



# CONNECTIONS

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

By the Outreach & Communications Committee

Volume 7 Issue 3 • Fall 2013

*(The Lord says) See, the former things have taken place, and new things I declare; before they spring into being I announce them to you.*

-Isaiah 42:9

## Dear Friends in Christ,

It has been incredible these past few months to watch the renovations taking place at St. James. The old walls were taken down and then slowly the form of the new rooms began to take shape. With each day that passes the vision we have been working toward in this process is growing closer to becoming a reality.

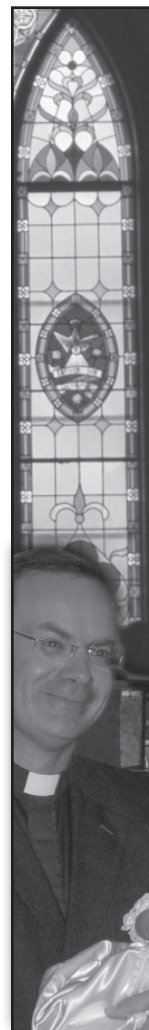
Now the journey to get us here has not always been simple or quick. We spent a great deal of time preparing and ensuring that we could go forward with the proposed changes to our building. Years of prayerful discussion and work allowed us to understand how our facility was influencing our mission and vision at St. James and permitted us to imagine how different our life together would be in a new physical structure.

Now that we are getting close to completion I must admit to being a bit impatient because I am eager to see us living out that renewed vision of worship, service, and community. As the walls go up in the kitchen, the hall, and meeting rooms, I want to see meals being served, fellowship taking place, and our church boldly sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ. I can not wait for us to continue the ministry we have been doing as well as beginning the new things that will soon be possible.

I have faith that time is almost at hand. Before too long the reconstruction will be finished and a new era will begin for us at St. James United Church. For I believe that God has richly blessed our life together and is calling us to grow in both our faith and witness by welcoming new people and beginning new ways of living and serving as disciples of Jesus.

May God continue to bless our congregation and the United Church of Canada.

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



## ST. JAMES HOLY BAPTISM

*Austin James Farrell son of  
Laura Venedam and Colin Farrell  
baptized on June 30, 2013 at  
St. James.*

*Evan James  
Stewart  
MacKenzie  
son of Shelley  
(MacDonald)  
and Jonathan  
MacKenzie  
baptized  
September 1,  
2013 at  
St. David's.*



## A Word About My Upcoming Sabbatical

*Rev. Peter Smith*

The Bible tells us that during his ministry Jesus went by himself to mountaintops and lakesides to pray and meditate. Good spiritual health means taking time away from normal routines to be with God and for those serving as ministers in the church that is often difficult to do given the pressures and schedules of caring for and leading within a congregation. The policy of the United Church is to provide sabbatical time of no less than three months for ministers who have served five consecutive years in a congregation so that there is time for spiritual renewal, study, rest, and reflection.

Over the last year I have been working with the Ministry and Personnel Committee and the Church Council to prepare for a sabbatical in order to refresh and rejuvenate my ministry with St. James. Through careful consideration, discussion with colleagues and congregations who have benefited from sabbaticals, and a great deal of prayer, I developed a proposal which was accepted by Council to be away from the start of January until the end of March 2014.

During that time I will be on retreat, taking courses, and visiting outreach missions and congregations within the Maritimes. The aim of my sabbatical is to build on my skills and knowledge as a minister and spend time in prayer and meditation, all the while considering the ministry which happens at St. James and St. David's. My intention is to return at the end of March better able and equipped to be your minister in the years to come.

Some of the specifics have yet to be finalized but the Church Council is working to ensure that our rich worship life continues and that pastoral care is available during the time I am away.

## The Senior Choir

The first thing you need to know about the Senior Choir is that it is not just for seniors. We have all ages represented from young university students to our older voices. We would welcome some of our youth as well if they were interested. The mix of ages is important to the continuing of our vitality.

