

# Connections... a Newsletter for St. James United Church

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Only let us live up to what we have already attained. - Philippians 3:16

Dear Friends in Christ,

It is hard to believe that almost a year has past since Meredith and I moved to Antigonish. Yet this time last Fall we were packing for the move and preparing to come to St. James - what a difference a year makes. Recently someone asked me if our time in Antigonish was what I expected and quite honestly I didn't know how to answer.

I do know we are pleased to be living here and like the activities and services of the town and county. I am enjoying the ministry at St. James and am pleased to be in a congregation so vital and active. Since we are closer to family — mine in Halifax and Meredith's in New Glasgow - we are able to spend more time with them especially during special occasions. Much of what we hoped for in coming to this area is happening.

That's not to say that there haven't been a number of surprises for us. Meredith never expected to be serving with the people at Merigomish and Greenhill/Alma as their minister through until 2009. I never expected that I would have to replace my old car quite so soon either.

Yet when asked if Antigonish is what we expected I still find it difficult to answer. Because I don't think we came here expecting life to be one way or another. We came to share in what was happening and hopefully to add our gifts and skills to what was taking place. So at the end of the year it is more a question of how we have been a part of this community and church rather than anyone meeting our expectations.

The last year has been one of getting to know people, celebrating good times and being a part of the church's life. There have been times of laughter and excitement and times of tears and uncertainty. I have seen the Holy Spirit at work among us and see signs of faith and witness continuing in the congregation and as we reach out into the area.

Quite honestly that is all I could have wanted for the year just past and all I can hope for in the year to come - to continue to serve and share in ministry as together we live as a church of Jesus Christ in Antigonish.

Yours In Christ's Service,



Rev. Peter Smith

## Welcome to the Coady International Students:



On Sunday, July 27<sup>th</sup>, a special service was held to welcome the incoming class of Coady International Students. An invitation to all Coady Students and staff, regardless of denomination, was extended by our Outreach and Communications Committee on behalf of St. James. We are pleased to say that many students accepted our invitation and shared in worship that morning. The Congregational Life and Hospitality Committee organized the hot meal luncheon following the service which was enjoyed by all. Christine and Gordon Morrison entertained the gathering and the Coady students delighted us with their wonderful musical gifts and talents. It was a wonderful time of fellowship by all who attended.

## The new face of Saint James



The rainy weather of August gave way to drier days in September and the Atlantic Cathedral Painters were able to finish the work around the church. The crane lifted them up to finish the last parts of the steeple in Mid September and allowed them to put up the clock faces on the tower. Did you notice the time on the clocks?

## News from Sierra Leone

Hope Graham has kept up with the choir as she works in Sierra Leone for the year. Her frustrations with computer woes aside, she has lots to report.

Dear Friends,

I am sooooo glad to be here! I am working many hours per day trying to teach the students the basic skills of the equivalent of a health aide.

They are attentive students even when they have to work hard at trying to understand my accented English/Krio plus learn umpteen big big words, as they call the medical terminology in Krio. One student even phoned me last evening in Freetown to say they missed me yesterday in class (I had told them when I was leaving and when I'd be back).

I teach from 08:20 -12:00 or so, then I spend the afternoon preparing for the next day. From 19:00-21:00, if we have electricity (when diesel is available), I try to make notes for the students in the class. I've discovered they really need the printed words for follow-up. There are no texts available except the 15 pounds of books (2) that I brought with me. Even though I'll leave the texts here, I need them when out of class so I can prepare the notes. I'm borrowing the Director's computer (which is newer than mine) for this purpose but I'm scared about having it remain with me for such an extended time for fear something adverse might befall it. I'm considering buying a computer (NOT among my original thoughts when I left NS) but even transferring money here is a long and costly process.

I'm on my way to Nigeria early on Tuesday morning to attend the quadrennial Nurses Christian Fellowship International conference and board meeting. I'm still living on the hospital compound in one of the three Guest Units. Two Nigerian midwives are in one of the other guest units. I have really enjoyed getting to know them. Unfortunately, they were recalled to Nigeria unexpectedly last week and have since text messaged the physician's wife in Kamakwie that there are "dire financial difficulties in the program" just now so they are unsure if or when they will return.

When I return from Nigeria, I hope to be able to move into a room in the town with the lady I used to live with. She lost everything in the war and is a much older woman now with no one to help her with anything. I'm also scheduled to finally begin language training in October--Limba--the primary tribal language of this area.

I think of you all often. I miss choir practices now as you get started again. School starts this Monday so the holidays are all coming to an end here.

