



CONNECTIONS

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

By the Outreach & Communications Committee

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For the mountains may depart and the hills be removed, but my steadfast love shall not depart from you, and my covenant of peace shall not be removed, says the Lord, who has compassion on you.

- Isaiah 54:10

Dear Friends in Christ,

Our lives and church were turned upside down when the pandemic hit this March. What we assumed would always be there and be unchanging was suddenly and unexpectedly different. We were forced to close our building to keep everyone safe and we had to find new ways to practice our faith and to be the church. In the words of the prophet Isaiah “the mountains departed and the hills removed.”

Yet we discovered that the rest of the words of the prophet are also true as God’s love and promises continued in our lives. We began online services and explored this different way of worshiping and being together in faith. We also used social media, emails, video conferences, as well as telephone and letters to continue to gather and keep connected.

God’s grace and faithfulness have kept us together during this chaotic time. The online services and children’s worship and all the social media presence have allowed us to be a constant and continual witness to the gospel message during these weeks and has allowed us to reach beyond our congregation into our community. For as people look for comfort and hope, we are there as St. James United Church to help them know that God has not forgotten them and that God’s compassion and promises continue.

When we eventually resume in person worship and return to many of the things we have known and

done before, we’ll also keep some of these new things as part of our life together. For no matter where and how we gather as a church, we do so in faith learning and growing as God’s people with the encouragement and guidance of the Holy Spirit.

May God continue to bless you and all of us.

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



Worshiping in a New Way

Rev. Peter Smith

On March 21, 2020 our worship life changed dramatically at St. James. Since we were not able to gather together in person at the church we moved our worship service to an online format. There was a bit of a learning curve that first week as everything was new to us but that Sunday we produced our first online service and children’s worship. In the weeks since, we have tried different things and gradually improved the services in small but noticeable ways with the focus always being on making the worship as accessible and engaging as possible.

What happens each week?

I write the sermon and prayers, the music is chosen and practiced by Hee Jung and any soloists, and the scripture readings are distributed for recording. During the week the parts of the service are taped and edited by Kenji and finally on Saturday everything is put together into the service which is uploaded that night. We are blessed to have Hee-Jung’s wonderful music, the voices of our different readers and soloists, and Kenji deftly putting all the elements together.

The children’s worship service follows a similar process with Bronwen, May, and Linda providing crafts and activities for the children and Chad taping the children’s story with me on Friday. I edit the video and upload it and the crafts on Saturday afternoon.

How has it been received?

Honestly if you had told me in early March that we would be worshiping this way and that our service would be seen by up to 200 households each Sunday I probably would not have believed you. Yet God has blessed us as a congregation and as we have worshiped online our doors have been opened to our congregation, our neighbours here in Antigonish, and to family and friends in Nova Scotia and around the world.

Coffee Time 2020

If you are like me, when January 1 comes around, we wonder what the New Year will bring. In our wildest dreams we never thought we would be enduring a pandemic. That sort of thing belonged to history books. Now we are a part of history and for younger people It will be something to tell their grandchildren.

A way of life has changed and for churchgoing people it is a sad reality that our churches have had to close. We are so very grateful to Rev. Peter for the wonderful worship services he has been giving online. And thank you Peter for arranging a Coffee Time. Every Thursday at 11 am we are given the opportunity to join in a coffee time via Zoom. So far there have been eight or nine familiar faces appearing (there are two couples) and we sit back and enjoy conversation just as we did after church. And yes, some even have their coffee cups with them and now and then a cat will appear across the screen as it enters the room where her mistress sits in front of her computer. It is all very casual.

Topics of conversation vary. Right now getting haircuts is a popular subject now that hair salons and barber shops have opened up. We talk about the changes we are experiencing. Rev. Peter keeps us updated on church matters during a pandemic. Today we talked about the wearing of masks. Just like after church, we go from topic to topic and share laughter.

So why not join in – lots of room and if you are not sure how to go about it, Rev. Peter will guide you through the steps. Hope to see you there. It’s a great way to spend an hour.

Mavis Murray

Pandemic Project or Labour of Love

The finials of St. James United Church were in poor shape and something needed to be done about them. Fortunately, we are blessed to have the talent necessary to bring about the necessary improvements.

Far be it for Connections to publicize the name of our church elf, although perhaps some readers might be able to guess who it is.

Behold the work in progress! Let’s hope we are soon able to admire his handiwork in person.



