



CONNECTIONS

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

By the Outreach & Communications Committee

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*God says: "I am about to do a new thing;
now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?
I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert."*

-Isaiah 43:19

Dear Friends in Christ,

This fall is going to be an exciting time at St. James. After a year and a half, we are finally going to resume a more normal life at church. I know that there are so many things we have missed - singing as a congregation, listening to the various choirs share their music, coming together in our groups, and the conversations during coffee hour. As I write this we are still working out how and when that will happen but my hope is that before we reach the new year we'll be able to restart most if not all of those things and resume our usual gatherings in and around St. James.

Of course as we move from our restricted life to the new life which awaits us the truth is that some things are going to be different. Our Church Council has asked all of us to take some time and prayerfully consider what we have missed doing during the pandemic and what new things that have started in the last year which we want to continue. Each group and committee will spend some time looking at their purpose and activities and for some groups this will mean a resumption of what was happening before but for others there may be a whole new set of priorities.

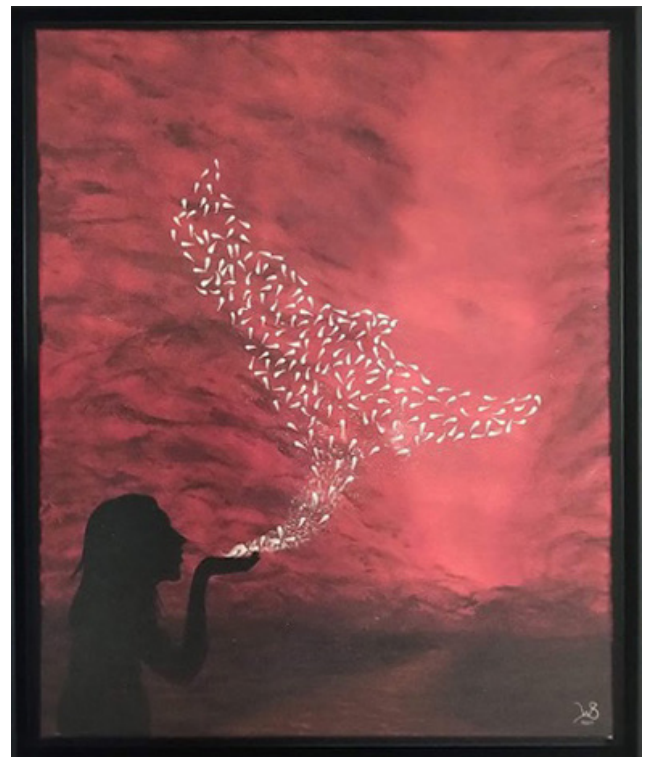
After all there are things we have missed, things we are ready to let go, and even some new things we will want to keep doing. On Sunday, there will be worship in our sanctuary as well as our online service so people can worship at home and during the week. Groups which have been meeting electronically may

choose to continue to meet that way or a combination of in person and electronically depending on the time of year.

The truth is that no matter how we have met or how we choose to meet, we will continue to live and serve as a Church of Jesus Christ, reaching out with the good news of the cross and empty tomb.

May God continue to bless us and show us the exciting future which is ours through God's grace.

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



Bringing these children the honour we denied them in life

Release from the United Church of Canada
Published On: July 19, 2021

To Residential School Survivors, Families, and Communities:

I want to acknowledge the pain that you, as survivors of residential schools, families, and communities, are experiencing. We understand that the pain endured at these schools went far beyond their walls and grounds into community and through generations.

The United Church of Canada operated 15 residential schools (opens in a new tab): Alberni, Ahousaht, Coqualeetza, Kitimaat (Elizabeth Long Memorial Home), and Port Simpson (Crosby Boys' and Girls' Home) in BC; Edmonton, McDougall Orphanage/Morley, and Red Deer in Alberta; Cote (formerly Crowstand), File Hills, and Round Lake in Saskatchewan; Brandon, Norway House, and Portage la Prairie in Manitoba; and Mount Elgin in Ontario.