If you have ever wondered if you could be in the choir, well the answer is yes and now is a good time to try it. We have anthems approximately three times a month with a few more for special seasons. There are other groups that also sing in the other slots, such as the Ladies Chorus, the Men's Choir, the Guitar Group or the Handbell Choir. If you have an interest in joining these other groups, that is also a possibility for you.

*Continued on page 5*

## Adopt-A-Highway Project

Mark your calendar for Saturday October 26th, when the St James United Church congregation (sponsored by your Social Justice Committee) is invited to work on our Adopt-A-Highway Project. We are responsible for the interchange at Highway 104 and Route 7. Garbage bags and safety vests are supplied.

We meet at Bennett's Market at 10 a.m. sharp. Bennett's have kindly agreed to let us park at the back of their lot. They will also be supplying some delicious snacks! This project is open to all members of our congregation who are 16 years of age and older. All you need is warm clothing, work gloves, sturdy waterproof footwear and a great attitude.

Sign up lists will be available soon and we'd love to see some new faces! Please consider donating a couple of hours of your time to this worthwhile project. If you have any questions don't hesitate to ask Michèle Ashby (232-3473).

# Sunday School: Welcome Back!



Sunday School has started for another year. Children in grades 4 and under are in the Junior class and children in grades 5 and up are in the Senior class. The Senior class will also be getting together for youth group evening activities on the third weekend of every month. They have already enjoyed a barbecue and bonfire. The whole Sunday School will be choosing a special fundraising project for Christmas and will also be taking part in services throughout the year.

We are very excited to have two St. Francis Xavier students helping us out this year too, Christina Chediac and Shushang Dai. We are looking forward to having the new spaces available and being able to resume nursery services when the renovations are complete.

*Linda MacDougall Penner*

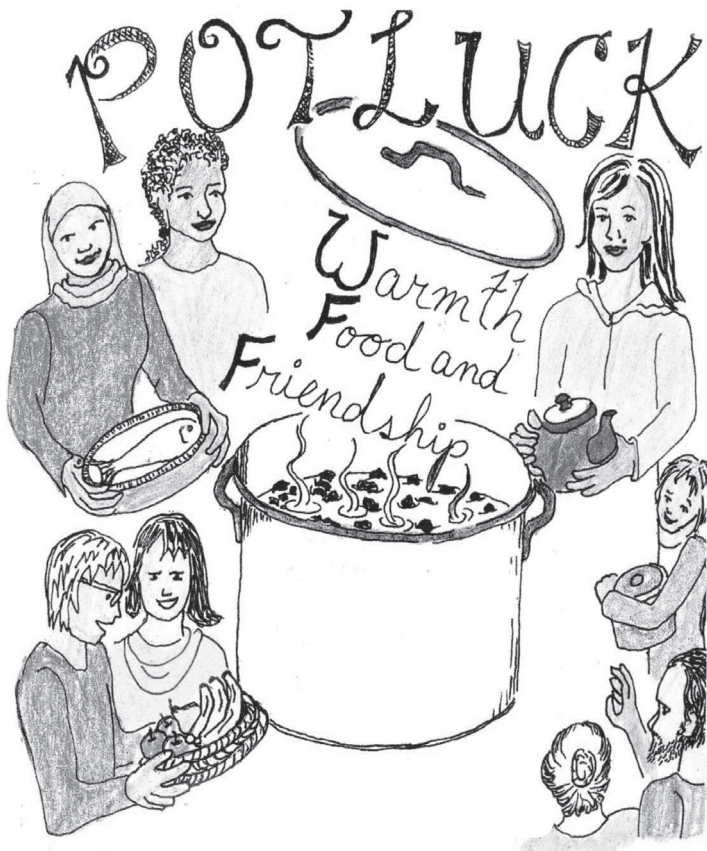
## Antigonish International

There has been considerable activity among the planners of the Antigonish International Potluck group. After five successful potlucks last year, the group is fine tuning the events hoping to continue to make Antigonish a welcoming place for the international community.

We have new members on our team as well as new partners. This year the StFX Service Learning Department as well as the Downtown Business Association have approached us to become involved, and we expect both these associations to be mutually beneficial.

