

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

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"... Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart." (Luke 2:19).

December 2009

Dear Friends in Christ,

The Christmas story is familiar to all of us. Each year, we remember the angels as they sang their praises and lit up the night sky. We recall the excitement of the shepherds as they rushed to Bethlehem to see the long-promised Messiah. We retell the account of the Wise men and their long journey to see the newborn king. Compared to such stirring scenes and emotional passages, the quiet little verse about Mary treasuring everything in her heart can easily be overlooked.

Yet later on in the gospel, the verse is repeated. When Jesus was a boy, he stayed behind at the temple to talk with the elders without Mary and Joseph realizing what he was doing. Following that story the Bible tells us "... his mother treasured all these things in her heart." (Luke 2:51).

There is a great deal of activity and noise around Christmas. Lots of presents to buy, decorations to put up, and events to attend. The Season is a busy one filled with activity and noise. We sing as the angels sang, we proclaim Jesus' birth as the shepherds did, and we even rush around with presents like the Wise men. But we often forget to take time to ponder what is happening and to treasure it in our hearts.

For Christmas is really about the new beginning that God gives to us through Jesus Christ. All the songs, the activities, and the presents are not Christmas. They are simply ways we celebrate the arrival of the Messiah among us.

So in this season, let's take a bit of time for quiet. To ponder what God did that night long ago in Bethlehem which changed our world. To treasure the great gift God has given to us in Jesus, a gift not merely for a single day of the year, but for every day of our lives.

May God continue to bless our worship and witness as a church and may you and your family have a blessed and meaningful Christmas and New Year.

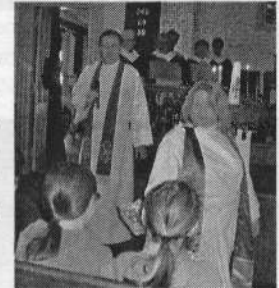
Yours in Christ's Service,

The Rev. Peter A. Smith



Holiday Combined Service

Each Christmas season our church and St. Paul's Anglican church come together for a combined service of worship followed by a shared potluck lunch. This is our second annual meeting and we hope



to continue in the future. The combined Sunday School children were treated to special crafts and got to decorate cookies—a fun time was enjoyed by all. Many thanks for Tamara McDuff and Carol Kell for organizing the crafts. Special thanks to Rev. Peter and Rev. Dawn who led our Worship.



Marriages and Baptisms at St. James

Congratulations and Best Wishes to the Couples who have been married at St. James:

Oliver Jegoden and Suzanne Lilly
Jason Caturay and Candace MacKenzie
James Woodward and Robbin May
Daniel Graham and Claire Hamilton
Jason Broussard and Michelle Geisler
Jeremy Parent and Mairi Fraser
Justin Clifton and Kristy Mason
Larry Tate and Erin Trenholm



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

Finnin John MacLean:

Father, Alexander MacLean; Mother, Debra Adams

Emma Elizabeth Young:

Father, David Young; Mother, Lori Hudson

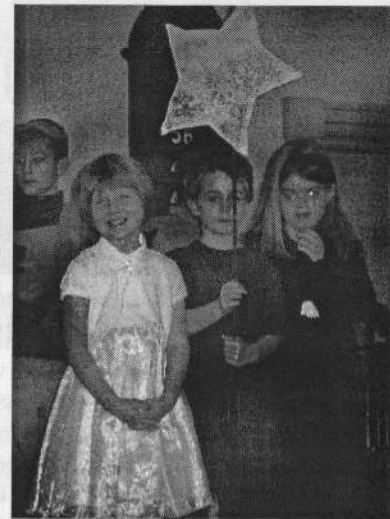
Jake Paul Alexander MacDonald:

Father, Derele MacDonald; Mother, Allda Cross

Griffen Roderick Marle Kelly:

Father, James Kelly; Mother, Karen Wallace

Sunday School Christmas Pageant



This year's Christmas Pageant was a wonderful tribute to the Christmas story as told by our Sunday school children posing as the animals of the nativity scene. Participating in the play were: **Donkey:** Isaac Nearing; **Camels:** Alex & Matthew Penner, Carter Van de Wiel; **Sheep:** Holly And Brianna Scott; **Angels:** Skyler Melanson, Rebecca and Garret Van de Wiel; **Stars:** David Nicholson, Ria Jurrlink, Keira MacDuff; **Shepherds:** Luke MacLaughlin, Rorey and Jack Adams, Owen Jurrlink, Ben Nearing, Gavin & Miller Semple, Ewan MacDuff, and Anthony Sears. We also owe our thanks to Seamus for his beautiful solo and Emery Van de Weil for the awesome piano playing.