Blessings,

Hope



## Weddings and Baptisms at St. James:

Congratulations and best wishes to the couples who have been married at St. James:

Lorris Jason Keizer to Julie Margaret Matthews  
John Arther Murphy to Barbara Grace de Marsh  
Rupert Guy Frederick Carleton to Elizabeth Marjorie Woolridge  
Stanley Joseph Skinner to Kandance Theresa Borden  
Craig Francis Brow to April Dawn MacPherson  
Robert Gerard Thompson to Cynithia Elizabeth Sampson  
Donald Charles Beaton to Crystal Lynn Linkletter  
Brian Douglas Van de Wiel to Carole Shannon Tayler

This year we have welcomed into our church family through baptism:

Ty Oliver Barton,  
Dorwin Keith Barton  
Eve Isabella Roach  
Jacob Morley MacKeen  
Owen Alexander MacLean  
Kieron Douglas O'Hara MacDonald

## Help is Close to Home:

This article, submitted by Fran Wittigens, tells us about how our contributions to the Mission and Service fund help many people including those in far off nations. The effects of this help, though, can be quite close to our home:

Though we regularly listen to the stories of how our donations to Mission and Service are used; it was with special interest that I listened to Mary Sankata. She told me that the floods and aftermath described in the readings on Sunday, Oct. 19th, had occurred in her homeland. Besides the flooding, the dislocation and instability in nearby Zimbabwe has created another flood, this time of human misery as refugees pour into Zambia for safety. Below you can read her message to us.

*My Fellow Believers of St. James United Church,*

*Christian Greetings.*

*I am a Zambian lady studying at The Coady International Institute and I just want to extend my great thanks to all members of the St. James United Church for the help they have been rendering to my country to support those who were affected by the 2007 Flood. I would like to confirm that my country was badly hit by the flood in 2007, and this has led to an increase in the level of poverty in my country because the provinces that were affected are the areas which supply the staple food for my country.*

*Besides that, my country is also being confronted with the challenges of HIV/AIDS and Refugees crossing over from Zimbabwe to Zambia in search of food and other commodities.*

*For more details on HIV/AIDS and Flood you can visit the following websites.*

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/2888333.stm>

<http://www.relief.int/rw/RWB.Nst/db900sid/Rmo1-6/ZVLVS?>

<http://www.concern.net/news-and-features/world-news/a303/concern-responds-to-worsening-floods-in-Zambia>

<http://www.avert.org/aids-Zambia.htm> (HIV/AIDS in Zambia)

*Bye,*

*Mary Sankata.*

## Our Candid Candidate:

Greetings St. James Family;

Hard to believe an entire year has gone by and I am once again settled in for a year with the books at AST! I have managed to return to my old room (308) and spent a couple of days just moving stuff out of storage and putting it back where it belonged. It is a good thing that the first week is community building, not classes. I needed the week to re-build my room. (When I was here for summer school, I just "camped" in another room.)

Last year was an extremely steep learning curve for me and I cannot believe how much easier things seem this year. There's lots less to take in environmentally and the fact that I took (and passed) two summer schools means my academic load is lighter too. It's not a breeze by any stretch of the imagination but it is much less overwhelming.

A wonderful addition to AST has been the SOHO Cafe. This is a catering business which is using the AST kitchen as their base. (Does anyone remember the SOHO Restaurant in Halifax?) These people provide excellent food at reasonable rates and are presently open from 8:30 to 4:30. Even if I opt to exercise my microwave skills on third floor, I know I don't HAVE to and I can get a dinner at noon in the Cafe. It makes a huge difference to know that "hunting and foraging" need not be part of my day unless I choose to do so.

This summer I took two Foundations courses, one in Ethics and one in New Testament. They were fun and challenging. I would not like to be doing the majority of my courses in those two week condensed form, however, this was new, and a fast way to get two credits.

It was great to be able to serve as pulpit supply for St. David's and St. James for three Sundays. It is always a pleasure to see the familiar faces and meet new. Thank you for the opportunity to share with you.

I am continuing with my Supervised Field Education placement at Trinity in New Glasgow. This means I come to New Glasgow on Thursdays and return to Halifax Sunday evening. (Occasionally, I am able to return Monday morning if there is no class at that time.) I have been using the bus to travel and find that I am able to read and relax on the trip which is a huge bonus. Student rate return is just over \$50, at this time, and with the price of gas, this is comparable to car travel without the stress.

The people at Trinity are warm and welcoming and I have a wonderfully supportive Lay Support Team. From talking to my fellow students, this is the best SFE placement there is. The church has much to offer educationally and the clergy are excellent resource persons. I think that the churches in the metro area may have become so used to doing this job that it is no longer new or very exciting. It is my sense that Trinity is actually excited about being part of the process.