We are aware of cemeteries on some of these sites, and we know that there are also unmarked and likely undocumented graves of children.

We acknowledge that our role in the residential school system and colonization is an abuse of power through our Christian faith. We hope that our ongoing work for reconciliation, which has been guided by United Church residential school survivors, more truly reflects what our faith calls us to be and do. We are committed to the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, especially those directed to us as perpetrators. These include those related to burial sites and missing children.

In the spirit of truth telling and transparency, we want to share the work that we have done, in consultation with community, on identifying and restoring graveyards. The United Church in southwestern Manitoba has actively supported

ongoing work on the identification and preservation of gravesites related to the residential school in Brandon; this includes the 104 graves identified off-site in 2018. In Saskatchewan, we supported the community of Okanese in preserving its graveyard and honouring the children buried there. The United Church of Canada has also been a partner in the preservation of the Regina Industrial School cemetery. (Regina was operated by the Presbyterian church, but the United Church shares responsibility.) United Churches in Red Deer, Alberta, worked to preserve the residential school cemetery in cooperation with the communities whose children were sent to Red Deer. There has also been research into possible graves at the Edmonton Residential School.

This work is just a beginning, and we understand that it must continue. Steps are required to properly locate, identify, and honour these children, and for the truth that Indigenous people have always known to finally be heard. Any work we do to help search grounds of and surrounding United Church residential schools must be done with respect for, the consent of, and with the guidance of Indigenous leadership, communities, survivors, and families.

We know that we are not the experts in this work. We will continue to share all the documents and knowledge we have. If anyone in community wishes to share information and expertise with us, we will gratefully accept it and be committed to transparency.

We are committed to meeting with leadership to hear how they wish to proceed, and whether they would like our assistance at any stage. This includes financial assistance for what community leadership deems appropriate.

The United Church of Canada is committed to reconciliation and to transparency in our efforts to support Indigenous leadership, communities, survivors, and families in bringing these children the honour we denied them in life.

With respect,
The Right Rev. Dr. Richard Bott
Moderator

The United Church is making funds available to support the work of Indigenous communities for the identification of unmarked graves.

Release from the United Church of Canada Published On: July 22, 2021

The United Church of Canada is making funds available to support the work of Indigenous communities for the identification of unmarked graves, knowledge gathering, and ceremony to honour the children who did not return home from its 15 residential schools. This is an act of reparation and responds to Calls to Action 73–76 of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada.

“The United Church of Canada was an active participant in a system that ripped Indigenous families apart by forcibly removing the children from their homes,” says the church’s Moderator, Richard Bott. “We have written to Indigenous leaders of the communities where 13 United Church-run residential schools were located, and in the case of the other two, communities whose children were taken there. We have let them know that we have made funds available so that the work of bringing home the children does not solely rest on their shoulders. We played a critical role in this and we as a church need to be more action focused in our commitment to reconciliation.” The Moderator also released a wider statement to the residential school survivors, their families, and communities.

A special meeting of the General Council Executive on July 20th, 2021 approved three million dollars to fund this work, which also includes archival research and providing communities access to documents. The United Church turned over all its existing records to the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation Commission and continues to send records that come to light. The General Secretary,

Rev. Michael Blair, notes, “Our history as settlers is a ‘we can fix this’ attitude. Clearly, we have been very wrong. We need to listen before we act, and support communities as they define their needs.”

Unama’ki Institute of Natural Resources

(taken from the UINR website)

Since 1999, Unama’ki Institute of Natural Resources, (UINR), has been Cape Breton’s Mi’kmaw voice on natural resources and environmental concerns.

UINR represents the five Mi’kmaw communities of Unama’ki–Eskasoni, Membertou, Potlotek, Wagmatcook, and We’koqma’q – and was formed to address concerns regarding natural resources and their sustainability.

