



CONNECTIONS

A Newsletter for St. James United Church • 197 Main Street, Antigonish, NS

By the Outreach & Communications Committee

Volume 7 Issue 1 • Spring 2013

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, they are a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.

2 Corinthians 5:17

Dear Friends in Christ,

I have a Christmas Cactus which sits in the front room. The plant grows a little bit every year but has never bloomed. As I write this, there are small buds appearing on the ends of the leaves signalling that colourful blossoms will soon appear. I expect my Christmas Cactus will be in full bloom by the time Easter arrives and given the cold winter, I'm especially thankful for that sign of new life.

The mild Easter mornings we have enjoyed the last few years are not a certainty in 2013. We are still very much in the midst of winter as we journey through Lent toward Holy Week and

continued on page 2

HOLY WEEK AND EASTER

March 24, 2013 Palm Sunday • 10:30 am. We wave our palms and shout our Hosanna's as Jesus enters Jerusalem and we consider the events which follow as we celebrate the Lord's Supper.

March 28, 2013 Maundy Thursday • 7:00 pm in the Hall. Come gather around the Table as together we remember and share the events in the Upper Room.

March 29, 2013 Good Friday • 10:30 am. As disciples of Jesus, we experience through story and song the emotions, events and meaning of the crucifixion.

March 31, 2013 Easter Sunday • 6:30 am on the Bethany grounds. As the sun rises, voices and prayers blend to give thanks for the Resurrection. A pancake breakfast will follow back in the church hall hosted by the Men's Club.

• **10:30 am Easter Sunday Service**



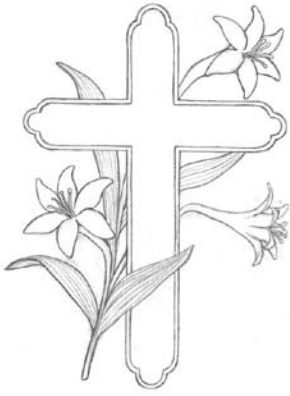
*Well Done
Thou
Good and
Faithful
Servant*

To have Pat Skinner for a friend was special, and friends she had in abundance. A shockwave went through the community when word of her death was made known.

Since that day we have read and heard of Pat's many accomplishments and of the honours bestowed upon her in relation to her work in Human Rights and as an advocate for the people of the African Nova Scotian community. There may be people in our congregation who did not know of the great work Pat did for she was one who did not talk about the honours she received. Those of us at St. James were privileged to see another side of Pat – her spiritual side.

I first met Pat in 1964 when I became a member of the Bethel Unit of the UCW (United Church Women) that was in existence at that time. Pat was a charter member and we look back to last June when the UCW celebrated their 50th anniversary by honouring the charter members and we remember Pat's excitement and enthusiasm. Upon meeting her for the first time I knew this was a lady who loved people, who was always interested in what they were doing and how their family was, etc. Family meant so much to Pat and her three children adored her.

continued on page 2



Easter. With Easter coming in March, I'm not sure that there will be green grass peeking out or tulips breaking through the snow as a sign of the new life we celebrate that day. Which is why I am so thankful for the promise contained in the tiny buds on my Christmas cactus.

The news is filled with tragedy, scandal, and difficulties. Our own lives are so often touched by sorrow and heartache that it is sometimes difficult to focus on the good news which moves the world to shout with joy "Christ is Risen." Any sign, however small, helps us to remember that Good Friday gives way to Easter through the power and plan of God's love for the world.

As Christians we bear witness to the peace, the hope, and the certainty that Christ rising from death means to us and to the world. For Easter is a reminder that by God's grace the storms of life give way to cloudless days and that the cold of fear is changed into the warmth of love.

This year, I would invite you to join with us as we journey to the cross and experience again the good news found there. During Holy Week and Easter we will be holding special worship services to recount the passion of Jesus and remember the cross and the empty tomb. Come join with us as we mark these important occasions of our faith and celebrate the love God shows us in Jesus Christ.

