



CONNECTIONS

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

By the Outreach & Communications Committee

Volume 5 Issue 4 • Winter 2011

“For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.” (Isaiah 9:6)

Dear Friends in Christ,

My cousin gave birth to a daughter last spring. Marley's arrival was a wonderful event and a celebration within the whole family. Even now, six months later, my inbox is filled each week with pictures and stories of what Marley is doing in her life. The birth of a child forever changes a family.

I'm certain that the family of Jesus rejoiced at his birth as families do at the arrival of a new child. But the angels, the shepherds and everyday people also celebrated because of Jesus' birth. For the child born that day was the saviour of the world, a light to the nations, and a hope for all peoples. As one writer has said, “the hinge of history is on the door of the stable of Bethlehem.”

Christmas is the time of year in which we celebrate the birth of Jesus. We mark the occasion with the singing of carols, the exchanging of presents, special decorations and family meals. Even though the historical event may be some two thousand years in the past, we still feel the excitement and hope that comes from Jesus' birth. His arrival forever changed human history.

This Christmas, as we celebrate the wonder of God's actions, let us join together during times of worship and praise God for the child born in Bethlehem. Let us tell the whole world of our joy at knowing the tiny baby who has come to save us and bring us back to God.

May God continue to bless our 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*



ADVENT & CHRISTMAS

Sunday, November 27, 2011 • 10:30 AM

First Sunday of Advent: We light the candle of hope as we begin preparing our hearts and minds for the coming of the Saviour of the World.

Sunday, December 4, 10:30 AM

Second Sunday of Advent: White Gift Service. A chance to bring a gift to mark the season of preparation for the joy of Christmas.

Sunday, December 11, 10:30 AM

Third Sunday of Advent: We welcome our friends from St. Paul the Apostle Anglican Church to a joint service as the candle of joy.

Sunday, December 18, 10:30 AM

Fourth Sunday of Advent: As we light the candle of love we celebrate the wonder of Christmas through song and story.

Saturday, December 24 • CHRISTMAS EVE

4:00 PM • Christmas Eve Service is at St. David's in Cape George

7:00 PM • Family Service at St. James

9:00 PM • Communion Service at St. James ending with the lighting of candles.

Sunday, December 25, 2011 • CHRISTMAS

10:30 AM • The Christmas Celebration continues with carols and lessons for the season.

BEHIND THE SCENES WITH The Social Justice Committee

When speaking to any of the members of the Social Justice Committee it is evident that they are all passionate about the work of the Committee and dedicated to helping alleviate the problems of the most vulnerable in our community. Any one of the members, Michèle Ashby, Sara Avmaat, Anne Camozzi, Barbara DeMarsh, Dolna Garbary, Sarita Ghore, Hope Graham, Judith Jowett, Muriel Kennedy, Mike MacDonald, Gina Sampson, Pat Skinner, Rev. Peter Smith or Fran Wittgens, will gladly discuss the initiatives that they are currently working on or the vision that they have for even more involvement.

The Committee was formed two years ago after much discussion at St. James about a number of areas that needed to be addressed in Antigonish. Their mandate evolved from these discussions and their approach became "think globally and act locally". The Committee, together and individually, is dedicated to educating themselves about topics of world concern and encouraging the congregation to learn about these concerns and act on them. To this end they are committed to organizing events such as the annual Earth Day service and sponsoring speakers on a variety of topics throughout the year.

The Committee, after much discussion and research into social justice in our community broke down the needs into six general categories:

POVERTY, ENVIRONMENT, EQUALITY, PEACE,
HEALTH AND EDUCATION

They decided to concentrate on one area at a time. Their first focus is poverty issues, specifically food, housing and transportation concerns in our community. The members of the Committee can speak on any of these issues with authority as they have involved themselves with the organizations that work on the front lines of these concerns. The Antigonish Poverty Reduction Coalition, the Women's Resource Centre, the Antigonish Emergency Fuel Fund represent some of the initiatives that benefit from their involvement.

They introduced the Social Justice Gift Book at St. James last year and the support received prompted the Committee to expand the number of agencies needing support from five to ten. A tax-deductible donation to

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Sunday School News

On Nov 13th the Sunday school children and youth led the morning worship service. The congregation enjoyed special music, dramatic readings, prayers and hymns. The Sunday school enjoys taking an active part in the worship service and looks forward to those times when they can share their gifts and talents with the congregation.

