



CONNECTIONS

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

By the Outreach & Communications Committee

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*For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son,
that whoever believes in him should not perish but
have eternal life.*

~ John 3:16 ESV

Dear Friends in Christ,

This past winter was long and cold. The freezing temperatures arrived in November and never left. Any time we did get a break from the icy grip of the season there was a rain storm one day and then by the next it was bitter cold again. There didn't seem to be any relief from the unrelenting winter weather.

Yet through all those cold days, through the weeks where the wind chill persisted, we knew that eventually it would break. That despite the months of winter at some point there would be a change. The sun would get stronger, the days would grow longer, and we would enter into a season of new life and growth.

The promise of Easter is that God can bring about a thaw in our lives and our world. For on Good Friday when Jesus dies it seems like there is no end to despair and the power of death.

Yet on Easter morning the disciples discover that God's love, God's grace, God's salvation can not be stopped by death, by evil, or by hatred.

For in the coldest heart, in the most bleak circumstances, where hopelessness is unrelenting, God can and does bring about new life and new possibilities. There is nothing that can prevent God from reaching to us with new life now and eternal life to come. The tomb is empty and the message spreads that nothing in heaven or earth can stand in the way of God's power and promise.

The invitation of Easter is for each and every one of us to believe in and respond to what God does through Jesus Christ. To allow the power of the

resurrection to warm our hearts, to break the coldness of our lives, and to experience the renewal that comes through grace and love. For the joy of Easter is our joy, the hope of Easter is our hope, and the truth of Easter is our truth.

This year as a church we will journey through Lent and follow Jesus to Jerusalem, gather around the table on Maundy Thursday, and hear again the story of the Passion on Good Friday. Come and experience again the great love that God has for each and every one of us. Then on Easter come to the tomb and discover once more the truth of the resurrection and the new life which is ours because God so loved the world.

May God continue to bless us as we live and serve as a church of Jesus Christ

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



Barb Gardiner found this poem in a very old New Brunswick UCW newsletter:

God's Garden

You may not see Him, but He's there;
no flower lacks His tender care.
Some grown in sun or shadows dim -
but every bud is known to Him.
He smiles upon the strong of heart
or kneels to give some bud a start;
He tends the weak and knows their needs;
He even blesses ragged weeds.
Earth is God's garden, row on row
where mortal flowers come and go.
And every race in every land
is tended by His gentle hand.

Author unknown

Services Holy Week and Easter

April 14, 2019 Palm Sunday

10:30 am We wave our palms and shout our Hosannas as Jesus enters Jerusalem and we consider the events which follow as we celebrate the Lord's Supper.

April 18, 2019 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.

April 19, 2019 Good Friday

10:30 am As disciples of Jesus, we experience through story and song the emotions, events, and meaning of the crucifixion.

April 21, 2019 Easter Sunday

6:30 am on the Bethany grounds. As the sun rises, our 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

ST. JAMES UCW ALIVE AND WELL



The St. James UCW held their 2019 Annual Meeting after church on February 3rd. It began with a light lunch before going into the business meeting. This was centred on what we did last year and where we are going from this point on. The yearly budget was presented and accepted. The difference with this meeting and the ones held in the last fifteen or so years was that there was to be an installation of new officers.

Betty and Mavis led the installation ceremony that saw Christine Briand become the new chair of UCW. She was wrapped in the beautiful yellow shawl signifying that position. Christine will be helped in this role by co-chair Joanne MacKenzie who will also act as our secretary. Judi MacPherson will be the assistant secretary and Paige Hunter the corresponding secretary. Sheryl Chapman will remain in the role as treasurer. Candles were lit and flowers distributed to these members as they agreed to work hard to fulfill their positions.

Joanne presented a beautiful arrangement of spring flowers to Betty Webber to thank her for all her work in the last few years.

UCW is open to every woman in the church regardless of age or ability. As a group, the UCW is certainly more than baking and fundraising. It is a time of worship, fellowship, tears, laughter, and support for one another and for our church. There are two units that meet monthly. The Orpah unit is led by Dianne Theuerkauf and meets in the afternoon and the Ruth unit led by Barbara Gardiner meets in the evening. 2019 is off to a wonderful start. We encourage all women to consider coming and being a part of this time. If you have questions why not ask a member and come and see for yourself all the amazing things that we can accomplish together.

Finding Joy: The African Heritage Pot Luck



It was Feb. 24th, the last day of the St. FX break, when Cultural Connections Antigonish and the various groups involved in this year's Black History Month held a potluck for the community to celebrate. But there had also been a storm advisory plus many conflicting engagements.

