

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

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*But strive first for the kingdom of God and God's righteousness,
and all these things will be given to you as well. Matthew 6:33*

Dear Friends in Christ,

There is a container of bulbs which is sitting on the top of the refrigerator at home. I really haven't put much thought to where I am going to plant them this year since the yard is still filled with ice and snow. Spring appears so far away that deciding where to plant flowers seems unimportant among all the other tasks which need to be done this day.

Yet as I watch the days get longer and the snow banks slowly melt, I am aware that the season will change at some point and it will be spring. While it seems that the preparation is something that can wait until later, I know that if Meredith and I consider our options now then when the time comes we can have a garden that makes both of us happy.

In this newsletter there is some material from the Capital Campaign Committee concerning the future shape of the church building. For almost a year now the discussion about who we are as a congregation, where we are headed, and what we need from our building to be a stronger church has been happening at St. James.

That conversation continues with the information in the newsletter and the responses that will come from it. For as a church we need to be sure about who we are as a congregation and certain about the things we are doing now and want to do in the future, before we can move onto figuring out how to make our building assist us in our mission. Like my flower discussion at home, the conversation needs to take place now so that we get the best possible results later.

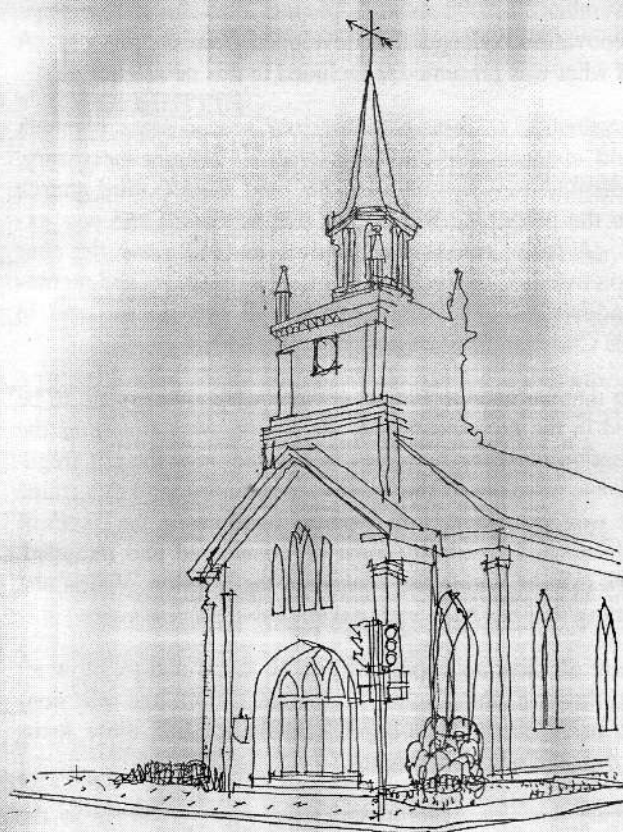
So I would invite you to consider St. James and who we are a community of faith, look around the building and think about our future. Consider the pages from the Capital Campaign Committee and let them know through emails and by your participation in the future focus groups your thoughts on what is being discussed. For together we are discerning where God is calling us today and in the years to come and what resources we will need to make that vision possible.

May God continue to bless us as a church and may the message of Easter lead all of us into the tomorrow God has planned.

Yours in Christ's Service,



The Rev. Peter Smith



LOOKING TO THE FUTURE
St. James United Church

November 30, 2008

Looking to the Future of St. James United Church

There has been much talk and work around a Capital Campaign at St. James over the past eighteen months. A traditional Capital Campaign organizes a committee who then go out and collect ideas on what improvements the congregation might like to see in their buildings, and sets about to collect a specified amount of money to complete the jobs identified.

After considerable investigation into how successful campaigns have been carried out in other areas in more recent years, the Committee at St. James has taken a slightly different approach. Our approach has been to work with the congregation to do a more in depth look at, and determine what the functions of the

church and its buildings should be and will be in the future. Then we will together try to extrapolate from there what the buildings should look like, and what improvements and renovations are needed.