“We affirm Black Lives Matter,”

says the Executive of the General Council.



United against Racism

The General Council Executive issued a statement yesterday (June 18, 2020) confirming unequivocally that Black Lives Matter to The United Church of Canada. The Executive acknowledges racism as a sin, and admits that the church has not confronted adequately the racism within its churches and councils. The letter to members states:

We confess that our United Church has not been such a sanctuary against racism. In particular, we regret that our church has been complicit in racial injustice, and that systemic anti-Black racism still exists within our structures. The church has not always lived up to its understanding of itself. We are sorry for our inability to hear and respond to the pain of our Black siblings.

The Executive commits to making anti-Black racism a priority, encouraging the church to

- publicly commit, in worship and elsewhere, to the stance that Black Lives Matter
- educate themselves about anti-Black racism and White privilege
- name and confront anti-Black racism and White privilege wherever they appear in our personal

lives, communities of faith, structures of The United Church of Canada, and in Canadian society

- provide safe spaces for people of colour to report racist harassment and achieve redress

The letter is in response to the tide of Black Lives Matter demonstrations sweeping across the continent and is part of the church's continuing response to the last hours of the 43rd General Council in August 2018, when many clergy and members spoke about their own painful encounters with racism in the church. The church's actions have not fully lived up to the good intentions voiced, but the Executive's statement vows to change that, concluding: "Love, not in word or speech, but in truth and action"—these are words that no member of the United Church, with our creedal commitment to "seek justice and resist evil," can ignore.

The Covid Trail

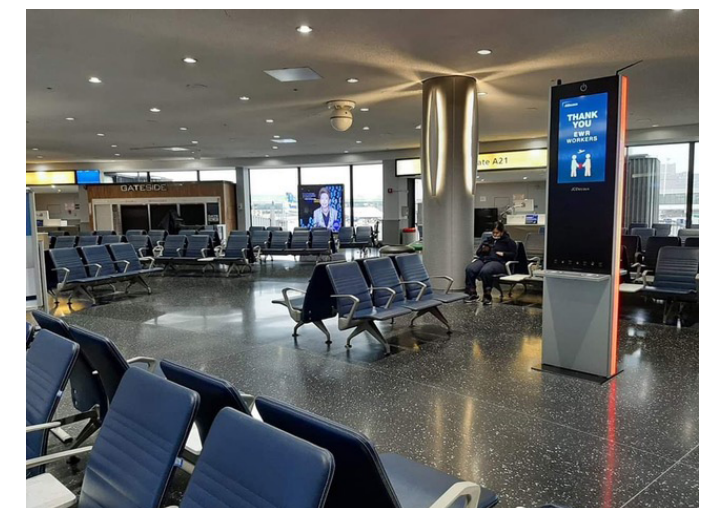
by Fran Wittgens

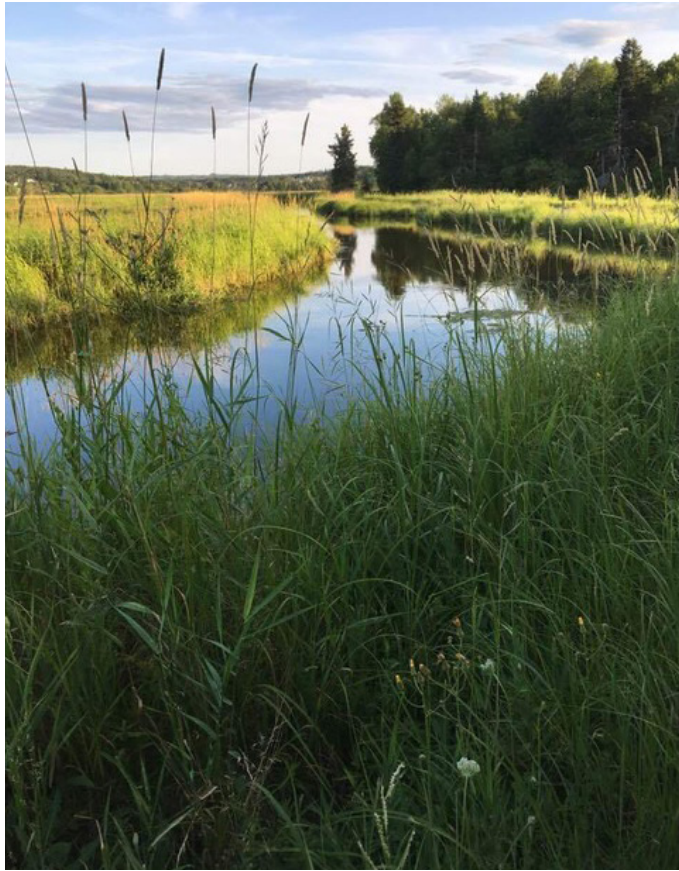
I remember the early impressions of Covid. An outbreak in China, the government cover up, Then their all-out response. A shutdown of millions. It seemed inconceivable but in an authoritarian state, maybe that was the way to do it. Then came northern Italy and how Covid overwhelmed the hospitals, how desperate the country was. Then it hit North America. By then, it was becoming more than a story. Nobody wanted an outcome like Italy's!