Our large hall was quiet, all the tables were set with chairs, and many dishes were waiting. But it did happen, in its own way. People who were to be here, were here. More came, and then we had something.

What did we have? Fun seeing our friends from the black community with so much to share. A long table was full of books, posters, and pictures.



Fabrics from Africa were worn with pride. A stream of drummers entered the hall, parked at first in the multi purpose room, waiting for their moment. Many dishes of delicious food, some authentic African, many more plain, but yummy, fare, all enjoyable and abundant.

We served ourselves, children and elders first, and soon we were all ready for the drums. Morgan Pero's group of students that beguile audiences large and small was here to establish a rhythm to our night. Steady and strong, we heard the beat and got to our feet. I saw smiles on the drummers' faces. Later I asked Morgan Pero. "Did they know they were bringing joy to us?" She answered that they'd never played that close to their listeners before, so were amused and delighted to see that our feet were wanting to follow their beat.

While a modest turnout of 50-60, the mood in the room was warm and happy.

It takes turning up to know that joy can come from the floor up, or from a ready new smile. Relationships take work and engagement is out there for all of us. It has and will lead to joy!



CROSSING PATHS



Summer student (2018) Riley Murphy working the vendor's table at the Antigonish Farmer's Market.

St. James United Church and Lochaber Growers Cooperative Ltd cross paths each and every Wednesday for 20 weeks of the year. Starting mid-June and continuing until late October, Lochaber Growers rents the storage room as the pick-up location for the town customers of their food box (CSA) program. It is perfect, with shelves for the various items and its central location for customers in downtown Antigonish.

What is a CSA? It stands for Community Supported Agriculture. The customer and farmer have an agreement which they commit to, where the customer pays, usually in advance, for the food boxes for the entire season, and the farmer delivers the locally grown, fresh fruits and vegetables on a weekly basis.

Lochaber Growers Cooperative came into existence in 2016. That year, they registered as a Not-for-Profit Cooperative in NS, and hoped to support 30 food box customers for 20 weeks. They actually supported 35 customers that year. In 2017, they planned for 60 customers, and supported 65, and last year they planned for 65 customers, and finished the season providing for 70.

What is Lochaber Growers Cooperative Ltd? Four farms located in North Lochaber decided to pool their resources and expertise to offer more variety of fresh

foods to local customers, both with the food boxes and at the Saturday Antigonish Farmers Market. The produce and prices are the same, for both the boxes and the markets.

The farms are:

1) Glen Hill Berry Farm, owned by Barb and Sid Taylor, specializes in fresh strawberries, fresh wild blueberries, peppers, pumpkins, cucumbers and squash.

2) Quinn Farm, owned by John and Bonnie Quinn, specializes in tomatoes, sweet corn, lettuces, asparagus and fresh basil.

3) Gillis Lochaber Valley Farm, is owned by Brian and Theresa Gillis. They raise raspberries, watermelon, bok choy, kale, peppers and cauliflower.

4) The Avant Gardener, is owned by Fenn Martin. He and Amberlee Boulton raise the hens who provide the fresh farm eggs offered by the co-op. They also specialize in rhubarb, melons, cabbages, squashes and herbs.

Some vegetables are grown on all farms. Examples of this are potatoes, carrots, green and yellow beans, sugar snap and snow peas, onions, turnips, spinach, lettuces and summer squash. None of the farms are certified organic. However all the farms follow organic practices. By mid-season 2019, two of the farms will have installed solar panels to help generate electricity. All of the farms have green houses to help extend the growing season in the spring and fall. All farms share equipment. By working together, they



Several farms pooled money and bought this gadget, which prepares outdoor raised beds with black plastic and drip lines underneath. It is weed control + irrigation + heat retention system all in one.

offer a wide variety of fruits and vegetables, without any one farm needing to 'do it all'.

Each week, each food box contains 6 or 7 items of fresh picked fruits and vegetables as they come into season from June until October, with a total value of \$20 in each box. There are also recipes offering prep ideas for the produce in the current box. Most customers cannot believe what really fresh food tastes like. Store-bought vegetables never quite taste the same afterwards.

The customers have the option of picking up the weekly produce, each Wednesday, either in town, at St. James, or in Lochaber, at Glen Hill Berry Farm, later in the day.

(Actually, if town folk forget to pick up their food box, earlier in the day, they drive to Lochaber for it.)