To this end, back as early as Spring of 2007, Council issued a request for input to identify deficiencies in our premises at St. James and to solicit suggestions to improve them. In September 2008, a process was started with focus group meetings and dialogue with user groups and committees to solicit more ideas.

On November 30, 2008 sixty people met after church to discuss three renovation concepts that developed from the process. A copy of what was presented is included in this newsletter.

It is worthwhile to remember that our predecessors planned, built and changed our buildings when it became necessary. The present church was built in 1861 and was the third church built on the property. By 1875 it was too small and was expanded. A major renovation occurred in 1911 when the congregation installed the inclined floor, new oak pews and memorial windows. In 1953 the Church Hall was opened and in 1974 the Christian Education Centre was added.

It is felt that we need to further explore what changes are to be expected in the congregation in the future, what functions the congregation want the buildings to provide, how the congregation wishes to relate to the greater community, and determine the best way to make this all happen. In all cases, the issues of accessibility and flexibility must be considered and included. All work is to be within the context of the Mission, Vision and goal setting that has been undertaken in the last few years.

To ensure all have an opportunity to be heard and to allow all ideas to develop, the Capital Campaign Committee will continue to carry out more in-depth consultation and more focus groups over the next few months.

It is hoped that this material will give wider coverage to the ideas developed by the focus groups and spark further discussion and additional creative input.

Respectfully submitted,

Dale Archibald/Brian MacLeod

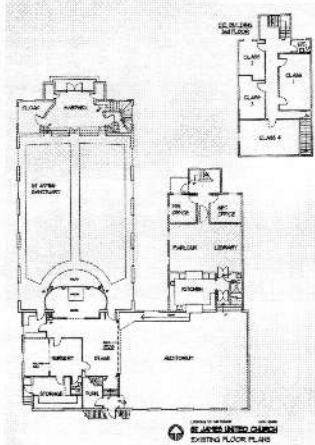
Design Concept Report - November 30, 2008

The list of ideas developed at the Focus Group on October 6, 2008 were reviewed and ranked by 5 separate teams of interested St. James members at the Focus Group of October 29, 2008.

The scoring of the team rankings were combined to produce a priority of ranking for each subgroup. The enclosed list reorganizes the items with the most important items listed first and **highlighted**.

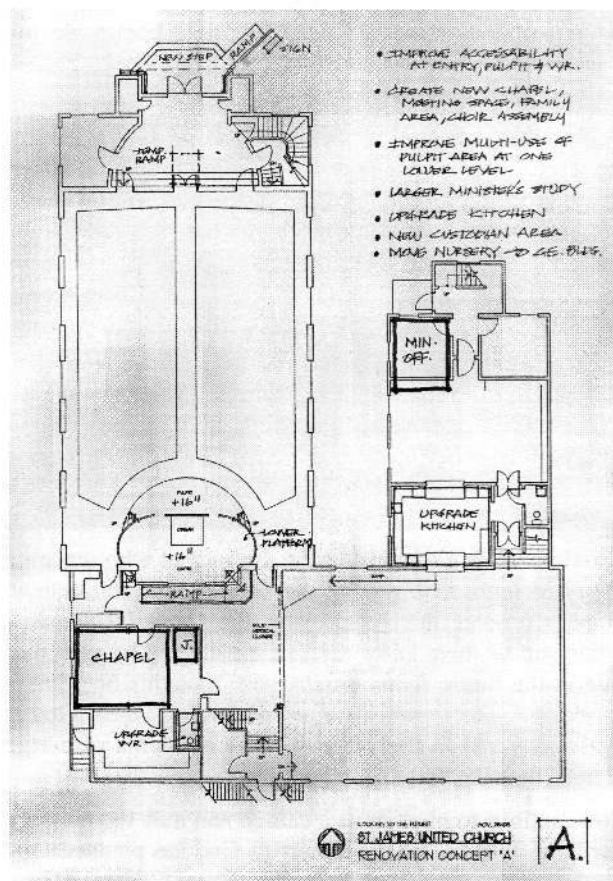
A number of suggestions or items dealt with what could be considered universal themes in today's building context. The most important of these is the principle of accessible design