As in years past the pageant was a result of hard work on the part of our Sunday school teachers and their helpers. A huge thank you to Ida Sarty, who arranged the service Sunday with Rev. Peter., Linda MacDougall Penner for directing the play, Laurie Crawford who made the great costumes, and Sally, Judy, and Irene for helping to herd the kids. We are lucky to have such a great team.



UCW Fundraiser a Success

The 2009 Holly Tea and Sale was a huge success with the final tally being just over \$4 600.00. That resulted from a fully loaded bake table, lots of gifts to buy, sensational items in the silent auction (all supplied by members of the congregation), and a tasty lunch of sandwiches and sweets. Without the support of many members from St. James this would not have been possible. A thank you to all who took the time to help, bake, or support our sale in one way or another.



This money will allow the UCW to meet various commitments for St. James. Each year the UCW sends \$3 600.00 to the Mission and Service Fund as part of our yearly pledge. Money is also used to help donations to the Benevolent Fund. In addition, donations are given to the running of the church

kitchen, bursary at the school, Legion wreath, L'Arche, 7 subscriptions of the Observer, Mandate magazine, flowers for the sick and shut-ins, remembering milestone birthdays and anniversaries, flowers at baptisms, donation to Brunswick Street Mission, specially needed items for the church and the list continues.

UCW is not just a group of money raising members of St. James. It is also a group of women committed to serving God, the congregation, the community, and one another. When one of us falls the rest are there to help that person continue their journey. By being a member of our UCW we know that we are not alone and we live in God's world. UCW is open to all women of the church regardless of age, or ability. Why not join with us — we are preparing to begin a new year — come make that journey with us. Watch the bulletin for our meeting in January. We look forward to seeing you there.



Candid Camera



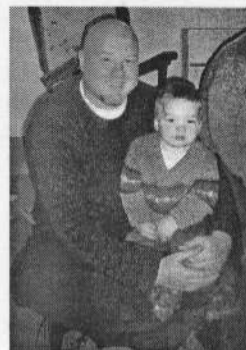
Bob Murray and Fred Davidson are playing it cool as they have a relaxed chat after church.

Nursery Makeover

Our nursery has been out of date and in desperate need for some TLC for a while now. Many thanks to Catherine Murray for organizing the following group to help redecorate our Nursery: Barbara Gardner, Betty Webber, Carol Kell, Laura Reddick, Roy Murray, and Tara Nicholson. Donations of time, talents, and toys were greatly appreciated



as were all of you who contributed Canadian Tire money which aided in the purchase of the beautifully coloured foam flooring. Now our little ones have a



FROM THE ARCHIVES
Election of Elders, 1879 Style

From the minutes of the Session of St. James Presbyterian Church, January 10, 1879:

Messer's H. H. McCurdy, Samuel Williams and Wm. Crockett who had been elected by the congregation on the 1st instant to the office of the eldership being present. The Moderator (Minister Rev. Peter Goodfellow) stated to these brethren that they were elected to the office of Eldership and asked a declaration of their willingness to accept.

Messer's H. H. McCurdy and Samuel Williams said they felt it their duty to accept. William Crockett declined considering the vote in his favour was too small. H. H. McCurdy and Samuel Williams were then examined as to their knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, Church Government and duties of the eldership, which examination was found satisfactory. The Session appointed the edict for their ordination to be read next Sabbath. The Session closed with prayer.

Signed Chas. A. Harrington, Clerk — P. Goodfellow, Moderator

Money Matters, 1879

From the Minutes of the Session of St. James Presbyterian Church, November 28, 1879:

The minutes of the last meeting were read and sustained. The Session agreed to pay Mr. Henderson, music teacher, the sum of \$7.50/100 for services rendered to the new choir.

The Elders in the several districts were requested to send out collectors for the schemes of the Church, having failed to collect sufficiently for that purpose through the new system of weekly offerings. The Session closed with prayer.

