



CONNECTIONS

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

By the Outreach & Communications Committee

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*So let us not grow weary in doing
what is right,
for we will reap at harvest time,
if we do not give up.*

~ Galatians 6:9



*Confirmation
Sunday 2017*



Dear Friends in Christ,

Hope and I planted some sunflower seeds and put them in the window when the weather was still cold and miserable. The tiny little seeds seemed so small and insignificant when we buried them in the soil. For a while nothing happened but after time green shoots pushed out of the ground and then gradually those shoots grew taller and leaves appeared. They were slow in developing at first but then as the sun strengthened they shot up and now have brilliant yellow flowers which eagerly follow the sunlight.

As followers of Jesus, we are called to do things which may seem insignificant- being kind to others, being generous with our gifts, sharing what we believe. Yet in faith we trust that from those small things God can bring about something great for God calls us to plant seeds in our lives through words spoken in love and by actions grounded in grace.

The truth is that sometimes we'll see the new thing God does through our efforts and other times we'll not witness the transformation from a simple word or action to a changed life. No matter what we should never be discouraged but rather have faith that God will take our faithful service and witness and create something wonderful for our calling is to plant the seeds which have the potential to take root and blossom for all the world to see.

May you find time to enjoy the summer weather and may you see opportunities to sow seeds of kindness and hope through your lives.

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

Sunday School News



Another Sunday school year is coming to a close. The past year our Sunday school was a busy, active place where we gathered on Sunday mornings to listen to and act out favourite Bible stories, pray together, and sing our songs.

On occasion we shared our talents and energy with the rest of the congregation and enjoyed being together when we left to go to our classroom time.



Our time spent in the classroom was at times loud and boisterous but always filled with love and joy.

On Sunday June 18th the Sunday school closing was held. The children took part in the worship service and following the service everyone enjoyed hot dogs, cake, and ice-cream.

We want to wish everyone a safe and joy filled summer.

St. James Sunday School



Thank You from Ida

My time as Christian Education Co-coordinator has come to an end. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the congregation of St. James for allowing me the privilege and honour to have served in this position over the last number of years. The years have certainly flown by.

Words cannot express what it has meant to me. The time spent with the children, youth, Sunday school teachers, and other staff members has enriched my life beyond measure and has helped me become more of the person God has called me to be. As a congregation we are truly blessed to have such remarkable people in our lives.

And so it is with mixed feelings that I say the time has come. I will miss spending the time on Sunday mornings with the children and Judy but know it is time for someone new, someone with fresh ideas and a new vision.

Thank you St. James congregation for all your love and support.

I am truly blessed to belong to a congregation and church as wonderful as St. James.

God Bless

On a Fine May Evening

Betty Webber, Rev. Peter Smith, and Rev. Jim Webber-Cook travelled to Halifax to attend the Atlantic School of Theology Gala on May 5, 2017. They enjoyed a meal with graduating students and supporters of the school and heard Tareq Hadhad tell the story of his family coming to Antigonish and establishing Peace by Chocolate. They were also able to join with others from Antigonish in congratulating Sister Jovita MacPherson, the Director of the Sisters of St. Martha Street Ministry in Halifax, who was named the winner of the Honourable Mayann Francis Faith in Action Award. This award honours exceptional community outreach that is recognized as having provided significant benefit to the wider community. It is given to an individual whose honoured work is driven by his/her religious commitment to the faith tradition to which he/she belongs.

St. James Library News

Among many other books soon to be on the shelves of the library of St. James. Within each section, all books are shelved alphabetically by the author's last name:

- Armstrong, Karen. *Twelve Steps to a Compassionate Life*. 2011. (Section: Spiritual Growth SG)
- Jungel, Eberhard. *Death: The Riddle and the Mystery*. 1974. (Section: Death and Dying DD)
- Pearson, Simon. *The End of the World: From Revelation to Eco-Disaster*. 2006 (Section: Social issues SO)
- Scott, Bernarn Brand. *Re-Imagine the World: An Introduction to the Parables of Jesus*. 2001 (Section: Bible Aids BA)
- Spoto, Donald. *The Hidden Jesus: A New Life*. (Section: Life of Jesus. LJ)

And for the very young among us:

- Munsch, Robert. *Light House: A Story of Remembrance*. 2003
- Fitch, Sheree. *The Hullabaloo Bugaboo Day*. 2014.



Peace by
CHOCOLATE
a Syrian family tradition



A Tribute to Sheila Davison

It was with regret that the Church Council received word at the May meeting that our present organist, Sheila Davison, had tendered her resignation effective the end of August 2017. She will be sorely missed as she has given dedicated service to this congregation for almost thirty years, having been hired for this position in October of 1987. She has always maintained a high standard of excellence in her preparation for morning church service as well as other events happening in the Sanctuary and the Hall. She was always supportive of the choir directors who worked with her over those thirty years. They included Robert Murray, Tara Fenwick, Allyn Chard, and Christine Morrison for the Senior Choir, Gerald Cunningham and Peter Rawding for the Men's Choir, and Karen Crawley for the Junior Choir.