that would provide barrier-free access to those with disabilities to all areas of a revitalized St. James facility. The second is "heat and lights" and basically suggests that whichever functions that happen at St. James be provided with appropriate environmental controls for heat, ventilation, lighting, etc. It should be considered a given that whatever improvements or additions are implemented at St. James, they will be accessible to all and have mechanical and electrical services to suit their functional requirements.

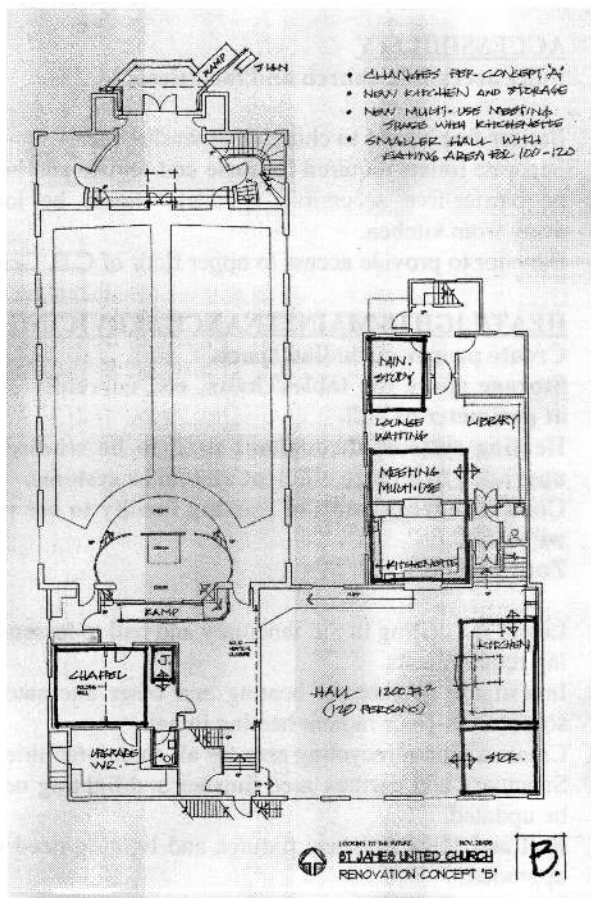


From the prioritized list, design options were developed and are now presented for discussion.

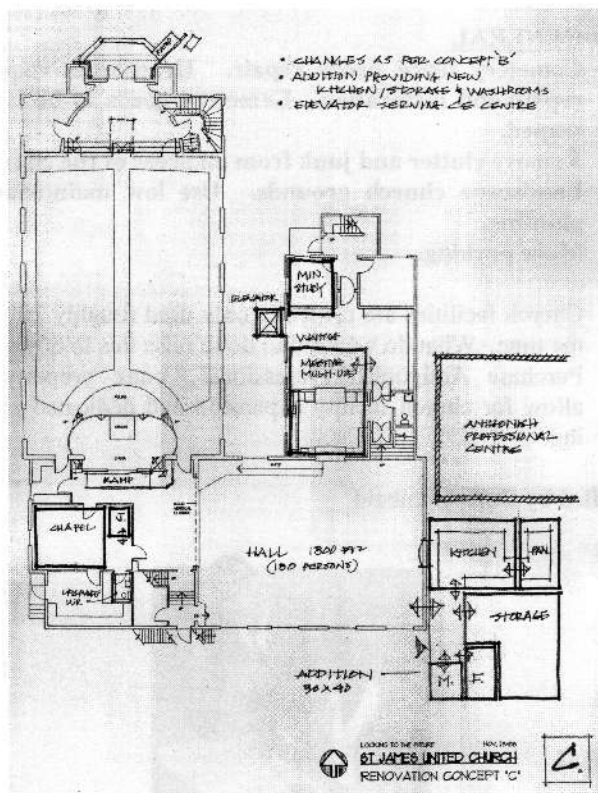
Concept "A" concentrates on upgrading the facilities with a minimum of structural changes.