May God bless your family this Easter season and may signs of new life fill your world,

*Yours in Christ's Service,
The Rev. Peter A. Smith*

Well Done Thou Good and Faithful Servant continued from page 1

Pat loved her church and was "always willing, always able" to serve in whatever way she could. During the ministry of the Rev. Russell Alcorn she was the church secretary, always greeting everyone with that big smile. During that time she sang in the church choir. I think the two of us disgraced ourselves more than once with our giggles. Perhaps it was after a choir rehearsal that I sat with her in one of the pews and listened while she told me of the experiences of racism she had encountered locally. I could sense then that she wanted to do something about it.

It was during the Rev. Fleming Holm's ministry that she started on her journey of fighting for what was right. He was involved in Human Rights and encouraged her. We were so proud of her when she enrolled in Coady International Institute, and I believe she was the first person from Antigonish to do so. Once again we felt great pride when in 2006 she received an award from the Human Rights Commission.

While she worked tirelessly for the betterment of so many people, she remained a faithful worker at St. James. She was elected as an elder and served as Clerk of Session and more recently she chaired the Ministry and Personnel Committee. Having a special service in her church to celebrate African Heritage Month meant so much to her. She was always willing to read Scripture, serve communion and even learned to knit so that she could make a shawl for the Prayer Shawl Ministry. We have vivid memories of Pat with her knitting needles and her look of determination to succeed but always collapsing in laughter. We shall all miss her big warm smile, her hugs, her laughter and the love she had for all.

Pat lived the Gospel and we are the richer for having had her in our midst. It can be truly said of Pat: "Well done thou good and faithful servant."

Mavis Murray

February was African Heritage Month
The African Cuisine was Delicious!

Antigonish International



*Feb 24: Clara Turay
 & the African choir
 lead interactive
 songs at the potluck.*



ST. JAMES HOLY BAPTISM



*December 11, 2012 • Ava Grace Young
Daughter of Krista and Gary Young.*

*January 12, 2013 • Jack Francis Hall
Son of Benjamin Francis Hall and Lacey
Elizabeth Gillis of Antiognish
Godparents Jamie Hat and Amanda Miceli*

*Pictured here are: Krista and Gary Young
with newly baptized Ava Grace and her
brother Jacob, grandparents are Isabel
and Glen Tate, great grandmother Maud
Tate.*

Sunday School News

The Sunday school was very excited to hear from Pamela Obonde, our Coady student, who recently returned to her home in Kenya. Pamela told us what a blessing we had been to her and thanked us again for welcoming her to our congregation and Sunday School life. She felt truly blessed and greatly appreciated the warmth and love she received from the St. James United children, youth, and adult congregations.

When Pamela left we presented her with a gift of \$305.00, money raised through a special outreach ministry project by the Sunday School with help from the congregation. With this gift Pamela was able to buy enough blankets for 80 children and 20 grandmothers in her home village. The Sunday School also gave Pamela an assortment of colorful plastic cups to take back to the children. She said the children would always remember the children of St. James United when they used these cups.

The Sunday school again has plans to lead a

worship service in early April. We look forward to these times when we can share our gifts and talents with the congregation.

On Sunday mornings when we leave the sanctuary following story time we gather as a group in our bright and welcoming classroom. We light our Christ candle, receive our offering, sing songs and share with each other important events that may have happened during the week since we last met. We then move into smaller groups to focus on our Whole People of God curriculum.

We have special outreach projects throughout the year. One upcoming project is to make valentines for those St. James congregation members that may be in nursing homes or have moved away or are currently in hospital.

We are continually looking for ways to make our Sunday school more vibrant, welcoming and interesting. If you have an interest or talent you would like to share with us we invite you to come along on a Sunday morning.

Blessings,
St. James Sunday School

Catching Up

NEWS ABOUT PAST AND PRESENT FRIENDS

Joanne and Lawrence MacKenzie are happy to announce the birth of their 4th grandchild. Andrew Lawrence MacKenzie was born to A. Jay and Cheryl MacKenzie on Dec 31, 2012 in Matamata, New Zealand. Andrew is a brother for William, Maria and Ula.

A letter was received by Betty Webber from Liz and Jamie Durning who were once members of St. James Church and choir. Jamie was with the Royal Bank and was very involved in Fairview United, Halifax. They live in Truro.