Our 3 goals are:

- To provide resources for Mi’kmaq equal participation in natural resource management in Unama’ki and its traditional territory.
- To strengthen Mi’kmaw research and natural resource management while maintaining our traditions and world views.
- To partner with other groups sharing the same desire to protect and preserve our resources for future generations.

At the soul of everything we do at UINR is Netukulimk.

Netukulimk is the use of the natural bounty provided by the Creator for the self-support and well-being of the individual and the community. Netukulimk, (pronounced neh-doo-goo-limbk), is achieving adequate standards of community nutrition and economic well-being without jeopardizing the integrity, diversity, or productivity of our environment.

Social Justice

The Social Justice Group was invited to join the People and Climate First workshop on September 22 sponsored by the Antigonish Development & Peace Diocesan Council and I was fortunate to be able to attend. It was an educational and eye opening 4 hours. I am very interested in the environment and our need to protect it but at this workshop I learned so much more.

We saw 2 films. The first, Laudatory Si + 5, was made in 2020, 5 years after Pope Francis raised concerns on how our many actions are destroying God's Creation. The Pope talked about the lie that the earth has unlimited resources and how this misconception must change. Water is a major concern and right now over 3 billion people worldwide are without water, and if we keep going the way we are, this number will increase to 2/3s of the world population.

The film also talked about the importance of biodiversity and how every person, animal and living thing on earth is important. It is important to think of all creation as living things with a purpose in the ecology of the world and should not be seen simply as a product or commodity to be used. One example is the Pacific salmon who are disappearing. The animals and birds eat the salmon, the bones and other debris are deposited into the forest where they decompose adding much needed nutrients for all the trees and plants who also give us our oxygen. Also without the salmon, the animals roam into urban areas becoming a nuisance and the forests become depleted of nutrients and all suffer.

Biodiversity is very important but I never realized quite how important it is. Biodiversity in our forests and in our world prevents diseases. In our forests, the leaves, plants and droppings of the animals decompose and change to make nutrients necessary for all life. But as the forests are destroyed by deforestation and fires, biodiversity disappears and there will be more viruses. With 83% of people living in cities, urbanization grows while forests disappear. As habitats are destroyed viruses that could live harmlessly in forests are now seeking other

places to live and spreading to people. As a result we are seeing more incidents of viruses such as CoVID.

We also heard how many people in the Global South are being harassed and killed for trying to protect their homes and their much needed water.

This was a 4 hour workshop so there was a lot of information including the importance of beginning to act now. And one very important quote, not sure of its source

"We didn't inherit the earth from our ancestors, we borrow it from our children."

We need to protect and care for all of God's Creation and not keep destroying.



Accessibility Plan

The Town of Antigonish and the Accessibility Committee is working with Upland Planning + Design and RHAD Architects to develop an Accessibility Plan for our community.

In line with Nova Scotia's Accessibility Act, this process is intended to remove and prevent barriers that restrict people with disabilities from fully participating in society. The Plan will recognize the diversity among people with disabilities and aim to improve the independence and wellbeing of residents, community members, and visitors with disabilities.

Accessibility is a human right, as well as an important part of diversity and inclusion work. The aim of the Town of Antigonish's Accessibility Plan is to create a Town that is safe for community members are visitors living with disabilities, prioritizing a dignified and comfortable experience for everyone.

Accessibility is a human right, and this process derives its principles for social justice from Nova Scotia's Access by Design. The values for this Accessibility Plan include:

- Respect for difference
- Dignity
- Independence & autonomy
- Equitable access & opportunity
- Non-discrimination
- Full participation & inclusion in society.

The Accessibility Plan will include recommendations for improvements and enhancements in the following categories:

- Awareness and education
- Goods and services
- Information and communications
- Transportation
- Employment
- The built environment

While most of the recommendations in this plan will be for the broader community, this plan will also include a building-specific accessibility audit of Town Hall.

Progress Update:

The Engagement Summary is Now Available.