Signed Chas A.Harrington , Clerk — P. Goodfellow, Moderator

A Christmas Story—*adapted Francois Coppee*

It was so long ago that the whole world has forgotten the date and even the name of the little town in which lived a little boy whose name was Hans.

Little Hans lived with his aunt, who was quite an old lady. She was not always kind to Hans, but this made no difference to him. He loved her just the same, and forgot that she was ever cross and very unkind to him at times.

Hans went to school with many other boys, but he was not clothed as they were. He had to wear the same clothes both week days and Sundays; the same even in the summer that he wore in the winter.

It was now midwinter, when everything was wrapped in snow and glazed with ice, while the north winds sang loud and whistled down the chimneys, played very roughly with the bare trees, and crept through every crack and crevice of the house. The frost, too, was busy pinching the cheeks and biting the toes of the boys, and making them run, jump and dance to keep warm.

The children were wild with the excitement and the joy that was astir at this time. For there were secrets in the air. Every one was busy making gifts for some loved one.

It was the night before Christmas, the one great birthday on which the whole world rejoiceth and when all endeavor to make their fellow men happy.

The schoolmaster and all of his pupils started for the midnight worship and prayer at the church. All of the boys were well clothed, with heavy coats, fur caps, thick mittens, and very heavy and warm shoes. But little Hans had only a poor, plain, ragged suit, with no overcoat, no mittens, and his shoes were only wooden ones. It was a very cold night, and the boys and the schoolmaster had to walk very fast to keep warm. But little Hans did not mind the cold so much, because the stars smiled down upon him and seemed like so many diamonds set in a deep blue canopy, each one glittering and flashing in the darkness. The snow, too, was a sparkling mass, and Hans wondered if the stars could see themselves reflected in the tiny snow crystals which covered the earth.

At last they reached the church, whose windows were shedding forth a soft, golden light on the stillness and darkness of the cold winter night. This little group of worshipers quietly passed into the church and sank noiselessly into their pews. It was a beautiful place to Hans. He loved it dearly, and was always happy to come here. The candles were all lighted, and they burned steadily brighter and brighter, filling the church with a beautiful mellow light. The grand old organ softly and clearly sent forth its tones, each one growing richer, deeper and sweeter, and gradually the voices of the choir boys and the tones of the organ filled the old church with such beautiful music that little Hans's heart seemed to bound within him, and his whole soul was enraptured, while there shone from his face a radiance that only a divine inspiration could bring forth.

At length, after the people had sung, each one knelt and offered thanksgiving to the Heavenly Father, little Hans, too, knelt and offered thanks for the blessings which he had received during that year, and for the tender care of the Father of all.

The people then quietly passed out of the warm church into the cold of the night. Hans was the last one out, and as he carefully made his way down the icy steps he noticed a little boy no larger than himself sitting on the steps, with his head resting against the church. He was fast asleep. His face was beautiful, and seemed clothed in a golden light. Beside him, tied in a cloth, were a square, a hammer, a saw and other tools of a carpenter. He had neither shoes nor stockings on his feet, although his clothing was spotless and of the purest white. It grieved Hans that the child should have no shoes, not even one to place for the Christ-child to fill with gifts.

Hans stooped and took from his right foot the wooden shoe and placed it in front of the sleeping child, so that the Christ-child would not pass him by. Hans then limped along on the ice and snow, not feeling how cold it was, but only thinking of the poor child asleep out in the cold.

The other boys were talking of the good things awaiting them at home,

of the feasts, the plum pudding, the Christmas trees, and the many drums, wagons and blocks the Christ-child would put in their shoes that night.

When Hans arrived home he found his aunt awaiting him, and when she saw that he had only one shoe, and he had told her all about the other one, she was very angry with him, and sent him to bed. Hans placed the wooden shoe from his left foot at the fireside, hoping that the Christ-child would remember him as he passed by. The first sunbeam that crept into Hans's bedroom and kissed him the next morning awoke him, and he bounded downstairs, and flew to the great open fireplace to find his shoe.

Hans rubbed his eyes and caught his breath, for, to his great surprise, there were both of his wooden shoes, filled with beautiful toys; by the fireside he found warm clothing and many other things to make him comfortable and happy.

Hearing loud voices, Hans went to the door. The people were standing in a crowd about the priest, who was talking to them. He told Hans that where he had seen the child asleep on the church steps there was now in the window above a beautiful crown set with precious jewels. He said that the child was the Christ-child, whom the Heavenly Father had again sent among men on earth for that night, and that it was He with whom Hans had shared his wooden shoes.