Letters and cards also came to Betty Webber from old friends from St. John's NFLD, Halifax, and most of the provinces where they lived at one time. It's a joy to connect with family and friends - to renew memories, learn about their families - their aches and pains.

More thank you photos from Pamela of Kenya for the blankets and the letter she sent to Ida on page 6.



The Young Family

David, Lori and Emma Young have resided in the Antigonish area since 2008. David and Lori have roots in the Maritimes, with Lori having been born and raised in Nova Scotia, and David having attended university in

Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. However, the family had been living in London, Ontario prior to their relocation to Antigonish, where Lori worked as an occupational therapist with London Health Sciences Centre, and David was employed as well as completing his doctoral degree at the University of Western Ontario. As a former high school social studies teacher as well as special education coordinator, David is currently a professor in the Faculty of Education at St. Francis Xavier University, where he teaches primarily in the area of school administration and policy. A graduate of Dalhousie University, Lori is employed as a community occupational therapist with the Guysborough Antigonish Strait Health Authority. Emma spends her days attending day care, and is enrolled in creative dance and swimming. She loves playing with her dolls, doing crafts, and spending time with her friends. David, Lori and Emma greatly enjoy living in St. Andrews, as well as being members of the congregation at St. James.



Catching Up

NEWS ABOUT PAST AND PRESENT FRIENDS

Dear Ida,

Happy New Year full of the Lord's blessings. I am well, my family is well and we thank God for His grace and mercy. I travelled and arrived well and my Christmas was a true Christmas. Allow me to say a million thank yous to you personally and the Sunday School children together with the St. James family. I love you all. You made a real Christmas for the children at Angolo Sunday School. The blankets were such a blessing to all of them who came to church that day. A total of 80 children and 20 grandmothers received blankets. They can't stop thanking God for St. James United Church and the Sunday School children. Your generous heart has made a huge difference to these children and their grannies who take care of them.



On my behalf and that of my community allow me to say God bless you so much! You were my family while I was in Antigonish and continued to show Christmas love to the children at Angolo village. THANK YOU.

We will definitely keep in touch and hoping to see and meet you in Kenya.

Lots of love from my family and the Sunday School children,

Pam



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YEAR OF 蛇 SNAKE

You Raise Me Up

A Report by Wang Ning on the International Potluck on January 27, 2013

A Potluck dinner is a North American tradition where everyone who comes brings something to share. It evokes the image of many foods going into one pot. Potluck. You never know what anyone will bring! That is where the luck comes. If everyone brought rice and nothing to go with it, it would be unlucky! Here in Antigonish, Nova Scotia, a group has been hoping that having regular monthly international potlucks will bring many people together and to create new friendships and memories.

Potluck can bring good luck in part, be it friendship or brief remembrance. I still remember the first time I took part in this event at St. James United Church Hall.

I was totally amazed by the big gathering of so many colorful, happy-looking people and colorful dishes on a long, long table. Then I found that lovely kids were doing helping work and even people with special needs came to the potluck. After enjoying it several times, I realized this is a nice way of helping newcomers fit in, teaching kids the idea of give-and-take and strengthening the bond of the community.

As this month was Chinese culture month, we became the cultural hosts of the January potluck. I was quite excited about it because I had long



wished to find some way to repay the kindness of people here and share a little bit of our wonderful Chinese culture. If you are always enjoying the green grass on the other side, even if the hostess is very hospitable, you still hope you could do something in return, otherwise it's like living on welfare emotionally. For me there was another expectation. My advisor Joanne was going to come. She is such a wonderful person! As I had enjoyed many moments of amazement and wonder in and outside her class, I did wish we could surprise her a little bit.

Through the participation of this activity, I realized that this "eat, drink and be merry" involved a lot of detailed arrangement. However it was fun for me to see how discussion of one small issue evolved into the prolonged talk about more details. For example, as soon as people entered, should we ask them to put food on the long table and come back for the name tag or should we move the long table near the door? (No, the food would get cold.) Or should we...? Now I understood why legal documents are incredibly long. For several days marvelous Brenda had a million things on her mind.