This Engagement Summary outlines the input that was collected throughout all stakeholder interviews and focus groups. The findings from this report will be brought into the development of the Draft Municipal Accessibility Plan, set to be released this fall.

Following the release of the Draft Plan, further engagement will give stakeholders and the public an opportunity to provide feedback on these recommendations, before the plan is finalized. This project web page will be updated as the draft document is published and more opportunities for involvement and feedback become available.

For inquiries, please contact Steve Scannell, Director of Community Development at sscannell@townofantigonish.ca.

Interviews

The next step in this project is to complete additional stakeholder interviews. The project team will be reaching out to people with lived experience of disability as well as relevant community service providers. A What We Heard Report will summarize key themes from these interviews and identify some priority projects which can be included in this year's budget. If you are a community member with lived experience of disability and would like to get involved, please reach out.

Draft Plan Review

A draft of the Accessibility Plan document is scheduled to be completed in May. It will be available online here in both text and audio formats, and large-print and braille hard copies will be available by request. Following the release of the draft, we will conduct follow-up calls with interested stakeholders, and the public will have the opportunity to provide feedback by submitting comments through email, phone, or print, in addition to a community open house (to be held in-person, as public health restrictions allow).

Final Plan

Following engagement on the draft, the final plan (to be completed this summer) will be updated and adjusted to reflect community feedback, also incorporating an Implementation Plan which will include the following:

- Phasing for the proposed improvements.
- A framework for Municipal monitoring and evaluation.
- A framework for responding to public concerns

Nova Scotia's Accessibility Act mandates the development of both Accessibility Advisory Committees and Accessibility Plans for Municipalities within the province.

The Nova Scotia Accessibility Directorate is responsible for administering the Accessibility Act and advancing disability issues within government, working with persons with disabilities, Municipalities, businesses, post-secondary institutions, and others to achieve the goal of an accessible Nova Scotia by 2030.

The Directorate has published a number of resources for this work, including:

- Planning Accessible Meetings and Events
- Accessibility Planning Toolkit for Municipalities
- Interim Accessibility Guidelines for Indoor and Outdoor Spaces

Two Standard Development Committees were established provincially and have recently submitted their first phase of recommendations on accessibility standards relating to education and the built environment.

Although these recommendations have not yet been established as standards, they are a good starting point, and the Town of Antigonish's Municipal Accessibility Plan will refer to these documents, as well as the guidelines established by the Rick Hansen Foundation's Accessibility Certification, a nationally recognized resource.

This Accessibility Plan also falls within the legislative and legal context of the Accessible Canada Act and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Disability

Nova Scotia's Accessibility Act states that disabilities "include a physical, mental, intellectual, learning, or sensory impairment, including an episodic disability that, in interaction with a barrier, hinders an individual's full and effective participation in society."

The World Health Organization offers a holistic explanation of disability, stating, "In recent years, the understanding of disability has moved away from a physical or medical perspective to one that takes into account a person's physical, social and political context. Today, disability is understood to arise from the interaction between a person's health condition or impairment and the multitude of influencing factors in their environment."

Disabilities may be permanent, temporary (such as a broken bone), or situational (such as a driver unable to see through direct sunlight).

Barriers

Nova Scotia's Accessibility Act defines barriers as "anything that hinders or challenges the full and effective participation in society of persons with disabilities, including a physical barrier, an architectural barrier, an information or communications barrier, an attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier, a policy, or a practice."

Accessibility

Nova Scotia's Accessibility Act suggests that accessibility is defined as "address(ing) the identification, removal and prevention of barriers in the policies, programs, practices and services."

The Rick Hansen Foundation elaborates on this definition as the "degree to which a product, device, activity, facility, service or environment allows everyone to participate fully and is available to everyone on an equal basis." They add that "something cannot be considered accessible if there have only been efforts to make it accessible to one group, such as those who are blind or people who are wheelchair users." Meaningful accessibility meets the real needs of any user and responds to their entire experience, rather than simply completing a checklist of minimum requirements. As examples, an accessible meeting space is not useful if it is only accessed by a flight of stairs, and a ramp does not provide meaningful access if it is located at a separate entrance around the back of a building.