This term I am taking classes in Introductory Preaching, Pneumatology (Holy Spirit), SFE (see above), UCC Worship and Formations. This is not a terribly heavy reading load (Heavy enough!) for which I am grateful. The faculty are amazing and I believe AST to be blessed with a very high quality of staff.

Last Sunday I had the pleasure of being at the event at Camp MacLennan with the Moderator. It was very nice meeting The right Reverend David Guillian and sharing supper conversation with him. It was even a greater thrill to be sitting beside Beryl MacIntosh, who is the Sunday School teacher who helped set my feet on this road. It was great to look around and see the faces of other Antigonish Pastoral Charge and Pictou Presbytery people who are helping to keep the feet in motion.

So here it is, time to get about the business of another day as a very privileged person who can take time to be a full time student. Thank you all for this opportunity to reflect on how things are going.

With many thanks for the support you give in so many ways, I humbly remain, YOUR Candidate for Ordination in the United Church of Canada

Bonnie

## Welcome to Our Community!

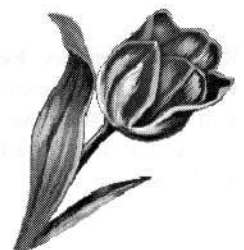
Brad Long and his wife Kim Bain moved from Truro to Antigonish about two years ago when their son Oliver was born. This was to reduce the commute to St. F.X. where Brad has taught for some time in the Business Department. Kim teaches at the Frank H. MacDonald Elementary School in New Glasgow.

Brad helps to serve at the Tuesday Hotmeal programme and says he was drawn to the hotmeal programme as it keeps him active in the church and represents values that he shares. "Fortunately I had an opening in my teaching schedule to allow me to participate. The people I have met are wonderful and welcoming, making it easy to return."

St. James is very happy that Brad, Kim and Oliver are pleased to call Antigonish home and that our church can provide a rich environment for worship, community and social justice.

## Spring Colours

The United Church Women donated \$100.00 towards bulbs for the church flower beds. In October, the large bed next to the fence on Church Street was filled with tulip bulbs. Come Spring and, with Mother Nature's help, there should be a profusion of pink blooms! Our thanks to Penny MacDonald and Sheila Redden who assisted with the project.





## St. James and the Antigonish Highland Games

In the late seventies, the Rev. Neil Macdonald suggested to the Congregation and the Antigonish Highland Society that St. James hold a closing Church Service on the Sunday following the close of the Highland Games. The suggestion was supported by the Directors of the Highland Society and the first service was held in the late seventies. We can't seem to find that actual year. At the first service and in continuing years the members of the Antigonish Highland Society have been piped in. A few years later, St. Ninian's Cathedral began holding an opening Church Service on the Sunday before the Games were to begin. This was the format for a number of years until it was suggested that the opening and closing service be alternated between the two churches. This has been the arrangement to the present time. Both churches have decorated the Sanctuaries with Scottish Tartans and Plaids and from the beginning at St. James, the Men's Choir has led in the music ministry dressed in kilts. Over the years we have also had Gaelic singers, one of the Scripture readings read in Gaelic and in the Old Scots translation.

In later years it was suggested that the Church Sanctuary be open for visitors during the week of the Games. Arrangements have been made over the past number of years to have some members of the congregation act as guides on Thursday, Friday and Saturday mornings from 10:00 am to Noon.



Rev. Smith, along with Bob and Mavis Murray greet visitors to St. James during Highland games.

Reserve **Saturday, February 14, 2009** for **A Night of Hollywood**. This date seems like a long time from now but since this will be the last newsletter before the above we're asking you to reserve the date for a fun-filled evening. Details will follow in the New Year.

## St. James UCW

Fall meetings of St. James UCW began in September with unit meetings as well as the General meeting.

The only event to date has been the fall rummage sale held on October 31<sup>st</sup>. Our thanks to Barbara Gardiner who sorted and folded bags and boxes of clothing in order to assure that the items were all of good quality. This time the sale was of clothing, bedding, towels and draperies only. But once again the attendance at the sale was low and once again a large amount was left over, but was bagged for transportation to Brunswick Street Mission in Halifax, where it will be put to good use for those in need. At an upcoming meeting we will be discussing if we should continue holding rummage sales.

The next event held will have been the Holly Tea and Sale on November 15<sup>th</sup>. Thanks in advance to the congregation for their support and attendance. This is one of our major fund raisers and we expect it to be as successful as always.