The big day came. There were so many people coming that the waiting line for food looked very long. We were supposed to say something about Chinese culture after everyone sat down. I was

continued on page 9

Capital Campaign Fund Raising Update

The Capital Fund Raising Committee was very fortunate to attract engaged and effective committee members. Under the professional guidance of RBR Consultants and with the full engagement of our congregation, our committee has already received pledges totaling 95% of our target (\$850,000).

We have several key contributors who have not completed their planning, we have a third letter campaign to execute, and, we are organizing a major fund raising event for the evening of April 5, 2013. Mark your calendar!!

We are grateful to our congregation and confident we will raise the funds necessary to meet our target on or before April 5, 2013.

Harley MacCaull, Chair
Capital Fund Raising Committee
St. James United Church



St. James United Church Capital Campaign Committee

February 2013

The Capital Campaign Committee is scheduled to present the next stage of the campaign and its recommendations to a congregational meeting on March 3, 2013, following service. The presentation is available in the narthex, or on the church web site at: stjamesuc.com/capital-campaign-presentation/. Copies are also available from the office, or from the chair. The core of the report culminates in its recommendations.

1. It is recommended that in the course of the construction phase, and keeping in mind that we serve the local community, that, local contractors be given preference where pricing and quality are equal.
2. As the nature of the work requires expertise in renovation, and some contractors have more experience than others in this area, it is recommended that the tendering of construction work be by invitation, and the committee determine invitees by examining past work history.
3. In keeping with our support of the local economy, it is recommended that the successful contractor be asked to buy locally where price, quality and availability are equal.
4. It is recommended that the tender and construction schedule presented here be accepted.
5. It is recommended that the budget presented be approved, with an undertaking to report monthly to the congregation on progress.
6. It is recommended that accepted accounting principles be adhered to, including a cost control system which requires two signatures on all expenditures.
7. There is much work to be done in preparing the buildings for the renovations, including disposal of unused items presently in storage. The following is the committee's understanding of how approval of this process will work.
8. It is recommended that in all cases recycling be the favored method when removing items.

Respectfully submitted

Brian MacLeod, Chair Capital Campaign Committee
bdmacleod@macleodgroup.ca

You Raise Me Up continued from page 7

worried that in this situation when the last one started to eat it would be the time for the first one to leave! At the same time I was amused by what Brenda said. She quoted a Chinese saying, “a smile can take ten years off your age,” to encourage people to smile and she used words “to take a tea spoon instead of a table spoon” to discourage people from taking too much food. She was so lovely to think of those sayings.



Playing the Chinese Zither

After a while, the long line finally came to an end. Then it was my turn to say something as the hostess. First of all, I used two flowers to represent two countries. The poinsettia is a typical flower during Christmas season here in Canada; The daffodil is a household flower in China during Spring Festival. Both have their own beauty and both add beauty to the big garden. I expressed my hope that our cross-cultural friendship would bloom and blossom like these two beautiful flowers. Then I said that Antigonish was an extremely people-friendly place and I gave a few examples of my personal experiences here.

I was happy to read a poem of mine to show our common gratitude to this place on behalf of the Chinese community.

This Is A Beautiful Place

(to Antigonish)