Christmas Service at RK MacDonald



In the Spring of 2009 with the help of the Spiritual and Religious Care Department at the RK MacDonald Nursing Home, St. James United and St. Paul's Anglican began to share responsibility for a monthly worship service for the residents. On the months when St. James is leading the service, the upcoming service is mentioned in the bulletin and everyone is welcome and invited to come and join

with the choir or sit in the congregation for this time of song and scripture.

In December, the Christmas service was a joint effort with Rev. Peter and Rev. Dawn sharing the worship service leadership. A large number from St. James came to help with the singing and spent this special time with residents from all faiths who came to enjoy the carols, prayers, and message. The ecumenical service was broadcast throughout the nursing home so that those unable to come physically were able to follow along with the service.



Do you know what A.D.H.D. is?

First of all. ADHD stands for attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. A person with ADHD might feel fidgety and squirmy. Feeling this way a lot of the time can make it difficult to get work done in school or to follow instructions from a parent. A kid who has ADHD might yell out the answers to questions before other kids in the class have a chance to raise their hands. They also can be disorganized, distracted, and forgetful. They might lose things and have trouble finishing assignments.

With help, a kid with ADHD can learn to act differently. Sometimes medicine can help a kid take control of his or her behavior, but only a doctor can decide if ADHD medicine is needed. People with ADHD are not bad people, for instance these are some people with ADHD: Albert Einstein, Thomas Edison, Walt Disney, Jim Carrey, Beethoven and Michael Jordan. This reporter thinks everyone needs to know all this stuff.

by Nathaniel Webber-Cook

Social Justice – What’s That??

In the past few months you hopefully have heard references to the newly formed “Social Justice Committee”. After multiple exploratory meetings we’ve developed a mandate to solidify our focus. Gina Sampson has offered to chair the meetings for one year and secretarial duties will rotate monthly. Meetings will be held the first Wednesday of each month at 12:30 in the Parlour. Members to date include: Sarah Aavmat, Michèle Ashby, Anne Camozzi, Barbara deMarsh, Muriel Kennedy, Gina Sampson, Pat Skinner, Reverend Peter Smith, Kevin White and Fran Wittgens. We welcome new members and input from the congregation.

Our approach will be to “think globally and act locally”. We want to educate ourselves about topics of world concern and inform the congregation of our findings. We encourage everyone to act individually on these issues. As a committee, we will act collaboratively on those matters that seem particularly relevant to our community.

Our mandate includes, but is not limited to:

1) **connecting with other social justice agencies and participating in related activities within our community** (including attending meetings and events either as individuals or as representatives of St. James; creating formal and informal liaisons with other organizations; and reporting information gathered to both the committee and the congregation)

2) **communicating about social justice issues and events to the committee and the congregation** (including educating ourselves about these issues and presenting that information in a relevant manner; publicizing dates, times and descriptions of events we can attend; preparing articles for our Church website, newsletter and bulletins; and updating the congregation during services)

3) **planning and carrying out social justice projects** (including organizing congregational or community events with speakers; taking part in awareness campaigns; beginning fundraising drives – either alone or in conjunction with other organizations and related events; and working with other congregational groups such as the Sunday School.)

Our exploration of social justice issues shows us that they can be broken down into the following six general categories: poverty, environment, equality, peace, health, and education. The committee has decided to concentrate on one area at a time. Our first focus will be poverty issues, specifically food, housing and transportation concerns in our community. However, we will also highlight environmental issues by participating in the *Global Bell Ringing for Climate Justice* (13th of Dec.) and by holding an inter-faith event in conjunction with *Earth Day* in April.

We look forward to updating you about our work in this area and hope that you will consider contributing your ideas and thoughts to this initiative.



Ringling for Climate Justice



Michelle Ashby and Tim Hinds with their dog at the Bell Ringing on Dec. 13th

350 Rings for Change in Global Warming.



We had some help from St. Paul's getting the message out to the community.

Stuffing Stockings for The Food Bank

Tradition holds that St. Nicholas learned of a man with three daughters who were very poor. Knowing that the family were too proud to accept money from him, St. Nicholas threw the money down the chimney and it fell into the stockings the girls had hung by the fire to dry. When the news of the find in their stockings spread, other children began to hang their stockings in the hopes that when they awoke there would be good things in them.