In so many ways she has enriched the music experiences of this congregation with her Preludes, Offertories and Postludes. Her proficiency on both the organ and piano has been very evident at every service of worship and it was a wonderful day for her when the congregation was able to provide a Baby Grand Piano for use for the times when a piano was more suitable than the organ for some hymns and anthems. She has always been a sympathetic accompanist for soloists adapting to their tempos and interpretation of the music. So we will miss her wandering through the many rooms that make up St. James (possibly looking for her keys) with her warm greeting and a smile and her commitment to the musical life and work of this congregation. We wish her all the best in her retirement which she so richly deserves and will look forward to her occasional return to the organ or piano when a substitute is needed.

ADOPT-A-HIGHWAY UPDATE

Our stalwart crew performed an excellent clean up of "our" interchange again on Monday evening, June 5th. Thirteen participants collected 17 bags of garbage, 3 bags of "refundables" and multiple large chunks of tire. Although it was on the chilly side we stayed dry. Once again, we were delighted to have two staff from Tim Horton's assisting us. Our most unusual find was a love letter – complete with full names and a phone number. The question we want answered is – did the writer chicken out and not send it? Or did the recipient callously toss it out their car window? Oh young, unrequited love ...

ADOPT-A-HIGHWAY PROGRAM

If you go to the Nova Scotia Adopt-A-Highway website at www.adoptahighwayns.ca, you'll find that the main photo is of a past St James' litter clean up, followed by this caption: "In Nova Scotia, the program was started in 1997 with an initial 18 volunteer groups. Today, we have over 170 groups who have adopted more than 1000 kilometres of secondary road and eighteen 100-Series Highway Interchange areas (Exits) throughout the province. On average, five to six thousand bags of garbage and recyclable materials are picked up along adopted Nova Scotia highways each year." The website has many features including an interactive map with locations of all the "adopted" highway sites in our province.

I was once again pleased to attend the annual AAH Volunteer Information Session on 8 April – held this year at the Joggins Fossil Institute, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. If you have never had the opportunity to visit this fascinating and educational location, try to make it a priority. Tim and I had been there last summer, but this time I enjoyed a most enlightening personalized tour from the director. Fun Factoid: Who knew that the reason dragonflies used to grow



to over a foot long was because the environment in prehistoric times had far higher levels of oxygen? After an instructive tour of this environmentally friendly and sustainable building we reviewed changes to the AAH program and benefited from some presentations. One keynote speaker was the Waste Reduction Coordinator from the Cumberland Joint Services Management Authority who provided an excellent overview of their programs, and explained how and why they differ from others in the province. We also had a motivating talk from the Marine Policy Coordinator at the Ecology Action Centre. Their programs include coastal livelihoods, sustainable fisheries and aquaculture, fishery policy, and protected marine areas. I brought back some of the handouts she provided to assist consumers in choosing fish raised through responsible fishing and farming practices. These can be found on the bulletin board between the sanctuary and the hall. At the end of the session we enjoyed an exhilarating scramble around the cliff face looking for fossils in the rain!

Some Adopt-A-Highway Thoughts: What Are the Effects of Litter?

- Litter can cause a whole range of problems for everyone in our community. Litter discarded along our roads can travel into our rivers and oceans, where it causes harm to wildlife.
- Litter costs money. Removing litter from the environment costs Nova Scotia taxpayers thousands of dollars each year.
- Litter is a threat to public health. Litter attracts vermin and is a breeding ground for bacteria. Items such as broken glass and syringes can be health hazards in public places.
- Litter can be a fire hazard. Accumulated litter and carelessly discarded cigarette butts are potential fire hazards.
- Litter looks bad. Litter negatively affects a community's image, especially tourist locations.
- Litter attracts litter. Litter sends a message that people do not care for the environment and that it is acceptable to litter – not true!
- Litter can harm or kill wildlife. Plastic litter chokes and suffocates birds and marine life (fish, whales and turtles). Carelessly discarded containers trap small mammals.
- Animals can be attracted to roadsides by litter as a possible food source, and can be hit by cars. Wildlife near the road also creates a hazard for passing motorists, cyclists, and motorcyclists.

Please think twice before you toss anything out your car windows or on the ground, and encourage others to do the same!



Life Lessons from the Benefit Concert

On a Sunday afternoon in early June, the senior choir walked on stage singing Shine, Jesus, Shine. It set the hopeful tone for the Shine Benefit for the Malaysian family who have been attending St. James. The wider Antigonish community had been hearing about the avalanche of medical costs that befell the Eee/Tan family. How their last two months have been framed by hospital stays and other uncertainties. At the benefit that was held on Sunday June 4th in the church hall, Bella Tan gave a moving account of how they have needed to let go and let God do the work. "I'm used to holding my life, but now I have learned I have to let go." The audience was very moved by this major life lesson. First, the family had to delay their return to Malaysia as a result of Bella's high risk pregnancy. When baby James Eee was born prematurely in early April, he needed to stay in the intensive care ward for over a month. While this would be a strain on most families, the Eee/Tan's insurance had run out after three months making the daily costs for specialized service range from \$3500 - \$5500. The family has asked the community for prayers and were overwhelmed at the response so far. \$1800 was raised at the benefit, and there continues to be other opportunities for people to help.