That was when I was still in Sarasota, Florida. The Americans were wrapped up in their election-eering, their primaries. But suddenly, the tape was changed. This was a global pandemic. Things can't be as they used to be. Medical experts came before tv cameras. Daily briefings from our Prime Minister and our Premier. Even from Florida I watched and listened. By mid March Prime Minister Trudeau was urging all Canadians to come home. There was the real chance of getting stuck, without a flight back to Halifax. Friends urged me to get back before things shut down. My daughters wondered if I was in the loop while in the sunny State of Florida. I was! I was following both American and Canadian coverage. But since I had only arrived in early March, I wasn't ready to let go of a whole month for which I had paid and also had insurance coverage. So I remained in my Florida digs. Social isolation was in place. Daily there were new restrictions and closures just like back here. I did, however, manage to create a simple life of social isolation while there. I walked the Siesta Key beach nearby once or twice a day finding the waters gloriously warm. I had my bike to go into the village. Since everything but grocery stores and pharmacies were closed, I didn't feel as if I was missing out. As I saw the temps in Nova Scotia, I was thankful that I was embedded in a sunny warm place.

All that changed once the airlines began to lose money and couldn't guarantee my April 16th return. Then it got frightening. I no longer felt I could seek refuge with family there as the Covid potential might imperil their health. As a result, I managed to

book a flight home, through three airports, on March 30th. The airports looked like something out of a sci fi scene. Rows of shiny metal seating, empty! Vast corridors, empty! A weird sense of being a survivor or maybe a victim. I was nervous that I had to place my items (backpack, computer case and snack bag) down each time I sat down. The whole sequence of sanitizing, not touching your face, keeping a distance





was streaming between my ears. AND I was traveling through one of America's then hotspots, Newark, N.J. Prayers and good luck saw me arrive safely around midnight on March 31st, with a sleepover at an airport hotel. I had been warned that renting a car might be a problem since I was returning from Florida. Thankfully, the pre-arranged rental went through.

That was over two months ago. The Covid Trail continued from my residence here near The Landing. For 14 days I wasn't allowed to go beyond my place. Friends helped a lot. Also I began to order my groceries and things I needed from the pharmacy and had them delivered. The days were similar to Florida's, but with the temps notched way down. Such a long winter!

There are common threads that have remained. One is a daily walk. As much as possible I try to get outside. Now that the weather is so much better, it is a real joy. The shades of green at the Landing, the people I meet on the way to and from, spotting wildlife, rejoicing in the budding of the fruit trees, the sprouting of the phlox and lupine along the road.

Another is the drive to keep connected. Phoning people far and near. Emailing, zooming, even writ-

ing real letters. We no longer can legitimately say we don't have the time! Like so many others I tried making a sourdough starter. This was a long drawn out chemistry experiment that

I failed. I just didn't have the right source of heat. It was either too hot or too cold. Alas, it had to be jettisoned after two weeks. I did get back into bread making. This too had a challenging start. The Sunflower sold me Brewer's yeast, instead of fast acting dry yeast. So without realizing it, I prepared a couple of loaves that never rose properly. But still, I had lots of time, so after swallowing my pride, I attempted it again, this time with success.