Concept "B" builds on Concept "A" but suggests new kitchens and storage spaces in the Hall. As with Concept "A", all work would be inside the walls of St. James.



Concept "C" is more ambitious with an addition for new kitchen, storage and washrooms adjacent to the Hall and a second addition providing an elevator which serves the Christian Education Centre.



All these concepts are only that and are open for discussion and suggestion. Hopefully they will lead St. James to new possibilities for the future.

Respectfully submitted,

Dale Archibald

Thoughts and Ideas Summary for Improving and Updating St. James United Church

Prioritized from Focus Group of October 29, 2008

1.0 WORSHIPPING

- 1.1 Reconfigure pulpit/choir/organ area to allow flexibility of use. The sanctuary could be used for more than worship - it has potential for music and drama presentation, large group meetings, etc.
- 1.2 Choir room is required with space for practise, seating, and storage of gowns and music.
- 1.2 Better sound system with ability to play recorded music.
- 1.3 St. James would benefit from having a private, quiet flexible space that could be used as a chapel, for meditation, for study, for counselling, for a grieving family during a funeral process and many more uses. It could be named after our first minister, Reverend Munro, and have a capacity of 20 to 25 persons.
- 1.4 New seats required for choir loft. Loft should be wheelchair accessible. Better lighting required.
- 1.5 New piano required for sanctuary.
- 1.6 Provide pipe organ in sanctuary.

2.0 EDUCATING

- 2.1 Redesign nursery so that it suits its needs and has proper facilities for infant care. Locate with other Sunday School functions.
- 2.2 Create subdivisions in hall so that it can be used by several smaller groups (Sunday School) with ability to bring back to full size use (sound proof divider walls).
- 2.3 Establish memorial and historical display area to organize and exhibit items important to St. James.
- 2.3 A soundproof, glassed-in room for families with infants.
- 2.4 A nursery that is easily accessible from the sanctuary.

3.0 MEETING

- 3.1 Multi-purpose room to include a small kitchenette for preparing, serving and cleanup of coffee service.
- 3.2 A small room for up to 6 people to meet in an intimate setting, i.e. grief counselling.
- 3.3 Multi-purpose rooms to handle various meetings/gatherings simultaneously.
- 3.3 Small group meeting rooms where door can be closed.
- 3.4 Multi-purpose rooms to include one with comfortable seating, i.e. parlour style (could be decorated by donation "in memory of").

4.0 FEEDING

4.1 Larger kitchen with better cabinetry, new appliances and a moveable island. Kitchen should be at same level as the hall. Include serving trolleys.

4.2 A meeting room with kitchenette attached. This kitchenette could be used day to day to control use of main kitchen.

5.0 FUNDRAISING

5.1 A larger secure rummage room with dedicated adjustable shelving, work surface and dolly cart for moving items.

6.0 ADMINISTRATING

6.1 New office areas designed for Minister, secretary and Christian Education worker. Consider locating in stage area.

6.2 Adjoining offices for the Minister and church secretary.

6.3 A second (private) entrance to the Minister's office area.

6.4 Research the needs of the Minister in terms of an office and design space to suit.

7.0 SOCIALIZING

7.1 Larger narthex to allow comfortable gathering before and after services.

7.2 Provide recreation area.

7.3 Open narthex to both sides and even upward. Get rid of old balcony or choir loft.

7.4 Allow for volleyball, badminton, basketball and ping pong use in the hall. Provide proper storage for sport equipment.