For the last two years, Lochaber Growers have been able to provide each of the five L'Arche Homes in Antigonish with food boxes. Also, through funding from a local organization, they have been able to offer subsidizes boxes to families who might otherwise not be able to afford the food boxes. Both these activities help spread the word that fresh and local foods taste great, and have more flavour than store-bought foods.

Last year, Lochaber Growers took part in many community outreach activities. This was possible because they received funding to hire Amy Buckland-Nicks to organize the events. In August the public was invited to visit the farms, for an Open Farm Day. Food-related activities were offered at each farm, and everyone was sent home with an ice cream cone from Glen Hill Berry Farm. Lochaber Growers prepared the supper meal at each of the 5 L'Arche homes, on a given Thursday, using the produce that had arrived the day before. With the help of the residents, lots of fun was had by all, both in the prep and the eating of the meal. In September, they took part in Antigonight, covering an entire pick-up truck with cabbages made from clay. In October at Airisaig, they hosted the monthly meal event of the entire L'Arche family. For this meal, to serve 40 – 50 people, they enlisted the expertise of chef Gyungbo Noh. And in November they offered a day long workshop on Permaculture,

led by Graham Calder. Community awareness and involvement in the production of locally grown foods, is one of the mandates of the co-op.

For the coming season, the farmers hope for a better growing season than in 2018. Last June, early frost killed many transplants, and meant some vegetables had to be replanted and didn't ripen until late August. The drought in July and August hurt the germination of the fall lettuces and spinach crops. Then Lochaber had a killer frost in early September that turned melons and cucumbers to mush, before they could be harvested. To say the least: 2018 was a challenge! Hopefully, 2019 will be better. If anyone would like to learn more about Lochaber Growers, they have a FaceBook page under their name, or email lochabergrowers@gmail.com. (Or peek into the storage room any Wednesday morning, starting June 12th.)



From the beginning of the season to the end, all produce is freshly picked and packaged.

Valentine's Tea

The St. James UCW decided to start the year off with a fundraiser. On Saturday February 9th, the first (we hope it won't be the last) Valentine Tea was held.

As it was an extremely cold day we opened the doors early to allow the patrons time to remove their coats and warm up a bit before we started serving. Within a few minutes all 100 chairs were occupied.

The dishwasher was not working which was a major problem. Thankfully we now have a new dishwasher which we hope will provide many years of trouble-free service. Although we ran into a few 'first time event' glitches, we worked our way through them.

The most important detail is that everyone seemed to have a great time and we received many compliments. So many people volunteered their time, and for that we sincerely thank them.

Will we do it again? We hope so . . . without the glitches.



FROM THE ARCHIVES

Some excerpts from the Annual meeting of St. James United Church For the year 1928

Compare the finances of the church then with the finances 90 years later.

The Annual Congregational Meeting of St. James United Church was held on the evening of January 30, 1929 in the school room of the church.

The Treasurer read the financial statement of the year with the auditor's report showing the sum of \$ 4,128.82 contributed to current expenses and the M & E fund of the Church which with the balance of \$ 483.78 brought forward from the previous year made the total receipts for these purposes of \$4,606.30 and the expenditures \$ 3,930.91 leaving a balance of \$675.39 on hand. \$ 1,472.50 was received on the Church Repair account with \$1,592.50 due on subscriptions and \$300.00 from the Ladies Aid and making that total credit \$3,365.00 with expenditures of \$ 2,683.77 and a credit balance of \$ 681.23. The Manse account showed receipts of \$ 428.60 and expenditures \$ 370.79 with a credit balance of \$ 57.81.

The Session report recorded the installation of the new heating plant by the family of the late D.G. Kirk and the rededication of the Church on September 9th and the 120th anniversary of the organization of the church by Rev. James Munroe. The Session also reported that there were 146 Resident members and 21 nonresident members and 73 families in the Church.

It was moved and seconded that the Treasurer be paid a bonus of \$25.00 on account of the extra work during the past two years. It was moved and seconded that Miss Margaret MacNaughton be appointed Treasurer at a salary of \$60.00. Moved and seconded in amendment that the salary be \$75.00. The amendment was carried.

Moved, seconded and carried that Mrs. C. C. Cunningham be reappointed as organist at a salary of \$60.00. Moved, seconded and carried that the Official Board engage a boy to pump the organ at a salary of \$10.00. (The boy engaged was Mrs. Cunningham's grandson. Gerry Cunningham who sang most of his adult life as a bass in the Church Choir and was also the director of the Men's Choir for a time).

