singing is itself therapeutic.” One of SingWell’s major goals is to make singing groups for health accessible and available for those seeking additional therapeutic options for their conditions, in hospitals, community centres, or long-term care homes. This means training choir leaders to work with vulnerable populations and embedding choirs within these communities.

Initiatives such as SingWell represent a form of “social prescription,” Dr. Russo said. He believes that being in a community with other can help those struggling with health challenges and collectively rehabilitate individuals with diverse health conditions.

“That social connection can even translate to physiological changes,” stated Dr. Russo. He indicated that evidence shows group singing increases oxytocin, the “love hormone”, while lowering cortisol, a stress hormone.

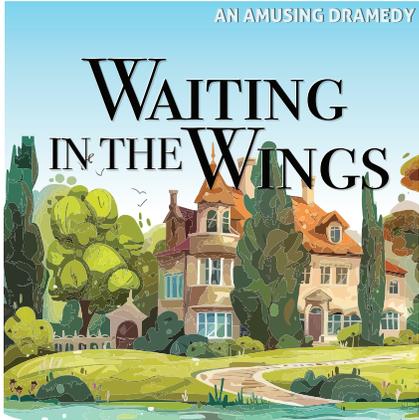
**SingWell’s** preliminary findings echo what UHN is seeing on the ground. People who participate in singing programs report improved respiratory function, better mood, enhanced social connection and even better sleep. These programs also offer something harder to measure: JOY.

“What we’ve seen from participants in our research is that they keep coming back, that they’re reporting it as something they enjoy, they feel a sense of belonging,” Dr. Russo said.

~ *From the Globe and Mail, May 26, 2025*

# AUDITIONS!

AN AMUSING DRAMEDY



## WAITING IN THE WINGS

Written by Noël Coward Directed by Jon Scheer

We encourage all actors experienced and new to the stage to come on out and give it a try! Nothing ventured...

Thu Nov 13 7-8 or 8-9pm  
 Fri Nov 14 7-8 or 8-9pm  
 Sat Nov 15 3-4 or 4-5pm  
 Sun Nov 16 3:30-4:30 or 4:30-5:30 or 5:30-6:30pm

Callbacks if needed Mon Nov 17 7-9pm

Please send your request for booking an audition date and time to: stlukesplayers1948@gmail.com

AND send your completed Audition Application and Resume/CV to the Director, Jon Scheer: jscheer1949@gmail.com

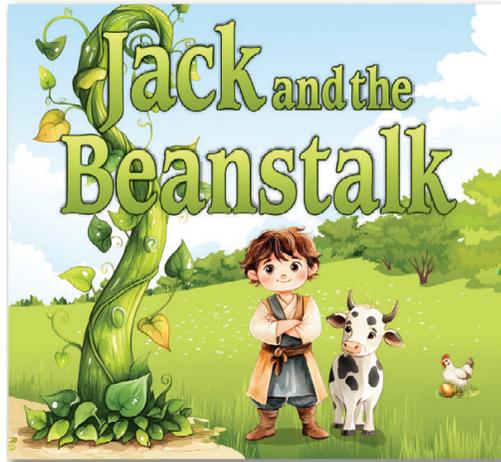
Play runs Mar 11-21, 2026 • Rehearsals start Jan 7th • Rehearsals are on Mon, Wed and Fri evenings, Auditions are cold reading from the script. **Please check our website for details.**



All auditions are held at St. Luke's Community Hall, 3821 Cedar Hill X Rd • Like us on Facebook Website: www.stlukesplayers.org • Email: stlukesplayers1948@gmail.com

# ST. LUKE'S PLAYERS A FUN FOR ALL PANTO

COMMUNITY THEATRE SINCE 1948



Written by Ben Crocker  
 Directed by Karmen McNamara

Evenings 7:00  
 Dec 12, 17, 18, 19

Matinees 2:00  
 Dec 13, 14, 20, 21, 26, 27, 28, 30, 31, Jan 1

**TICKETS \$18.00, \$10 Children ≤12 (Get yours early!)**

• TICKETS AVAILABLE VIA EVENTBRITE OR AT THE DOOR (Limited) •

Presented by arrangement with Ben Crocker Pantomimies

All shows are performed in St. Luke's Hall, 3821 Cedar Hill X Rd • Like us on Facebook Website: www.stlukesplayers.org • Phone: 250-884-5484 • Email: stlukesplayers1948@gmail.com



presents

# VICTORIAN CHRISTMAS CAROLS



**Sat Nov 29 2:30pm**

• St. Mary's Anglican Church  
 1973 Cultra Ave. Saanichton

**Sun Dec 7 2:30pm**

• St. Mary the Virgin Anglican Church  
 1701 Elgin Rd. Victoria

Tickets \$20, Children ≤12 Free via Eventbrite, from VGSS members or at the door

• A VICTORIA GILBERT & SULLIVAN SOCIETY 2025 PRODUCTION •

• Adrian Sly, Producer • gilbertandsullivanvictoria.ca •