Having a project, whether it's baking, sewing, memoir writing, boat building, etc. is the key, I think. My major project crystalized when I began to yearn once again for a cat. I checked to see if there was room in my garage. I even moved furniture, then called the vets to see if there was an adult cat needing a home. This led to me calling Nelda Armour who is one of the organizers of the Indian Garden Cat Project. She asked if I'd be interested in fostering three 5-month-old feral kittens! Again, I had time, and a wellspring of colourful and fond memories of cats. So I said yes. The other facet of this project that I set for myself was writing a blog about the experience. So now I am into the 6th week. Anyone wanting to follow from the beginning or just to check on the latest can Google the following: franskittyblog.blogspot.com

I was going to write about what I see along my walks, but maybe that will be for another time.

It is a long road, this Covid Trail, one we might be trekking for a while. So we can learn a lot from one another. And as Dr. Bonnie Henry says, "Be kind, calm and safe."



Reflections

by Joan MacGillivray

What have I been doing during this time of COVID 19? Not much. With no schedule, time is different, what day is it? What time is it? But it is so great when walking around town to meet people, wave, say hello. Also walks at the Landing, and other places, everyone keeping their distance and watching the birds, the leaves coming on the trees, the flowers and all the beauty of nature and all creation that is all around us.

And now it's so wonderful being able to visit with people, even if it is at a distance, no close encounters, always keeping 6 feet apart whether walking, sitting on the deck or just talking with someone I meet while outside. I think we're all learning what's really important and hope we'll remember this when we get back to our new normal.

It seems such a long time ago that I went on my trip to Costa Rica but it was only 14 weeks ago that I arrived home and glad I arrived home before all the restrictions and isolations were in place, but it wasn't long afterwards that everything changed. I thought it would be good to look back on that wonderful trip.

My flights to Costa Rica were much delayed because of weather. Instead of arriving at my hotel in the daytime it was 2 in the morning. Because it was so late and dark, I didn't see any of the surrounding area. I thought I'd have a good sleep in the next morning, glad that I'd arrived a day before my tour began.

However I woke early to birds singing and looked out my window to see such wonder - the sun, trees, flowers and so much beauty. I just had to go out and explore. I had lots of places to walk and explore without leaving the grounds of the hotel. I saw many different species of birds and learned afterwards that the ones that had woken me up were Rufous Naped Wrens and they were all over the place. Also saw a few iguanas sunning themselves.

Our tour began that evening with dinner and I met the 11 other people who were on the tour although

most I had met throughout the day as I explored the grounds of the hotel. We left the next morning on our journey through Southern Costa Rica going near to the Panama border and along the west coast. We stayed 2 nights at each beautiful place such as rain-forest lodges and national parks and took a boat ride through mangroves to see a lot of birds and crocodiles.

The weather was great but it wasn't always warm. The last 2 days before we made our final stop we were in the mountains at 7,000 ft. sometimes going to 11,000 ft. I was glad I had taken warm clothes but people thought it was funny that I found it cold being from Canada.

Everywhere we went we saw the most amazing scenery and wildlife, plus a total of 275 different species of birds including Scarlet Macaws, Trogons, hummingbirds, and Toucans, as well as a sloth asleep in a tree.

I would love to go back next year but that may not be possible. Instead I'm enjoying what we have here. As I wait patiently, I remember what is really important, to be together and look after all creation. And enjoy what I have here and now.



Relaunching Guidelines – In Person Ministry

The thought of returning to in person worship in our churches, is both exciting and scary. We are all doing our best to navigate these uncharted waters with guidance from our health and government officials. We need to celebrate how resilient we have all been through this pandemic. The slow and gentle re-opening of our communities, businesses, and churches will be more difficult than the closing down. We will all need to be very diligent about keeping one another safe. This time can also cause stress, anxiety and conflict, as there will be many voices with many opinions with what needs to happen and what should not happen in our attempts to relaunch our in person ministries. Some will wish to move quickly; others will be cautious. Some are confident in their good health and other are at risk because of age and/or medical conditions. We are tired and these next steps will take much energy. Let us remember to be caring and generous in spirit with one another to hang together and make adaptive decisions for the good of all.

In March, we were called out of our churches to service God’s people in a different way. As we begin to wonder about and plan for our return to our spiritual homes, we know that it cannot be church as usual, but must be church in the new normal. As we begin to develop our plans for reopening let us remember, as followers of Christ we called to love God and to love our neighbour as ourselves. It is in that spirit that we must develop our plan to return to in person worship and opening our buildings once again as symbols of Faith, Hope, Justice and Love.