Birthday greetings were given to our much loved member Hazel Fraser as she celebrated her 90<sup>th</sup> birthday. Hazel now lives in Pictou but still feels a connection with St. James UCW.

## Sunday School News

September 14<sup>th</sup> saw the beginning of another Sunday school year. Following the morning service a welcome back celebration was held where the whole congregation enjoyed fellowship and good food. We are continuing to search and pray for ways to expand our Sunday school with more children, teachers, and helpers. There is always an open invitation to anyone who would like to join us; you may have a talent that you would like to share with the Sunday school. Our teachers/helpers to date are: Sally Van de Weil, Judy McCarron, Irene MacLeod, Lorrie Crawford, Mandy Robertson, Tara Nicholson, Carol Van de Weil, Linda Penner, and Ida Sarty. In addition, some of the confirmation class has expressed a willingness to help when they can.

## Senior's Club News

The newly formed Seniors' Fellowship has had a good start having held 2 successful meetings to date. The first in September saw 19 participants discussing format and guidelines. Bob Murray agreed to lead the group with Barb Gardiner as back-up and Mary Lou MacKenzie taking on the job of Treasurer and Brenda Botterill as Secretary. Meetings will be held on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of each month at 2:00 p.m. in the Parlour. Friends of the congregation coming from all denominations will be welcomed. A donation of \$1.00 per person per meeting will eventually help to defray any future expenses.

The second meeting on October 15<sup>th</sup> saw 14 members enjoying Scrabble, 45's and Cribbage and a light lunch provided by Barb.

If you are 55 years of age or older, please join us and bring a friend. It's a most enjoyable way to spend a social couple of hours in the afternoon.

## Where We Stand as 2008 Winds Down

November is here and with it comes the knowledge that there are only nine yes '9' Sundays left in 2008 in which to reach our budget goal for the year. October shows us with a deficit of - \$9,000 as we approach the final stretch. This is a considerable amount of money to find in such a short time. However, historically, the two remaining months are the ones in which donations seem to be the largest. These numbers refer just to our everyday accounts and expenses and not to any of the capital project which included the exterior renovations. That is the heats, lights, salaries, and office expenses that will be suffering. Think about what you can do to help.

### Envelops for 2009

The Finance and Stewardship Committee has been taking a look at the way that our church offering envelopes have been assigned. To this end we are planning to make some changes to help with the counting process. Par donors will not receive envelopes for 2009 - (if you are on PAR and you use the envelopes as well, please notify the church office and you will receive them.) New members to the church community who would like to have offering envelopes should call the church office or place a request in writing on the offering plate. Envelope numbers will change for some donors. We thank you for your patience as we try and make this a more efficient process.

### Par for 2009

2008 was a growing period for PAR members as the congregation at one point made it to the '60' member's goal but have since dropped back to '58'. This year, St. James, required \$2841.00 per week to reach our budget goal. Presently we receive 45% of that number (or \$1282.97 a week) just from our PAR donors of who are only 32% of the weekly church givers. Knowing that these dollars will be there is allowing us to work on the budget for 2009. A new target of '65' PAR givers has been set to reach by December 31- so if you are one of the remaining 68% of the congregation not already on PAR won't you consider joining our PAR forces. For those of you in the 32% remember as you set your personal budgets for the New Year that PAR amounts can be raised at any time. For more information on PAR check with the finance committee, the church office or pick up a PAR pamphlet in the narthex.

### Where are they Now?

**Babs (Lillian) MacLeod** has recently celebrated her 96<sup>th</sup> birthday. She is settling down very well in Melville Heights but is somewhat lonesome and missing her Antigonish friends very much. She feels reticent about returning for a visit as leaving again would be hard for her. Babs asks to be remembered to everyone. Her garden consists of two pots of flowers and she is still enjoying the basket garden given to her when she left St. James. If anyone would like to contact her by snail-mail her address is 24 Ramsgate Lane, # 226, Halifax, N.S. B3P 2R6.

Congratulations to Sachi Shimotakahara who has just turned 80 years old.

**Beth Hobson** is a joy to talk to - which I do almost every week.

She gets around by using her wheeled walker, going to the dining room for meals, out for rides in the bus provided by the home and also attending a number of activities during the days and evening in the home itself.

Visits from her family and hearing from friends by 'phone & receiving notes bring her much pleasure. She likes to know what is going on in Antigonish and, of course, St. James and tells me she still misses all her friends here. I enjoy talking to her - she is always so pleased to get my phone call."

- submitted by Flo Burke

Fran Wittgens is proud to announce that her singer/songwriter daughter **Andrea** performed at Immaculata Hall on October 18<sup>th</sup> at 8p.m. An indie pop artist shaped by many influences, this event saw the release of her 4<sup>th</sup> CD, *In the Skyline*.