Dec 4th, White Gift Sunday, the congregation is invited to join us in the hall following morning worship for the annual packing of the Christmas cheer bags for food bank recipients. Together we will enjoy a time of fellowship along with pizza, cake and refreshments while we pack the bags with personal care items.

Dec 11th - Sunday school children from St. Paul's will join us for a special time of cookie decorating and craft making. Dec 18th, 25th and Jan 1st will be inter-generational Sundays. There will be no Sunday school time. This allows everyone the opportunity to remain in church for the entire service. Sunday school will resume Jan 8th.

We would like to thank the congregation for their help and support for our Sunday school program and in all our projects that we undertake. We would like to wish everyone a very Merry Christmas.

St. James Sunday School



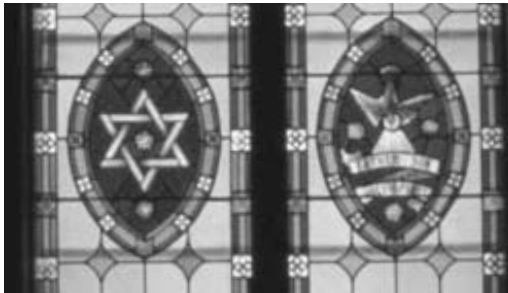
**Rev. Dr. A.H.
Denoon's**

great grandson,
Jamie Patterson,
and great great
granddaughter,
Heather Patterson,
visited St. James,
October 30, 2011.

*Rev. Denoon was
the minister at
St. James from
1909-1914 and
at Trinity United
from 1925-1930.*

Youth Service

Sunday, November 13, 2011



Keeping Pace with Changing Times

In September, the Finance and Stewardship Committee issued interim statements to the members along with a request for members to review their donations in light of our rising costs. We're all aware of how prices are creeping up on everything and the expenses of the church are no exception. At inflation rates of approximately 2% annually for the last number of years, it may just be a couple of cents here and there but over time those increases accumulate. Did you know that something that cost \$20.00 in 2002 would cost about \$23.60 in 2010?

With the possibility of a deficit for the current year (something that hasn't happened at St. James since

2005), the Committee is planning a series of appeals to encourage members to increase their donations in light of 'creeping inflation'. If you are in the habit of placing a \$20 bill in your envelope, consider tossing a few loonies in with it!

Something else to remember is the favorable income tax impact of charitable donations. Since 2010, for every \$2.00 contributed to St. James, \$1.00 is given back to the giver by the government income tax credits. Or, another way to think of that - When you give \$2.00 to St. James - one of those dollars comes from you, the other dollar comes from the government!

Twelve Local Days of Christmas

On the 1st day of Christmas my true love sent to me
Green transportation for free