Trauma Informed

Some churches/families will have had members die during the lockdown phase. Some will have had funerals take place that were far from normal others may have been prevented from attending the funeral. Many will still be waiting for arrangements to be

made. Be aware that some people will have become vulnerable during the weeks of physical distancing, because of physical and mental health issues, financial hardships, strained relationships, abuse, and some may have had triggers of past traumatic experiences.

Be cautious about expressing thanksgiving when you can return to your buildings, because some will be acutely aware of loss or may be fearful about returning. Give attention to this and seek healing for all who are hurting, and reconciliation wherever that is possible. Be conscious that different people will need different approaches and take different amounts of time to begin to recover from the trauma they have experienced.

Looking Forward in Faith

In Nova Scotia, Dr. Strang reminded us of the right to worship versus the responsibility to help prevent spread and protect the vulnerable. We are reminded that re-entry into our churches will be a slow process and we all have a responsibility to stay informed, be prepared, and follow the public health advisories. We must follow the regulations from our health care and government authorities as they begin to relax restrictions. To help our churches to put together their plan to help ensure adequate preventative measures are in place, we have provided these guidelines as a tool to prepare for reopening. Each church is asked to have a reopening committee. If you have a small community of faith, your governing body can be your committee. It is likely that this virus will continue to affect our behaviour and activities for a long time to come. Having a committee that can seek guidance, create a plan and make recommendations to the governing body will be a vital part of our reopening. *Each community of faith will need to make a plan that fits with their needs, taking into consideration the activities you have and the demographic of your community. We offer the following to help you develop a unique plan for your community of faith. Each plan will be different and may need to change depending on the directions from our health care authorities. We may also have to put a plan in place in case we experience a second wave and have to limit activities.*

Faithful Discernment and Suggestion of a Plan

The safety of staff, volunteers, church members, and all those we serve needs to be at the center of our decision-making. Some questions to help you engage in discussion about the faith, principles and values that underlay our decision:

- What is the need we are trying to respond to, if we reopen?
- Does our decision to meet in person serve that need in a way that is faithful? Is a fear of losing members, money or conflict factoring into decision-making?
- Does the risk of illness outweigh the benefit of gathering?
- What is the impact of our decision on vulnerable members? (gathering in a way that leaves our vulnerable members out might be just as harmful as not gathering)
- What will we not be able to have for some time: gatherings with food, coffee hour? Potlucks?
- What shall we do differently, and how shall we live differently as we work through the pandemic and emerge in this new season?
- Where are the signs of hope?

Current - Churches (Government of NS)

Currently, our churches are encouraged to continue holding services virtually (online or through community TV). Churches can also hold:

- Outdoor “drive-in” services, if the social distancing requirements are being followed
- Staff must be present to make sure everyone is following the restrictions
- Vehicles must be parked 2 meters apart in the parking lot, with the engine off
- Only people from one (1) household unit should be in each car
- Everyone must stay in the car through the entire service
- The buildings, including washrooms, must stay closed to the congregation
- Microphones cannot be shared between staff
- Nothing can be passed out to the congregation (like books, programs, food, collection plates)
- People cannot exchange items between cars

- Gatherings can take place with no more than ten (10) people indoors and ten (10) people outside; this includes religious gatherings (excluding the person conducting the ceremony)
- In the case of funerals and weddings, permission is given to have fifteen (15) people plus the officiant outside only (excluding the person conducting the ceremony).
- For our Camping ministries, overnight camping is cancelled for 2020.

Current - Churches

(May 28 to June 30 Government of Bermuda)

- Church services (buildings) are closed
- Private Prayer – members of the clergy shall be permitted to enter the church with appropriate social distancing for private prayer with a maximum of five persons
- In order to broadcast services via electronic means a maximum of ten (10) persons are permitted with strict physical distancing
- Outdoor weddings and funerals may take place to a maximum of twenty (20) people plus the officiant and funeral home staff
- Funerals (indoors and graveside), and viewing of the deceased, are permitted with a maximum of ten (10) indoors plus the officiant and funeral home staff.
- Weddings indoors are permitted with a maximum of ten (10) people indoors, including parties, the Registrar General, marriage officer or domestic partnership offices, witnesses, photographer and others in attendance.
- People must wear masks and must adhere to physical distancing.