In keeping with St. Nicholas' generosity, our Sunday school stuffs stockings for the food bank. This has been a long standing tradition at St. James and it greatly appreciated by the recipients. This year they asked for toiletry items and our congregation responded with mounds of toothbrushes, toothpaste, shampoo, and soap. We had a wonderful social after church while the bags were stuffed with goodies and everyone had cookies and something warm to drink. Thanks to each one who contributed to this great cause.



Reader's Corner:

A Thread of Grace by Mary Doria Russell

I am getting to be a fan of this author. Her book *Sparrow* and its sequel *Children of God* is a powerful character-driven journey to another planet but with none of human nature changed. *A Thread of Grace* is a complete change. Set in WWII when Jews were being rounded up and sent off to a horrible end, this shows the response amongst Italians. Set in the northern mountains, bordering France and Switzerland, we're immersed in the harrowing and painful lives of young Claudette Blum, her father, as well as thousands of other Jewish refugees. A thread of grace seemed to have held them as kindnesses, risks, and even death came as a result of protecting them. There were sacrifices from everyone: the Catholic priest, the simple farmers, the brazenly bold women resisters, as well as growth as even a Nazi SS deserter comes to see his past actions in light of their impact on these people he has grown to love.

This book will soon be in the church library, so look for it!!

Fran Wittgens

Service Learning Program

This fall we were pleased to have students from St. FX Service Learning come and help out with the hot meal program. Some students come and serve the people each week while others make presentations on easy meal preparation and food safety for both the participants in the program as well as the volunteers. The students have taken a break for exams and Christmas but the hot meal program continues on. This past Tuesday a Christmas dinner was served to all and Christmas gifts were offered to the participants who were very appreciative of these generous gifts.



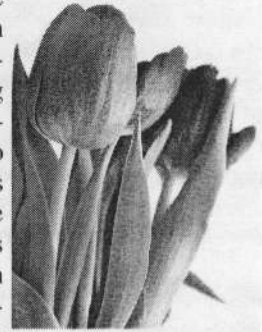
Going Green

What better time to think "GREEN" than the Christmas season...and let's combine it with that prize of a free pizza we promised. We are challenging the young people of the congregation to share a REDUCE, REUSE, RECYCLE idea with us. Send your submissions to tal@ns.aliantzinc.ca by the end of January for your chance to win!



"Remember, Renew, Rejoice"

On June 10, 2010 we will celebrate the 85th anniversary of the United Church of Canada and across the country anniversary activities are being planned. At St. James we are anticipating many events throughout 2010 to recognize this milestone. Committees and groups within the church will be asked to be creative in generating ideas and following through on them. The year long anniversary celebrations will bring the entire church community of St. James together for fun, reflective and exciting experiences.

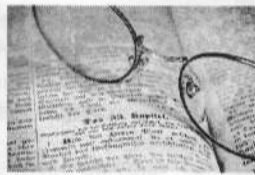


Your involvement is most welcome! Join the planning committee of Betty Webber, Bob Murray, Rev. Peter, Wendy MacCaull, Andrew Murray, and Catherine Murray or give some thought to other ways you might like to be involved. The new year will truly be a year to "Remember, Renew, Rejoice".

Attention Please!

Now is the time to renew or to begin your subscription to The United Church Observer. The observer features articles and columns that are Spirit-enriching explorations of faith, ethics, justice, and journeys of life. Editorial lineup includes: Everyday ethics, Question Box, Your Letters to the Editor, News and Reviews. If purchased through St. James, your one year membership to the Observer is only \$15.00.

To order, complete the information on the special envelopes that are available in the Narthex.



WANTED!!! Council Members

New Council Members will be proposed at the Annual General Meeting in February. A number of positions will be vacant as terms of appointment are completed. We are seeking interested members of the congregation to accept an appointment to Council. This is an exciting time for St. James and Council membership offers you the opportunity to give back to your church. Council meets bi-monthly in the evenings. If you are willing to serve, contact Roy Murray (by December 25th) at 386-2110 or sammy711murray@hotmail.com.



Need a lift?



With the colder weather upon us and if you need a ride to Sunday Worship Service, please call the church office at 863-2001 and leave a message. We'll do our best to arrange for someone to pick you up.