Fran and Herman's second daughter, **Margaret**, was just in Toronto at a conference about alternative transportation. Fran met up with her there as well as our friend Sachi Shimotakahara.

## Hotmeal Program

The hotmeal programme has resumed! On September 2<sup>nd</sup> there was a good reunion after a busy summer, many of whom were involved in the community garden project with Voices. An exciting part of our programme is the engagement of the people we serve. They have helped by setting up tables, donating some of their vegetables and even supplying a delicious apple crisp for dessert!

Also, it's good to report the healthy level of volunteerism. We're happy to announce our new volunteers, Stan Chapman, Pat Hendsbee and Brad Long. We also have students from the Service Learning Project at St. F.X.

There is always room for more, so join in this exceptional community experience. Call Betty Webber at 863-1301 if you want to see how you can be involved.

## Going Green

What to do with all those batteries!

Please return rechargeable batteries that are no longer of use to your place of purchase. Household batteries (alkaline, carbon-zinc, lithium, mercury, silver and zinc) can be placed at curbside. Put the batteries in a small bag, (i.e. zippered sandwich bag), and place the bag on top of, or next to, your green organics cart. The batteries will be collected and transported for proper disposal.

## Reader's Corner:

We invite you to promote books that have meant a lot to you by offering a brief description for our newsletter.

### Secrets of the Code (DaVinci) Edited by Dan Burstein

The book is a collection of commentaries by "informed experts". The evolution of Christianity is examined in its historical context. Gospels omitted from our Bible and the role of Mary Magdalen are examined. The intent is to enlighten the reader regarding the influence of some secret societies on Christianity and society. An interesting book.

Fred Davis

### The Greatest Salesman in The World by Og Mandino

This is the first in a series of books that Og wrote a number of years ago. The book follows the experiences of a young man in the area of ancient Jerusalem, and his quest as he attempts to learn how to be a great salesman. In the process of his learning, he makes a decision that will influence his life forever. The book includes the wisdom of "ten scrolls" of learning. A great spiritual read.

Wayne Ezekiel

### The Road to Daybreak- a spiritual journey.

This book is the diary of Henri J.M. Nouwen, a distinguished writer and professor at Harvard Divinity School. In it he records his inner struggle to reject his comfortable life in academia for a simpler ministry. As he prays for direction he is introduced to Jean Vanier's community of mentally handicapped people in France. Eventually he accepts a position at the L'Arche community in Toronto known as Daybreak.

Marg Brown

## Where to Walk in Faith

A devotional story based on Genesis 6:9-22; 7:24; 8:14-19  
Peter Andrew Smith

"The world is falling apart," Joyce said as she watched the news. She got up during a commercial and started locking the doors.

"The news is never good," George answered from the desk as he signed cheques. "Why are you locking the doors now?"

"The violence and drugs here in our town, that's why! Nowhere is safe anymore. Sometimes it makes me want to just stay behind a locked door."

George took off his glasses and looked up. "For how long?"

"Until things get better outside," she said. "I know you laugh at me for being a believer but I think God will straighten things out. Just like in the days of Noah, God doesn't want things the way they are today with the lawlessness and violence. God is going to cleanse the wickedness from the world. I want to be well away from those people when God starts cleaning things up!"

"Noah was the one who built the ark, wasn't he?"

"Yes, he was. He loaded his family and the animals as God commanded. Noah was a righteous man even though everyone around him was corrupt."

George put his glasses back on and resumed signing cheques. "I'm glad Noah didn't hide behind a locked door in his house."

Joyce started to say something but closed her mouth. She went and unlocked the front door instead.

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## Service Learning Students at St. James

This fall St. James has been pleased to welcome students through Service Learning to help with our hot-meal programme. Libby and Melissa are third year students who come each week on Tuesday morning to help serve and prepare the meal. Ningfu, Janine, Mary Anne, and Tom are nutrition students who are putting on some cooking, nutrition, and food safety demonstrations for those attending the hot meal program.



Service Learning is an innovative way that St. F.X. integrates experiential learning, academic study and community service. Students take part in existing programs and activities in the community as part of their course work to broaden their experiences as well as to

## Coffee Hour

It will soon be time to set up our schedule for 2009 - Thank you to everyone who gave so graciously of their time. If you have not been a part of a team and would like to get involved we would love to have your help - it's a great way to meet more people and enjoy hospitality. Please call and leave your name at the church office, 863-2001 or Joyce Hilling, 863-5881 or any member of the Congregational Life and Hospitality Committee.