Regional Council 15 Recommended Guidelines (NS and Bermuda)

- Worship continue to be held online (or by telephone or by dropping of services in mailboxes) however if you have been conducting services that work for your community of faith, continue with that practice. Where it can be done safely and in accordance with local law/public health directions, a small number of people may go into

- the church to record or stream services. In those situations, everyone should stay at least two meters apart. Singing is known to be more dangerous than talking, and therefore you will need to ensure that any soloist needs to be a very safe distance apart (the science varies and the minimum distance should be at least 15ft). Aerosol droplets can remain in the air for some hours and may be dangerous. If you are using microphones, only one person per mic and each mic must be disinfected after use.
- Once the service is recorded, all areas used by the recording team needs to be cleaned. (for example, the church's pulpit, lectern, musical equipment used, door handles)
- Bible study, small groups, and other activities should continue to be online.
- Community ministries must operate within local guidelines and as safely as possible, adapting the services provided as necessary, recognizing that their inherent risks involved in providing these frontline services.
- Burials and weddings need to adhere to the public health directives (10) people plus the officiant inside and fifteen (15) people plus the officiant outside. Others brought into the service with online technology. At all times physical distancing needs to be in place. ***(Bermuda Please see above)***
- For any service inside, disinfectant cleaning must happen after each event.
- Baptisms need to be postponed until it is safe to do so.
- Reminder: as Ministry Personnel, you will need to make sure you protect yourself and not cross contaminate when part of the liturgy. (For example wedding: blessings of the rings and signing of the documents, do not pass the rings back and forth, and make sure you use your own pen for signing documents. Funerals: no hugging or touching the hand of family members)
- It is within a Ministry Personnel's authority (and responsibility) to refuse to participate in these small gatherings where numbers go over the limits.***

- Members of the same family may sit together but others must physical distance.
- Pastoral care is provided by phone or videoconference, or if (rarely) in person, respecting social distancing requirements as well as the institutions regulations, and with all appropriate precautions.
- Maintenance and cleaning activities in the church building are limited to what can be done safely and within local restrictions.
- Administration, if you can work from home you should continue working from home.

LOOKING AHEAD

While we do not have the directive for after this current stage for either NS or Bermuda, we must remember that we are far away from a business as usual and back to "Normal" way of life and church. Our Health care authorities have advised us that we are in a place of the New Normal: Living with COVID-19 and will be for the next one (1) to two (2) years.

We can assume that in the next stage places of worship will begin to be permitted to resume operations with restrictions (we do not currently have the restrictions). The Department/Ministry of Health will provide guidance when it is safe to move into the next stage/phase. Remember, just because we can does not mean we should. The following are guidelines to help you manage a slow and careful return.

Regional Council - First Steps (Take the re-entry slowly)

- Your ability to resume activities will depend on the size of your congregation and your ability to physically distance. Churches could continue offering online worship services, along with bible studies and other groups.
- Funerals need to adhere to public health directives keeping the restricted number of people with attendees maintaining physical distancing. You could consider asking people to wear masks (Bermuda masks are required). It is within a Ministry Personnel's authority (and responsibility) to refuse to participate in funerals where numbers go over the limits, or participants are refusing to social distance.

- If weddings are planned during this time, they need to adhere to public health directives, keeping the restricted number of people with attendees maintaining physical distancing. You could consider asking people to wear masks (Bermuda masks are required). It is within a Ministry Personnel's authority (and responsibility) to refuse to participate in weddings where numbers go over the limits.
- Church offices may consider opening, especially where there are small staff components.
- Church boards, committees, or staff groups may meet in person in small numbers, respecting local restrictions, and with physical distancing. You may also consider asking people to wear masks

Regional Council 15 - Second Steps

(When you feel ready, you are encouraged to move at your own pace)

- Your ability to resume activities will depend on the size of your congregation and your ability to physically distance. Churches could continue offering online worship services, along with bible studies and other groups. In person worship could resume in the church buildings where space allows for physical distancing, adhering to public health directives and allowable numbers. You may ask attendants to wear masks.
- Singing by the congregation and the choir must be avoided. Communal singing poses serious risks! Scientific evidence shows that the forceful breathing action of singing disperses the plume of aerosolized droplets from a singer's mouth much further than six feet. Public health officials have said that masks cannot completely contain such forcefully expelled mist. Tests have proven that microscopic 'droplet nuclei' that can contain the virus remain suspended in the air for up to 3 hours.*
- Small funerals, weddings, and baptisms may be held within local restrictions about numbers, with physical distancing.
- Even with the resumption of in person worship, online versions could continue to be available especially if numbers do not allow your full congregation to gather.