7.4 Create a space for teenagers where they can safely congregate.

8.0 OUTREACHING

8.1 Smaller space required for serving hot meal program. Locate near kitchen.

8.2 If church had emergency power, the facility could serve as a central emergency shelter during a crisis.

8.3 Backlight stained glass windows so they are showcased at night.

8.3 Make space available to other community and religious groups.

8.4 Daycare centre and after-school program facility (could be for profit to help cover costs).

8.4 Have Lion/Lamb sculpture done in stone.

8.5 Purchase Meehan property, remove hall and Christian Education Centre and partner with community to create "Highland Cultural Centre" that serves St. James' needs 20% of the time and the community 80%. Present sanctuary and stage would serve St. James' spiritual needs, remainder of space would be for community uses like community group offices, meetings, musical presentations, dance, art, hot meals, etc. Advertise to the community to gauge possible interest in community cultural centre partnerships.

9.0 ACCESSIBILITY

9.1 Fully accessible church and facilities.

9.1 Barrier-free access to church/hall/washrooms.

9.2 Separate toilets required for male and female and both to be barrier-free accessible. Toilets should be located away from kitchen.

9.3 Elevator to provide access to upper floor of C.E. Centre.

10.0 HEAT/LIGHTS/MAINTENANCE SERVICING

10.1 Create proper custodian space.

10.2 Storage space for tables/chairs, etc. currently stored at perimeter of hall.

10.2 Heating systems throughout need to be studied and upgraded to a more efficient system or systems.

10.2 Conduct energy audit of existing facility to see where we stand.

10.2 Zoned heating.

10.3 Lower the ceiling in the sanctuary and hall to lessen heating requirements.

10.3 Investigate geothermal heating and other alternate heat sources. In-floor radiant heating in hall.

10.4 Create a proper recycling area for all church facilities.

10.4 Sanctuary and narthex area finishes and lighting need to be updated.

10.4 Hall and stage finishes, fixtures and lighting need to be upgraded.

10.4 Investigate ventilation of sanctuary space and hall.

10.5 Install water filter on water line.

10.6 Birds living around the church need to be addressed.

10.6 Review stained glass window report for recommendation of window repair.

10.7 The wooden Lion/Lamb sculpture requires attention.

11.0 GENERAL

11.1 Cemetery fence needs repair. Headstones require repair and restoration. Cemetery needs to be landscaped.

11.2 Remove clutter and junk from all areas of the church.

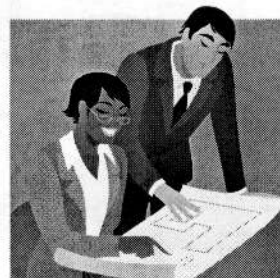
11.2 Landscape church grounds. Use low maintenance planting.

11.2 More parking.

11.3 Church facilities are presently only used roughly 20% of the time. What do we need to do to raise this to 80%+?

11.3 Purchase Antigonish Professional Centre property to allow for church facility expansion and dedicated parking.

compiled by Dale Archibald



HOLY WEEK AND EASTER SERVICES AT ST. JAMES

Sunday, April 5, 2009- Palm Sunday.

10:30 am We shout our Hosannas as Jesus enters Jerusalem and the events of Holy Week begin. At this service as we consider the Passion of our Lord, we will share in Holy Communion. Following the Service, the Children of the Sunday School will have a "Walk Through Holy Week" for interested members of the congregation to pass through on the way to Coffee and Conversation.

Thursday, April 9, 2009- Maundy Thursday

7:00 pm in the Church Hall. Come gather around the Table as together we re-experience the meal Jesus shared in the Upper Room

Friday, April 10, 2009- Good Friday

10:30 am We remember and recount the meaning and mystery of the cross through scripture and music

Sunday, April 12, 2009- Easter Sunday

6:30 am at Bethany. As the sun rises, voices and prayers blend to give thanks for the rising of the Son.

10:30 am Easter Celebration at St. James with special music to stir our hearts and voices to sing with joy!