On the 2nd day of Christmas my true love sent to me
Two veggie boxes

On the 3rd day of Christmas my true love sent to me
Three homemade crafts

On the 4th day of Christmas my true love sent to me
Four gift books

On the 5th day of Christmas my true love sent to me
Clothes sweatshop free

On the 6th day of Christmas my true love sent to me
Fine local honey

On the 7th day of Christmas my true love sent to me
Support for local art

On the 8th day of Christmas my true love sent to me
Green affordable housing

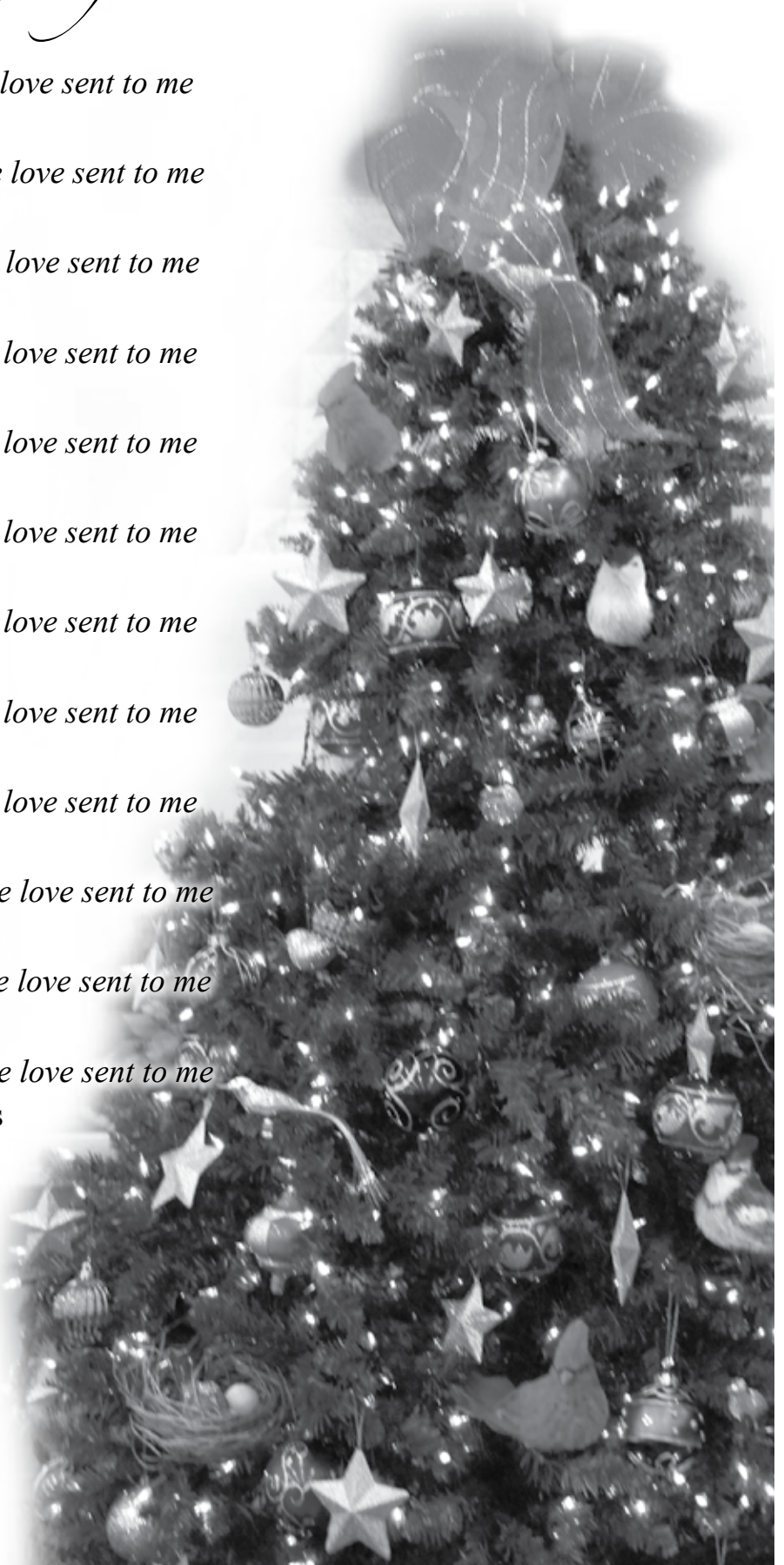
On the 9th day of Christmas my true love sent to me
Nine special visits

On the 10th day of Christmas my true love sent to me
Ten local turkeys

On the 11th day of Christmas my true love sent to me
Eleven sleds a sledding

On the 12th day of Christmas my true love sent to me
A potluck with twelve neighbours

Lyrics by the fun folk at the Liten
Up Christmas Gathering of the
Anti Poverty Coalition Nov, 2011.
Sponsored by Antigone Sustainable
Development, & partners ACALA,
the APRC, St. James Social Justice
Committee, and the Food Security
Coalition. Stay tuned, soon to be
released by ACALA film students.



by Rev. Peter Smith

The Tuesday after Anniversary Sunday, Mavis Murray called me to say that she was familiar with the names on the quilt and they were from Trinity United

I was in touch with the grand daughter who had presented the quilt to us and she forwarded me some material which when put together with what Mavis and Bob found and what we had assumed supports our idea that the quilt was presented to Mrs. Denoon by Trinity United in 1925. The St. James Church Council decided at the meeting on November 15th

that with the blessing of the Denoon family we present the quilt to Trinity United Church in New Glasgow.

The Rev. A.H. Denoon was the minister at our church and stories of him and his son (who was a medical missionary who spent time at St. David's in Cape George) were shared during this fall. While the quilt may not be a part of our past the connections we have made with the Denoon family have helped us better appreciate and remember some of our rich history at St. James.