- gations to gather or for those in high risk categories who need to continue to avoid group activities.
- Maintenance and administration functions resume more fully, with provisions for physical distancing which might include such measures as alternating times for staff to be present in the office (if necessary)
- Tenant/Rental use of church buildings may be back in operation depending on the types of activities and the ability to implement appropriate safety/cleaning protocols.
- Cleaning with a disinfectant will need to be done after every gathering.

Regional Council 15 – (NS and Bermuda) (The New Normal)

- Full "return" to in person worship, in person groups, in person gatherings of all kinds may not be possible until a vaccine is developed and generally available. The health authorities will confirm if/when we are able to have full return.
- Ability to participate online may continue to be important for persons in vulnerable categories. Many church members and regular participants may be from vulnerable categories.
- Gatherings/fundraisers with food preparation will need to consider all of the health and safety regulations for the Province/Country and the demographic of the event needs to be considered in this time of COVID-19 recovery.

Tools to Assist with Re-Entry

As you begin to make your plan, please make sure your minister is included in your planning committee. Their input is very important to the process of reentering our church buildings.

Staffing and the Ministry & Personnel Committee

Ministry and Personnel Committees have a vital role in the reopening of the churches. It is important to have a conversation with each employee. For some of your staff there will be a level of mental fatigue, especially for those who have worked to keep the Pastoral Charge operational, through worship and pastoral care. With that in mind:

- Meet with all staff – virtually right now
- Ask how they are doing and how their family is doing
- Ask how this time has been for them
- Ask how they are feeling about returning to the office (if applicable) and in-person worship
- What learnings have they gained, what went well and what was difficult o Ministry Personnel and Lay Employees who are vulnerable (over 60 or have compromised health) should work with their Ministry and Personnel Committee to develop an alternate option to limit exposure to groups and high-risk activities
- Ministry and Personnel Committees should contact the Regional Minister to come up with a plan for return in-person ministry.

Caring for the Church Building and Hall

- You should, in your announcement and in you plan, advise any staff or congregants who are symptomatic or have been advised by public health 8-1-1 to report their symptoms, to self-isolate and stay at home.
- It would be wise to post the symptoms so people can see what they are and know how to assess when to stay home. (Fever above 38C, a new cough, or worsening cough, headache, sore throat, runny nose, fatigue, muscle pain, diarrhea, loss of sense of taste, loss of smell and in children, purple markings on the fingers and toes) o 2 meters will need to be observed where people sit. Churches may need to measure and rope off areas where people cannot sit to maintain physical distancing

For contact tracing (if/when required) for each use of the building, there needs to be a record of:

- Name and phone number of the people who were in the building
- Date and time that the gathering took place
- Purpose for the gathering

After each use of the building cleaning with a disinfectant (like Lysol) will need to happen. Churches are encouraged to make a checklist of the places and items to clean for your worship and meeting space. Some things to consider:

- Public washrooms need to be equipped with hot and cold running water under pressure, liquid soap, paper towels, and garbage containers. Handwashing signs must be posted.
- Thoroughly clean bathrooms with disinfectant – toilets (inside, outside and around the basin) – counters - sinks – taps – paper towel dispensers - door handles. (Have Lysol wipes available in the washrooms and a sign asking people to wipe the taps and door handles as they leave) Make sure the washrooms are cleaned frequently.
- Hymnbooks – pew Bibles
- Backs of pews
- Microphones
- Musical instruments
- Chairs
- Tables
- All door handles
- All other highly used areas
- Light switches
- People need to be aware of the hand sanitizer stations and places where they can wash their hands.
- You may wish to ask staff and congregants to wear a mask when coming to church for any activity.

WORSHIP GUIDELINES

Communion

If communion is offered:

- The officiant and servers must use hand sanitizer before offering communion
- Individual pieces of bread and individual cups are offered
- Servers offer the bread and cup to each person rather than each person taking them from a communal plate or tray
- Each communicant places their empty cup into a separate receptacle
- Disposable cups should be used

Passing the Peace and the Offering Plate

- Physical distancing must be maintained.
- Offering a phrase or pressing hands together in a prayerful bow, a wave, a nod or some non-contact gesture can convey the message of peace
- Encourage people to contribute through online giving, PAR, E-Transfer or posted dated cheques. Passing the offering plate should be avoided. Place the plate in the church for people to drop their offering into, and have gloves available for volunteers handling cash or cheques

Singing

- There should be no congregational or choir singing.
- Soloists must be at safe distances from each other and from the congregation.