This is a beautiful place

White clouds are moving across the azure sky

Wild flowers dance away into distance

Blue spruce, brown oak and green cedars

*Maple trees are turning and returning their
color to the earth*

They are having a joyous celebration

This is a beautiful place

Great minds turn it into rainbow

A hello, a smile, a touch, a hug

*It makes a difference between sadness and
sunshine*

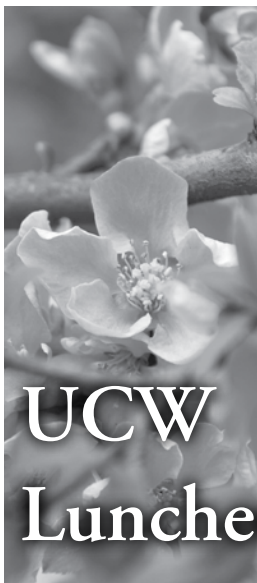
Loving idea comes across loving hands

We are having a joyous celebration

Then I said a little bit about Chinese festivals. I tried to link them to the festivals here. For example, the Moon Festival is similar to Thanksgiving here. It is a time when people gather together to celebrate the harvest, to have big meals and to give thanks. The difference is that here people give thanks to family, friends and God while we give thanks to the goddess of the moon whom we believe produces magic dewdrops which nourish the crops at night. That is why the cake is made in the shape of the moon. I also said in many parts of China you could see osmanthus which has clusters of small, light yellow petals giving off sweet fragrance. That is why the autumn is also called the season of fragrant osmanthus. Therefore Chinese people would sit under the moon, smell the fragrance of osmanthus, have a cup of tea and a small piece of mooncake.

As I was almost through with my presentation I watched the excited conversation in this warm, well-lit place and I was so moved. I still remember what Fran said during the first planning meeting. She said that when she and her husband came here in 1970, they felt lonely and isolated as people were mostly concerned about their own worldly affairs. That was the reason why she was so involved in this activity. I remember my first month being here. For several days I was so uncomfortable that I decided to go on an excursion to feel better. I

continued on page 10



UCW Luncheon



You Raise Me Up continued from page 9

took a cruise on the Atlantic Ocean for two and half hours. Although it was drizzling cold, I felt much better after the trip because I had a strong feeling that we were all passengers passing each other's life for a brief while and sharing the same destination, the other bank.

At the potluck I saw the hall with people dining, feasting, singing, talking, laughing. The whole room turned into a big ship, which was why the word friendship has a ship in it.

Several days later the pictures came out. Those beautiful pictures again brought me back to that nice gathering. It was cold and windy outside but cozy and warm inside. I saw people enjoying colorful food and different cultures, bright smiles bringing sweet memories. There were pictures of the Chinese traditional musical instrument called the Chinese Zither. The first piece Green Island Serenade, a romantic song, was played by a young Chinese student. The second one Jasmine Flower, a very popular folk song in China, was done by two young girls. Their performance won big applause. In another area one girl was doing the ancient art of Chinese calligraphy which expressed best wishes to everyone: Happy New Year & Happy Every Day! We were very lucky to have Mary Beth Carty, a gifted musician. I could tell that music was her life.

She accompanied two young Chinese students at the piano, singing *You Raise Me Up*. Their sweet voices lingered in my mind:

There is no life - no life without its hunger;
Each restless heart beats so imperfectly;
But when you come and I am filled with wonder...

You raise me up... to more than I can be

When I heard the song, the words resonated within. They made me think of Joanne, my advisor, who always finds some way to smooth out my uneasiness as a newcomer, and Brenda, who mothers those young students, calling them "sweetie" and kissing them good night, or Fran, who volunteers professionally to do every little bit for this potluck, from the first-minute planning to the last-minute cleaning. Probably many newcomers were sharing my feelings. We were all raised up by a loving idea and loving hands.



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Music at St. James

THE GUITAR GROUP As well as being enriched by the Word at St. James on any given Sunday, the congregation is also entertained and moved by the ministry of music as presented by the senior choir, the women's chorus, the men's choir, the brass quintet, the hand bell choir, various soloists or by the guitar group. No matter which group provides the week's ministry of music, the congregation can be sure that it will be hearing something to lift up the heart.

The guitar group tends to provide up-beat musical selections, playing homage to the expression, "Christians can have fun too." Their work ranges from the light and playful to more soulful melodies, such as 'He Ain't Heavy, He's My Brother.' The guitar group consists of Charles Lowe, Peter Rawding and Gord Morrison on acoustic guitar, Fred Davison on bass and Jack Lilly on drums.

continued on page 12

Film Review *Offside*

An Iranian film by Jafar Panahi, 2006

By Linda Darwish

As with many Iranian films since the 1960s and 70s, this film comprises layers of socio-political commentary. The most obvious layer of critique is that of the Islamic Republic's imposition of social restrictions placed on women and the epistemological structures that uphold them.