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BEHIND THE SCENES WITH The Social Justice Committee

one of these organizations can serve as a tribute or a memorial to a loved one, an excellent substitute to celebrate a special birthday or anniversary in lieu of a gift. A recent article in the Casket introduced the Gift Book project to our wider community and it is hoped that support for this initiative will garner much needed financial aid, particularly as we approach winter and the Christmas season where so many of the issues become even more urgent.

All of the members of the Committee are dedicated to their mandate; we focus here on just some of their members:

Gina Sampson, Chair of the Committee, is steadfast in her commitment to the goals of the Committee and devotes a great deal of her time to those goals. As a busy mother of two young school age children she is involved with their extra curricular activities as well as giving a great deal of her time on the Steering Committee of the Antigonish Poverty Reduction Coalition and as a member of Antigonish Sustainable Development.

Michèle Ashby is well known to the congregation for her involvement in our choir. She serves on a number of committees including Guess Who's Coming to Dinner, the Tuesday Hot Lunch Program and the UCW. Michèle is a retired member of the military and can be counted on to take part in Remembrance Day commemorations at St. James and in the community. Michèle is pleased to have recently received her St. John Ambulance Instructor's certification in First Aid and CPR and invites anyone who is interested in training in this vital area to talk to her.

Barb De Marsh has been employed by GASHA as a Seniors Health Social Worker for over three years.

She helps seniors stay in their homes as long as possible as safely as possible. Her work takes her through the District to see people at home or in community hospitals in order to address their concerns. She also works one day a week in the Dialysis Unit at St. Martha's Hospital. In her job she works closely with some of the issues the Committee tries to address.

Mike MacDonald is an architect and although his various projects result in a great deal of travel he still manages to find time to devote to a number of local social issues. He is the Chair of the Board of the Antigonish Emergency Fuel Fund, providing help to those in the community needing assistance with fuel and electricity costs during the winter. This is an initiative that Mike was instrumental in starting. He is also involved with the work of the Women's Resource Centre as well as being a busy member of the Social Justice Committee.

Fran Wittgens, a long time member of St. James, is involved with a number of activities at the church such as the Discussion and Meditation Groups and is very often seen at special services and events as our "roving photographer". Fran is responsible for many of the photographs that appear in our editions of Connections.

The Committee has addressed their interest in the environment by planning our annual Earth Day services at St. James as well as starting a "green note" in our weekly bulletin to educate us on ways to preserve our environment. The upcoming Celebration of Trees is already on the agenda for Earth Day 2012.

Any one of the members of the Social Justice Committee is always willing to discuss their work. The enthusiasm will be evident.

Much of the material in this article was taken from the website of St. James and if you wish to learn more about the important work on the Committee simply visit our website at:

www.stjamesuc.com/sojust.htm



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What do you see from your kitchen window?



PHOTO: FRAN WITTGENS

For me, I see the tree that we planted over 20 years ago.

As it grows and fills our inner and outer landscape, trees are an essential part of our lives. This year for our Earth Day Service in April, we're celebrating trees.

We will have a chance to share your own stories, pictures, poems, and prayers. There will be a dramatic reading based on Shel Silverstein's *The Giving Tree*. A special Hindi dance will be done, as well as original art and photography amongst many other offerings.

Your contributions will be a valued part of this celebration. Please turn them in via the Offering plate or the Office as soon as possible to help our planning.

Thank you, Fran Wittgens
and the Social Justice Committee



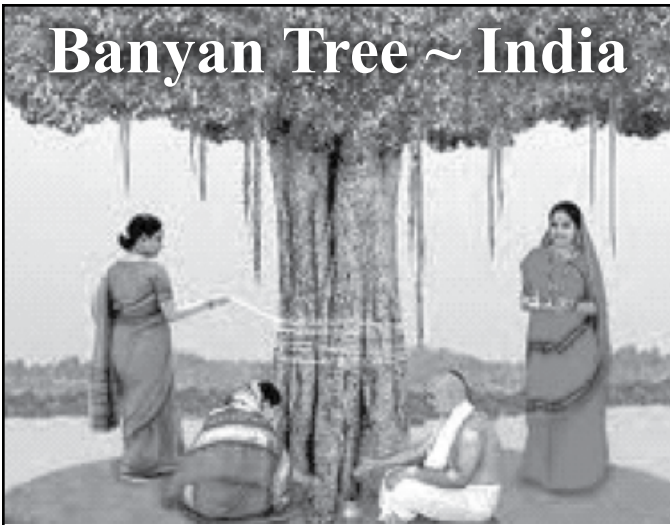
The Bell Choir is hoping to help ring in the season on Dec 11. They have been busy working on beautiful renditions of We Three Kings and the Halleluiah Chorus.