Communal singing poses serious risks! Scientific evidence shows that the forceful breathing action of singing disperses the plume of aerosolized droplets from a singer’s mouth much further than six feet. Public health officials have said that masks cannot completely contain such forcefully expelled mist. Tests have proven that microscopic ‘droplet nuclei’ that can contain the virus remain suspended in the air for up to 3 hours.

Special Services

Baptisms

- For infant baptism, the parents should be the only ones to hold the baby. The officiant will sanitize hands before the baptism. For infant, child and adult baptism, Water should come from individual cups or a bottle for each person, not the common font. If possible, have a separate bowl that sits in the font for each individual who will be baptized.

Weddings and Funerals

- We will need to follow our government restrictions and if they happen in the church physical distancing will need to be maintained and thorough cleaning right after will need to be followed.

Bishop Karen P. Oliveto of the United Methodist Church:

“I do not want one single case of COVID-19 traced to one of our churches because we did not care for those whom Jesus loves.”

Remember that this is a tool to help you with your plan to reenter your church buildings; your Regional Council staff are available for consultation and support.

Resources from the following are gratefully acknowledged:

Pacific Mountain Regional Council

Government of Nova Scotia

Government of Bermuda

United Reformed Church, UK

FROM THE ARCHIVES

We are not able to look through the old ledgers in the Archive Room at the Church because of the present restrictions, so we thought we might bring you some history of the Men's Club which happened nearly 60 years ago. When we moved to Antigonish in 1964 we became involved with the St. James Men's Club. At one of the meetings we learned that the Club still owed around \$1,000.00 on their pledge to help with funding for the new hall which was opened in 1954. We suggested the club might present a variety concert. The club agreed, and we were given the task of arranging this.

After all these years we don't remember the performers, but it was quite successful and was well attended. As a result, it was suggested the club sponsor another concert the following year. This began a series of concerts for the next few years. There is a scrap book in the archives with all the programs for each year and without this information we are not sure in which year these concerts were put on.

For the Centennial Year in 1967 we presented a taste of the music for each decade from 1867 to 1967. Pat Cunningham wrote the script which introduced each musical number as the husband, played by Art Holmes, and his wife, played by Emily Sweet, sitting on the platform at the top of the wheelchair ramp and reminiscing about these years.

We were able to find a book in the Town Library which covered the hundred years of music which was a great help in arranging the program. The numbers were performed by members of the Senior Choir, Men's Choir and Junior Choir. The Junior Choir sang the famous Bobby Gimby song "Canada" as the last number. One of these concerts was called "The Family Album" which had the performers forming a tableau in the picture frame and then come out to sing their number. You might remember that we reprised this concert during the 200th anniversary of St James in 2004.

Another concert presented the music of Irving Berlin. We were able to find 4-part harmony of many of his songs for the choir to sing. Our opening number by members of the Senior Choir was "There's No Busi-

ness Like Show Business". Another year we showcased Oscar winning songs, and Keith Currie made a full sized copy of the Oscar statuette for us as a backdrop. We had the choir members sitting around small tables on the stage in their finest evening clothes. Choruses were interspersed with solos and duets. Another year we presented the music of Stephen Foster, again with choruses, solos and duets. One of the more memorable concerts was an evening of songs and choruses from Broadway musicals. With the help from Jack O'Donnell, chair of the music department at STFX, we were able to get scores of Broadway musicals from their music library which really helped in putting this production together. Through all these shows we had someone announcing the numbers from that corner on the ramp. Art Holmes did this for us for most of the shows.

Some of the years we didn't have a regular organist or pianist at St. James so we were able to have Helen Cameron to play for us one year and Margie MacDonald another year. We were blessed to have so many talented singers in our choir at that time (and we still do) who gave us so many wonderful solos and duets. The response from the community was wonderful and we filled the hall for two nights every year. There was no Theatre Antigonish at that time and very few shows of this type, so it gave the community an opportunity to enjoy some live performances. We believe that of all those who took part in these productions, Jean Barkhouse, Mavis and myself are the only ones other than the children who are still living who remember them.

We hope you have enjoyed this little taste of our more recent church history.

Bob Murray