A Modest, Famous Musician Amongst Us!



We all know Stan Chapman from his violin playing in church and his singing with the Men's' Choir. But do you realize the extent of his expertise?

Stan hails from New Glasgow, although he married Gert, a "Caper". His love of violin/fiddle was sparked by hearing his father and uncle play. His father loved the music of Winston (Scottie) Fitzgerald, Angus Chisholm, and other masters of traditional Cape Breton music. Stan studied with Vera Campbell and worked through the Royal Conservatory's violin and music theory programs, eventually becoming a music teacher here in Antigonish. But he also taught privately for ... well ... let's just say several decades! In private lessons he taught Cape Breton style fiddling to such renowned artists as Wendy MacIsaac, Stephanie Wills, Kendra MacGillivray, Glenn Graham, Natalie MacMaster and Ashley MacIsaac. Every time Ashley plays locally, he gives a call out to his former instructor.

Other "notches on his bow" include: directing the Cape Breton Fiddler's Association and many youth groups; conducting fiddle workshops in Canada, the US and New Zealand; teaching at the Gaelic College and lecturing at Cape Breton University in Sydney.

He swears that his "job" was never actual work because he enjoys fiddling and teaching so much! This man is not only generous with his time (he frequently volunteers and donates performances), he's very modest about his gifts too. We are extremely fortunate to have this pleasant and talented man amongst us. If you want to hear Stan really cut loose, check out a performance at The Townhouse during one of their Sunday evening traditional music sessions sometime!

Antigonish Poverty Reduction Coalition's "Poverty School"

Tuesday, 18 Sept., the APRC held a "Poverty School" at the library. The purpose was to look at current community initiatives to deal with a reduction in poverty. The APRC's plan is to conduct two of these brainstorming "schools" targeting groups such as Affordable Housing Antigonish, Kids First, the Antigonish Women's Resource Centre, the Food Bank, the Antigonish Emergency Fuel Fund, and our own Social Justice Committee. Four community meetings open to the general public will also be held in Antigonish, Pak'tnkek, Pomquet and Upper Big Tracadie to gain diverse perspectives on strategies and hopefully some recommendations. A final session will be held in November to present the results.

This first event's interesting guest speaker was Christine Saulnier, a director with the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. I was impressed that someone who has worked with "policy" for ten years could still be so passionate about it! She provided us with the latest Statistics Canada figures (2015) for Antigonish town and county dealing with poverty, specifically broken down by location, gender, ethnicity, and ages of children. It was clear that single parents with children still at home (1 > 5 years of age) are the hardest hit by poverty – a direct correlation to a lack of affordable childcare. As children age and attend school, their parents are less likely to fall into poverty. It is also clear that there is an issue with visible minorities and people with disabilities facing barriers to employment or being employed at lower wages.

There was discussion around the following topics:

- welfare incomes and government incomes (CPP, etc) have not kept up with the cost of living; after adjusting for inflation people today earn less than at any time since 1977
- the "working poor" are frequently working two or more part-time minimum wage jobs with no benefits and little job security, not by choice
- despite common misconceptions, those working part-time are rarely under 20, generally not students and not living w/parents
- the rate of elders, particularly women, living in

poverty is on the rise

- we need to decrease barriers to employment and remove the stigma for those who are unemployed – it isn't a moral failing, it's systemic
- we need to stop pretending that it's possible to "live" on minimum wage
- health and social outcomes are significantly worse wherever there is greater disparity between the wages of top and low earners, which is the current trend
- the degree of control we have over our life circumstances (especially stressful ones), is a key influence on health care outcomes – a major expense in both personal and government budgets
- men's salaries in Antigonish average more than \$10,000.00 women's salaries

Discussion around solutions included the need for:

- a living wage
- tackling root causes including but not limited to: institutional racism, gender discrimination and exploitation, safe affordable housing, tax policies, food security, affordable transportation and quality education
- ensuring income security, decent jobs, social inclusion
- enhancing public services by "demarketizing" certain social goods (rent controls, childcare, etc)

The solutions are always about income, but not only about income. Overall it was a stimulating day with many thought-provoking ideas presented. No easy answers, but hopefully working toward some strategies and recommendations.



NOTE OF INTEREST

If you haven't already, do check out Anne Camozzi's uplifting presentation on the use of art for pain control, called Channeling Maud Lewis: Art for the Heart at: www.youtube.com/watch?v=n6-yxvB26a8&feature=youtu.be



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