From the Archives Concern for the Youth of 1877

From the Minutes of the Minutes of the Session of St. James Presbyterian Church February 23, 1877.

Mr. J MacDonald and Mr. Charles Harrington reported that they had carried out the instructions of the Session and seen the young men who had been absenting themselves from the sacraments of the Lord's Supper, and that they all promised to be present today. The young men were Thomas Trotter, George Bishop, Grant Kirk, William Cunningham, Perley Cunningham and they all appeared accordingly before the Session who proceeded to deal with them each separately. The reason assigned by them all for their not observing the ordinance of the Lord's Supper when opportunity offered was that they were not fit. They believed they had made a mistake in going forward at all or in applying for admission into the fellowship of the Church. The Session tried to ascertain their present views and feelings. George Bishop and Grant Kirk affirmed very hard and held in their hardness they were living in total neglect of prayer, had not prayed for many months. Grant Kirk requested that his name be taken off the Communion Roll, and this affirmed to be the decision of others of them. William Cunningham manifested some sorrow for his past conduct and tried by God's Grace to be more watchful and live differently in future. No others expressed any feeling of sorrow. Several of them affirmed to be addicted to profane swearing. The Session endeavoured to bring them to right views and a right state of feeling but with the exception of William Cunningham, apparently without effect. After earnestly exhorting them the Moderator prayed with and for them and they were dismissed.

Banyan Tree ~ India



Trees in India hold historic, religious and cultural importance and are always linked with immortality and wisdom. Trees are integral part of Indian culture and heritage. One of such trees of importance is the Banyan tree which is the National Tree of India. The Vat, Bargad or Banyan tree is one of the most venerated trees in India. It has the ability to survive and grow for centuries and is often compared to the shelter given by God to his devotees. It also symbolizes the personality of a benevolent ruler or head of family who nourishes and looks after all those under his care.

The Sages and Seers sat under the shade of this tree to seek enlightenment, held discourses and conducted Vedic rituals. In Hindu mythology, the tree is called Kalpavriksha, the tree that provides fulfillment of wishes and other material gains. It symbolizes Trimurti – Lord Vishnu is believed to be the bark, Lord Brahma, the roots, and Lord Shiva, the branches. The banyan tree is said to have nourished mankind with its 'milk' before the advent of grain and other food. According to the Agni Purana, it symbolizes fertility and is worshipped by those who want children. For the same reason, it is never cut. Even its leaves, which are used as cattle fodder, are broken only when there is a famine.

This tree is also sacred to the Buddhists. After attaining enlightenment, Lord Buddha is believed to have sat under a banyan tree for seven days, absorbed in his new found realization. The worship of the tree is also represented in a Buddhist sculpture with its long hanging roots dropping gold pieces in vessels placed below.

The Banyan tree also has several medicinal properties. Its leaf, bark, seeds and fig are used for the variety of disorders like diarrhea, dental, diabetes and urine disorders. The wood of the Banyan tree is used in making door panels, boxes and the other items. Its bark is used for making paper and ropes. The milky latex that comes from its leaves and stems is used in many Ayurvedic medicines.

In India, Hindu married women observe a whole day of fasting and perform pooja of the Banyan Tree, urging the tree to grant a long, healthy and happy life to their husbands and loved ones.

Article courtesy of Hemlata Ghore (Sarita)

Holly Tea & Sale 2011



The UCW held their annual Holly Tea and Sale on Saturday, November 19th, attracting a great crowd and very good sales. Every year the support from the members of the congregation, as well as the greater community, assures a very successful event. The bake table was overflowing and the donations to the New To You table resulted in so much merchandise that the women kept refilling the table making for a wonderful selection of "bargains."

Some years the sales are up and some down, this year they made about the same as last year - a little over \$4000.00 - an impressive total.

It was necessary to move The Children's Corner to the Nursery because of repairs to the Sunday School area upstairs. It worked out very well and Ida Sarty said that they would like to make this their permanent Holly Tea & Sale home for the children's activities as they felt they were a part of everything for the first time.

*Merry Christmas to All
& A Happy New Year!*

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