The film uses live footage from the June, 2005 World Cup qualifying match between Iran and Bahrain to explore the injustices and inconsistencies of the regime's prohibition against women attending soccer matches. It focuses on a group of girls who, as is common practice, attempt to sneak in to watch the game by dressing up as boys, accepting the risks and the inevitable financial exploitation this entails.

Although the trick apparently works for some—though we are never given a glimpse of this crowd—the film highlights six female 'captives' who are caught by male soldiers as young and exploited as themselves, though in quite different

ways. The girls are held in a special make-shift outdoor holding pen on the margins of the stadium from which they can hear, but not see the game being played out. In lighter moments, one of the soldiers offers a running commentary that is not immune to his regional biases.

Through a series of events and conversations between the soldiers and their charges, the film depicts the regime's absurd rationale for the extraordinary level of paternalism to which its views take it. The audience sees the mental universe of the regime, mediated through simple and essentially good-hearted young men who hail from the various rural and urban regions of the country, as they clash with university-educated urban youth. Not that the soldiers are themselves convinced of the rhetoric they are obliged to uphold. As they begin to question that rationale at the prompting of the reasoned and emotional protestations offered by their female charges, the cracks that appear in the regime's logic open up a space for both groups to merge, almost unconsciously, into their shared humanity and, especially, their shared love for and loyalty to Iran.



FROM THE ARCHIVES

Major Repairs and Renovations, Social Concerns & the Relationship with Cape George

102 years ago

At Antigonish on the evening of Wednesday the 26th day of July 1911 and within the Baptist Church where the Presbyterian congregation has been worshipping since the middle of April while the Presbyterian Church is undergoing repairs in the way of repainting and resurfacing the interior, the Session of St. James Church met after Prayer Meeting and was constituted by prayer by the moderator (the Minister) with whom was present J.H. Stewart, D.R. Graham, and A.C. Thomison, Elders.

Minutes of last previous meetings were read and approved as correct. It was agreed that A.C. Thomison be appointed representative elder for the ensuing year. Mr. Denoon read a letter of appreciation from Mr. Shearer for the contribution made to the funds of the Moral and Social Reform Association. Mr. Denoon intimated that it was his purpose to hold Communion Service at Cape George on the first Sabbath in August and asked that an Elder be appointed to accompany him which was done. Mr. Denoon read a letter he had received from Rev. J.G. Shearer with reference to Women's Moral Reform Council and asking that an Agent be appointed to represent the congregation of St. James as correspondent and who would assist in the rescue of girls. It was agreed that Mr. C. N. Wilkie's name be entered as such Agent and sent on to the Board of Moral Social Reform & Evangelism 436 Confederation Life Building, Toronto

After some discussion it was unanimously agreed that the following Resolution be incorporated in our Session Minutes:

Whereas owing to the remodelling and

reseating of St. James Church it was impossible for the congregation to meet there for public worship for some time, and whereas on invitation of our Baptist friends we have been using their cosy and comfortable Church for our regular Sabbath Service since the 2nd Sabbath in April, be it therefore resolved that we as a Session and in the name of the Congregation extend hearty thanks to our brethren for their generous hospitality and express appreciation of the spirit which prompted so brotherly a courtesy.

Be it further resolved that we not only give permanent form to this expression of our gratitude and appreciation by recording the resolution in the minutes of our Session but that a copy of it be read from the pulpit of the Baptist Church on the Sabbath preceding the discontinuance of the present arrangement.

A.C. Thomison, Clerk

J.H. Stewart. Chairman of Comm.

There being no other business before the Session closed with prayer by Moderator.

A.H. Denoon, Moderator

A.C. Thomison, Clerk

Music at St. James *continued from page 11*

Peter does the arranging for the group, and the men work hard to get the blending just right. Because the group doesn't make notes of these arrangements, and because memories sometimes fail to kick in when most necessary, many reviews are in fact rearrangements of previously-done pieces, and it isn't unusual for the group to incorporate last minute alterations just minutes before the service.

The guitar group really enjoys the playing, the fun, and the relaxation that making music together provides. Few congregations are as blessed as we are, to have so much talent available for our enjoyment on Sunday mornings.

Gord Morrison

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