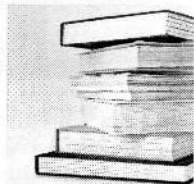
Library Update

Marilyn Gerriets has kindly agreed to manage our Church library. Suggestions for purchases should be directed to her at 863-8160 or mgerriets@stfx.ca. You are welcome to borrow books – just sign your name and the date on the card in the back pocket. Please put the card in the 'slot' provided and enjoy your read.

Reader's Corner:

Fran Wittgens' sister Jane Carter from Seattle has this to recommend:

I've been reading "The Great Emergence: How Christianity is Changing and Why" by Phyllis Tickle. It's an excellent book that our new bishop has suggested for Lenten reading, with perhaps some online discussions as well as small group discussions. If you like Diana Butler Bass, Marcus Borg, and other present day theologians and thinkers, you'd really like this book. Her premise is that every 500 years the church cleans out the attic and has a giant rummage sale. The process is painful but there is renewal and strength in the changes. The last "Giant Rummage Sale" was the Protestant Reformation, and we are now coming out of that into a much more complicated scene, both in the world and in the church.



New Discussion Group

Through head and heart we can meet in small group discussions! Most church visionaries and planners see that it is in small groups that we really become community. Isn't this why we linger in the Parlour? Bit by bit, as we meet there's learning, laughing, growing, and gathering.

In the following suggestion, we are invited to consider coming together to discuss issues we think are important in our lives. The concept is to pick a topic and meet about it for a limited period, perhaps five weeks. Then take up another topic, again for a limited duration. To make it easy and comfortable, there are several ideas as to when and where to meet. For instance, it could be at someone's home (Betty Webber has offered hers), or it could be 45 minutes before church begins at the church.

Some possible topics come from books:

Living Faith Fully within Empire: A Call to Community

Greta Vesper's book, With or Without God

Sports attendance versus church attendance

Me to We by Craig and Mark Kilberger

The Last Lecture, the true story of a young professor diagnosed with a terminal illness and how he lived the remainder of his life.

Perhaps there's something you want to add to the list.

Sound like a Book Club? It could morph into that but the main thing is for people who'd like to engage in ideas to enjoy each others company. Part of the mandate of the Congregational Life and Hospitality Committee is to nurture and encourage small group relationships within the church community. That makes it legal!!

Call Betty Webber at 863-1301 to show your interest.

The Penners

The Penners moved to Antigonish in late August from the Annapolis Valley, where Ken had been teaching at Acadia Divinity College and Linda had been working with NSCC Disability Services.

Ken is originally from Northern BC, and spent time as a "missionary kid" in Brazil, Linda from Sydney, NS. They met and were married while completing their Master of Christian Studies degrees at Regent College in Vancouver BC. (Linda was on a study leave from Operation Mobilization Ships, but Ken convinced her that marrying him was a better plan.) They then moved to Hamilton, Ontario where Ken completed his PhD at McMaster and their sons Alex 8 and Matthew 7 were born. Between maternity leaves Linda taught adults with disabilities, part time, at Mission Services of Hamilton.

Ken is now teaching in the Religious Studies Department of St.FX and Linda is the Disability Resource Facilitator at St.FX. Alex & Matthew attend Antigonish Education Centre and enjoy Tae Kwon Do, swimming, piano lessons, Sunday school (with Mom as a teacher) and their many pets.

They are looking forward to moving in to their new home at Antigonish Landing in late May.

They would like to thank the congregation of St. James for welcoming them to the church and Antigonish. They are excited to learn more about the church and community and how they may serve and grow with St. James.

News from Sierra Leone

It is hard to believe that my time here is quickly running out: less than four months until I'll be back in Canada. This has been such a privilege to be here!

I am now big into teaching HIV protocols to the general clinic and hospital staff. We managed to start a program on \$0 because I am a freebie.