While we're waiting for our hall and kitchen to be available, we are planning to hold smaller potlucks at the People's Place Library, Community Room. There we will share fruit, cheese and desserts while hearing the stories of the individuals who have chosen to come to Nova Scotia.

The date for the first potluck is Oct. 29th at 6pm. The space is limited to around 50 so we suggest you arrive in good time.



*Fran Wittgens*



# **St. James United Church Capital Campaign Committee Report to the Congregation**

*September 2013*

The Capital Campaign Committee has been diligently working to ensure that the construction phase of the project is completed, and all details are managed properly. To date the hall floor has been installed, and the ceiling has been put in place. New lighting, new windows, new wainscoting, and the new door from the new accessibility entrance have all been completed. The multi-purpose room is well under way and the choir area and accessible washrooms are being worked on.

Our kitchen has been expanded and is well under construction, and the offices are being reconfigured. The sanctuary work will include a refinished floor, as well as a new paint job on the walls, trim and ceiling. A new lift in the narthex will facilitate accessibility from the street. There is also a new ramp outside as part of the accessibility effort.

Some items have come up which were not planned for, and could not have been foreseen. Fortunately we have provided contingency funds in the budget and so far are able to cover these costs.

These include new hall windows, extra electrical work in the basement, some asbestos removal, roof shingles, fire alarm system, and a brick chimney which had to be dismantled and removed from the attic. We are happy to report all this has

been completed without going over our budget.

Our schedule has been a major part of our concern. Obviously everything which happens in the church and hall are subject to those spaces actually being available at the required times. Our hope is that the hall work will be completed to the point where we can hold services in there after September 29th. When work on the sanctuary begins, that space will be completely unavailable until completion.

Our aim is to have the kitchen ready by early November. The offices and hallways, meeting rooms and washrooms will follow. The overall project will be completed by mid December. Plans for an official ceremony / celebration will be announced as we get closer to these dates.

This report may be a bit dated. Our report is written several weeks before publication.

Please feel free to contact me or any member of the committee if you have questions.

Respectfully submitted,

*Brian MacLeod*

*Chair*



# Accessibility Grant Awarded to St. James

St. James United Church received some very heartening news in the late summer. Efforts to obtain funding for the two fully accessible washrooms for the hall have been rewarded, and we have been given a Nova Scotia Community Accessibility grant of two thirds of the overall costs of the project, up to a maximum of \$10,000.

Especially glad was the accessibility subgroup of the Capital Campaign Committee, which has worked on assessing and communicating the many features needed when opening a space to be as barrier free as possible. This committee includes Dale Archibald, Rev. Peter Smith, Brian MacLeod, Jeniffer Hilling, Lori Young and Fran Wittgens.

Jeniffer and Lori have given tirelessly of their expertise as occupational therapists and the church community is blessed to have had them on this project. It was Jeniffer who researched this funding opportunity in February, when we first began the abilities project. It took the group five months to assemble all the required documents, the most inspiring of which came from the more than 15 outside groups that use the hall. They each gave testimony to the invaluable community service St. James provides and to their anticipation of even wider use once our facility is barrier free. This is indeed a time to treasure our place in this community.

*Fran Wittgens*



## Senior Chior

*Continued from page 2*

We sing in four part harmony but that doesn't mean you have to be able to read music. We don't all have that knowledge. The parts are easy to learn just by hearing them. If you wonder about what part you would sing, not to worry, we can decide for you. It all depends on your voice, whether it's high or low. You would then sit with the group who have the same range. Every member in each section would be happy to help you until you get the hang of it.

We practice once a week, on Thursday evening at 6:30 in the sanctuary. The Women's Chorus starts at 6:00 and the Men's Choir at 7:30. We have a lot of practices before we actually sing in the service so there will be time to learn each piece. Not every anthem is new. We try to mix in our old favourites as well. Our practices are a mixture of serious work and light-hearted fun. There might be a modern composition, a spiritual or even some classics. Our anthems also vary in tempo: some fast, some slow. We like to use as many styles as possible. Once in a while we do a piece in French or Latin. We have a lot of fun learning them as most of us don't speak those languages.