Lenny PD MacDonald as MC had the pulse of the occasion and the crowd. The entertainers were all crowd pleasers, but Lenny made a special point of welcoming the three who had recently moved here, stressing the welcoming hearts that brought us to the event. Stories, poems, Nia, and of course songs were

the signature of these generous performers. Then when reaching the close of the event, Lenny brought back The Lowe Brothers and Sheumais MacLeod, to help him and the audience sing 'With A Little Help From My Friends'. Another life lesson, this time humming in our ears.

GoFundMe APPEAL

On Sunday, June 4, in conjunction with the benefit concert for the Eee/Tan family, a group from St. James launched a GoFundMe page at www.gofundme.com/babyjameseee. We have set a very ambitious goal to try to raise \$50,000.00. This is approximately 25% of the money this family needs to pay off the medical bills incurred by their recent hospitalizations.

If you don't know how GoFundMe works, it uses social media, FaceBook, etc. to spread the net wide! If we can reach at least 1,000 people and persuade each of them to donate a mere \$10.00, we can easily reach 20% of our goal. If each of them reaches out to another few people ... you get the picture. But we need you! Please prayerfully consider contacting everyone in your "address book" and asking them to donate any amount, no matter how small, for this worthy cause. The best way to promote this campaign is to directly ask individuals and organizations to share the information with their family, friends, and contacts. It helps to speak to them in person whenever possible.

Unless you've been in hibernation you're already familiar with this family's heart touching story. But you can read about it on either the GoFundMe page or the FaceBook site that's been set up at "Friends of Baby James Eee".

If at all possible, would you please consider sharing this story with your contacts and friends? For anyone local who doesn't have a credit card or do online banking, donations can also be made at the East Coast Credit Union (Bergengren) here in Antigonish. Just say the money is for the "James Eee Benefit Account". Thank you so much for considering this appeal.



Ye Olde Stump Frolic 2017



“How can I support thee? Let me count the ways.”

Let me ask you - how do you support St. James? Yes I am talking financially. Are you money or a cheque in the church envelope only when you attend? How about the monthly PAR program which sees that your donation is there even when you cannot be. Both are excellent ways to help our congregation meet its financial goals each year. Church envelopes are available from the church office and PAR applications are there as well.

Have you ever considered that each Sunday it costs \$25.00 to just print the weekly bulletin? How about dedicating the bulletin in memory of a family member or to celebrate an event in your life, like a new baby, a milestone birthday, the fact that summer seems not to want to come this year? A phone call to the office or a note on the offering plate lets you pick the Sunday you would like to support. This \$25.00 donation would result in \$1300 to the church if each Sunday had someone to celebrate.

Music in St. James is a huge part of our worship service. New anthems and songbooks are expensive and as our choir seems to be ever expanding one anthem alone can be more than \$100.00 for enough copies for each member. Have you considered, as a special family gift, providing a monetary gift for the use of the choir?

Many of you in the congregation are at the point in their lives where we are making the decisions about what do we do with our “stuff” when we are no longer here. A bequest in your will contributes money to the church even after you are no longer here. It can be earmarked for Sunday school, choir, Hot Meal, oil bill, floor cleaner or just regular church use.

What about the Benevolent Fund? It is the only fund from which a tax receipt cannot be given for your donation. This money helps out those who do not have enough for food, fuel, clothes, or emergencies. The fund is administered by Rev. Peter and given only to those who need a hand up. Each of us often has a few extra dollars for coffee or a piece of cheesecake in our wallets. Why not save the calories and drop it off at the office to help those who really could use your donation?

Hot Meal always can use a gift card to a grocery store or the knitters of the Prayer Shawl Ministry can use money for yarn or donations of same. FundScrip

is another way to help St. James. Once a month you purchase gift cards from our representative and the companies give back to the church a percentage of the total sales. To date we have had over \$1000.00 returned from sales in this program. The St. James Sunday School always needs craft supplies, music, cookies or juice so why not choose a month and supply what they need for that time frame.

Yes there are many ways to financially support St. James. I am sure you can think of several others as well, but it is the total of all the little dollars that come together even if we think we do not have much to give that make St. James such an alive and vibrant place to worship.

A New Tradition Begins



Following Easter Service, the first annual St. James United Church Easter Egg Hunt was held at Columbus Field. Armed with nothing but empty baskets and dedicated resolve, the excited children of the St. James Sunday School and Nursery classes took to the field and scoured it clean of chocolate eggs in record time. While not present during the hunt itself, the Easter Bunny did express his admiration for the fast work, and is looking forward to a repeat performance next year. As well, he wanted to offer a most gracious thank you to Ewan and Kiera MacDuff for their assistance in preparation for the hunt. Until next year!



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www.stjamesuc.com/connect.htm