THEREFORE, I'm trying to ensure that all the procedures and education I've acquired gets translated to the local folk so that the treatment of HIV+ve individuals can continue for as long as the government provides the antiretroviral (ARV) drugs at no cost. Getting initial access was quite a feat that actually was managed shortly after I arrived when I made a public inquiry at a national workshop I was attending. More recently, I attended another workshop that provided our facility with access to paediatric ARV's

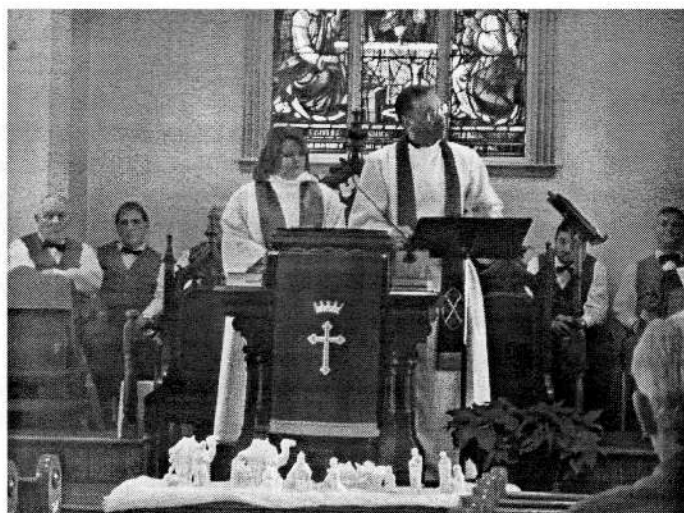
Would you believe, the first day we offered testing to the individuals in our OB unit, we found one antenatal woman who was HIV+ve. At the hospital we only see the complicated cases because there is a government run local maternity centre. We have not been routinely testing for HIV because the government refused to provide us with either testing kits or meds to treat any positive cases. Our closest referral site was at least 55 miles away so, of course, nobody could afford to go. It was at least a three-day's journey by public lorry, if the District health facility could and would agree to do everything needed in one day—highly unlikely.

The students I was teaching when I first arrived graduated December 18th. They were all hired by the hospital and are really adapting very well. After graduation I was supervising and advising on all three shifts. I'm gradually lessening the quantity of supervision out of my physical necessity. They are so eager and grateful to learn. It is such great pleasure to try and add to their knowledge base. The lack of resources and the ability to adapt to what is available is incredible and amazing. An HIV testing team came to Sierra Leone the end of January. I was in Freetown for a workshop and met up with the Dalhousie nursing faculty. She, along with some team members, had very kindly transported four huge nursing texts among them. I happily received them and they are now available to hospital staff.

I am typing this at home with my fan running full blast. The electricity is about to expire so I'll be forced to quit soon because typing in the dark, although creative, is not very intelligible, I've noticed. Then I'll probably just finish getting ready for bed and go sit on the porch in the starlight where I might find a bit more coolness, a light breeze even, if I'm really lucky. When I doze off, someone is sure to come along and wake me by greeting me in passing. I usually give up then and go lie down with the mosquito net faithfully in place. I usually get up several times and go outside to let the perspiration evaporate a bit. Finally, at 0500 h, the Muslim call for prayers comes and I get up, have a refreshing bucket shower with "room temperature" water and go to church for the 0600 h prayers.

Warmest regards,

Hope



On December 14, 2008 we welcomed the people from St. Paul the Apostle Anglican Church to St. James for a "Joint Service of Joy" followed by a shared meal in the hall. Rev. Dawn Leger and Rev. Peter Smith preached a dialogue sermon for the service highlighting the salvation which came to us in Jesus of Nazareth.

Such a Christmas



"Such a Christmas" was a poetic Christmas card presented in our service of worship on December 21, 2008. The dramatic reading was written by Fran Wittgens with music by Tony Genge. Performers were in order of appearance: John Graham-Pole, Jamie, Brian and daughter Eve Lowe-Roach, Sheri, Tessa and Ben Lambourne, Bethany Theuerkauf, Barbara DeMarsh

Coffee Hour

Thank you to everyone who has given 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.