We always get a warm feeling when we are complimented on our anthems. It makes all our hard work worthwhile. It happens a lot.

We sit in the choir loft every week, except when the men sing, and we help the congregation with the hymns and psalm responses. You get a whole new perspective on the service from up there. Just seeing Andrew's mural on the back wall every week is worth sitting there for.

I hope I have explained all you need to know about the choir and that I may have piqued your interest. We hope to see you just walk through the door one day and say, "I'm ready!"

*Christine Morrison*

# Mark Your Calendars!

**S**t. James will not be holding its annual fall yard sale due to the renovations and lack of a convener. We're sorry for any inconvenience this has caused. It is hoped that by next April or so, we'll have a humdinger of a spring sale.

In the meantime, the Holly Tea and Sale will definitely be held as it is the major fund-raising event for the UCW. As yet we're not sure whether the tea and sale will be in our church on Nov. 16 or at our alternate venue, the Antigonish Legion, on Nov. 23. We're going to need plenty of help this year, especially if it's held at the Legion what with transporting all sorts of boxes and supplies. (I hope all you men have made a mental note of that.)

In the meantime, start sorting through your cupboards and drawers. Items for the new-to-you table must be new or in like-new condition. Everyone always has things tucked away that have never used or only used once or twice.

Look for regular notices in the church bulletin regarding the sale in the next few weeks. If you have any questions, please call Barbara Gardiner at 863-1641.



*Memories of the Highland Games closing service reception*

# Vitamin F

**W**hy do we have a variety of friends who are all so different in character? How is it possible that we can get along with them all?

I think that each one helps to bring out a different part of us. With one of them I am polite. With another I joke, and with another I can sit down and talk about serious matters.

With another I laugh a lot. I listen to one friend's problems. Then I listen to another one's advice for me.

My friends are like pieces of a jigsaw puzzle. When completed, they form a treasure box. A treasure box of friends! There are some friends who understand me better than I understand myself.

They're friends who support me through good days and bad.

Doctors tell us that friends are good for our health. Dr. Oz calls them Vitamin F (for Friends) and counts the benefits of friends as essential to our well being. Research shows that people in strong social circles have less risk of depression and strokes.

If you enjoy Vitamin F constantly you can feel up to 30 years younger than your real age. The warmth of friendship stops stress and even in your most intense moments, it decreases the chance of a cardiac arrest or stroke by 50%.

I'm so happy that I have a stock of Vitamin F!

In summary, we should value our friends and keep in touch with them. We should try to see the funny side of things and laugh together and pray for each other in the tough moments.

Some of my friends are friends on line. I know I am part of their lives because their names appear on my computer screen every day and I feel blessed that they care as much for me as I care for them.

Thank you for being one of my Vitamins!

Thank You Vitamin F.

*Fran Wittgens*



# Guess Who's Coming to Dinner

**G**uess Who's Coming to Dinner is back by popular demand! This year's dinner will take place October 20th, so please mark your calendars now. If you're not familiar with this event, it's designed to encourage members of our congregation to mingle with other congregants they may not normally have a chance to get to know. Children, spouses and partners of the congregation are welcome.

Participants sign up as either guests or hosts.

*Welcome Christina!*



**M**y name is Christina Metcalf and I hail from the small coastal community of Kennebunk, Maine. The decision I made to come to Antigonish in 2011 and pursue a degree in Human Nutrition was more or less a leap of faith.

While here in Antigonish I have recently begun volunteering with the Hot Lunch program on Tuesdays. This program is a wonderful opportunity to help and it is truly a rewarding experience. I have met wonderful people throughout the community. I also recently joined the Antigonish Internal Potluck committee and have met a wonderful group of men and women with a common goal of welcoming and integrating newcomers to our community.

Thanks to the wonderful people and great initiatives I have been involved with thus far, I am so happy I made the decision to come to Antigonish.

Hosts accommodate between 2 and 10 diners at their home for a simple family-style meal. Neither party has any idea who the other is until they meet for the evening. During the sign-up process guests can indicate any personal issues relating to transportation, dietary requirements, allergies and/or physical limitations. All can be accommodated.

Members of the group whose names are listed below are happy to answer questions. Please don't hesitate to talk to any one of us.

Michèle Ashby (232-3473)

Brenda Botterill (867-1095)

Pamela Cunningham (863-3816)

Joyce Hilling (863-5881)

Doug Hunter (863-6737)

Randy Lauff (863-8341)

Joyce Stephen (863-1580)

*Meditation Group Welcomes All*



**W**hile the fall has its nip and tug with the many new and continuing activities, it's good to know there's a group for any and all seeking a quiet space in their week. The meditation group meets on Tuesdays at the Alaya Ch'an Centre and Thursdays at Beryl MacIntosh's. The time is the same, 3:45 p.m. for both. The downtown one is convenient with parking at Shoppers. Beryl's promises a beautiful drive to Jintown and a very calming environment to meditate.

The group has been meeting since 1994 and continues to see new members, many who have meditated in other places and traditions. Call 863-3546 if you want more information or wish to carpool to Beryl's.

*Fran Wittgens*

## FROM THE ARCHIVES

# The beginnings of the new Presbyterian Church Building 153 years ago

A meeting duly called of the Presbyterian Congregation at Antigonish was held in the Church this 30th day of January, 1860. The meeting was constituted with prayer. Rev: Thomas Downie was chosen to be Chairman after which the business of the day was commenced by brief but very appropriate addresses by Rev: Thomas Downie and Robert Trotter Esq.

1st. Resol. Moved by Robert Trotter Esq. and seconded by Jas. Burnside and all but unanimously passed that a New Presbyterian Church be built at this place.

2nd. It was agreed that nine building committee men be appointed (There followed the names of the nine appointees)

3rd. Moved by David Stewart, seconded by Robt. Trotter and passed that the above New Church be made large enough to comfortably accommodate five hundred persons.

4th. Moved by Robert Trotter seconded by Hugh MacDonald Esq. and passed that not over the sum of ten or twelve hundred pounds be expended in erecting the new church.

5th. The question put and passed that the funds for this purpose be raised by subscription but on that mode failing that the same shall be raised by assessment.

6th. Agreed that the payments by the Congregation for the New Church be made by three equal annual installments commencing with the first payment on 1st September 1860.

7th. Moved by Hugh MacDonald seconded by Jas. Burnside and passed that the trustees dispose of the Old Presbyterian Church at Antigonish to the best advantage possession given to the purchaser somewhat near the completion of the New Church.

Agreeably to the fifth resolution a subscription list was opened and the sum of eight hundred and nineteen pounds was subscribed and the meeting was then dismissed.

### Building Committee Meeting

At a Building Committee meeting held in the Church on the evening of 30th January 1860 all members of the committee present except Jas. Taylor who left before the business was closed.

It was agreed the size of the new Church be as follows:

1st. 68 sixty eight feet long, 45 forty five feet wide, 24 twenty four feet high including sill & plate.

2nd. That the tower project three feet from the building

3rd. That a spire be preferred to a dome.

4th. That a Gothic order be observed on outside of building.

5th. That for the foundation two courses of cut free stone be under the Church all round, each stone to be of the full dimensions of three feet long and one foot & eight inches wide and ten inches deep or thick.

6th. That John MacDonald Esq. Carpenter draw a plan of above for which he agrees to receive whatever remuneration this committee think proper or if it is not adopted that he receives no compensation.

Adam Kirk, Clerk

(Note: John Mac Donald Carpenter's plans and specifications were accepted at a meeting on February 27, 1860 with some changes concerning the cornices and the size and quality of some nails. The New Church was built and opened in the fall of 1862 a 151 years ago.)



## CONNECTIONS

A Newsletter for St. James United Church

By the Outreach & Communications Committee

Vol. 7 Issue 3 • Fall 2013

St. James United Church • 197 Main Street, Antigonish, NS  
Phone: (902) 863-2001 • Email: [st.james@ns.sympatico.ca](mailto:st.james@ns.sympatico.ca)

[www.stjamesuc.com](http://www.stjamesuc.com)