Accessibility Design

Milena Khazanavicius stands on a sidewalk giving the finger to a diamond shaped construction sign strapped to a telephone pole at head level. Her guide dog sits at her side.

Our friend Milena Khazanavicius runs into things like this on the street. Every. Single. Day. These obstacles are impossible to avoid for persons who use canes or guide dogs because they do not detect obstacles way above the ground.



About 7% of Nova Scotians have some type of visual impairment, which adds up to be about 65,000 people. If that does not sound like a significant number, it may help to think that this number is roughly the same as the population of all elementary school children in Nova Scotia. If this many elementary school children were at risk of injuring themselves on the streets, policy makers would already be moving to eradicate these hazards at construction sites, wouldn't they?

Whether you have vision challenges or not,

people often get distracted while they are walking. For example, their eyes may be glued to their mobile phones while walking (true, they should not be doing that), or they may be talking with a friend and not paying attention, or they may have some big bags to carry. Spots like this are accidents waiting to happen for all pedestrians.

Design standards, regulations, policies are all important. But they are not enough. More importantly, something like this can be mitigated without regulations telling us, if we are all aware. It is a quick fix.

Construction companies and their staff with good awareness are already working hard to prevent these kinds of barriers. Let us all be aware and ask construction folks, planning folks, and politicians to be aware. Someday, any of us could be scraping our faces with the corner of a construction sign and flipping the finger at it—or worse, suffering serious injuries (and flipping the finger at the world).

Global Climate Justice

"Our Mother Earth is ill. The development model of unlimited economic growth and overconsumption has broken the balance between human beings and the environment. The current proposals on the table in the negotiations are not enough to stop climate change. We propose the model of living well in harmony with Mother Earth as the way forward to re-establish the balance between humans and nature."

- Rafael Quispe, Bolivian Indigenous leader

Walking Trails for Seniors

By Denise Davies

Walking is good for the body heart and soul. It is not only for the exercise, but we are blessed in having a variety of nature experiences close at hand. I find that learning about the plants adds to the interest and these change as the seasons pass. Enjoy the outdoors and fresh air as we are heading into autumn colours.

Some of these walks are excerpted from the Out and About Antigonish book where you can find maps and additional details. The book is available at The Curious Cat Tea and Books and Antigonish 5 to \$.

Antigonish Landing



1.5KM trail. The entrance is on Adam St. near Granny's Antiques or from the Landing Road near Tony's Meats on Hwy 337. This level gravel path along the Antigonish wetlands provides changing views of the water and farmlands of Williams Point on the far side. Every season brings new wildflowers and blossoms, ducks and water birds, eagles and ospreys. A mid-way raised viewing platform is wheelchair / stroller accessible.

Bethany Trails

Just past St. Martha's Regional Hospital turn left on the Bethany entrance on the left. The Motherhouse of the Sisters of St. Martha stood on these grounds for almost 100 years. The grounds have several areas to walk and enjoy nature. Throughout the area the Arboretum includes 25 selected trees which are marked with the name of the species and a dedication to a person or event. More trees will be added over the years to come.

Saint Theresa's Garden with its pond, flower beds and beautiful water lilies and peaceful path are

a delight in every season. The short Sacred Heart Forest Trail leads from St. Theresa's Garden to the Sacred Heart Grove through old growth forest.

The new Bethany Centennial Garden is opening September 21 2021. The garden will include a heritage walk with interpretive panels marking significant events in the St. Martha's history.

Columbus Field

Columbus Field on Main Street has a track for walking (or running!), quiet trails through the woods as well as tennis courts, a dog park and a playground. It is next to Club 60.

The Keppoch

Take exit 30 off of Hwy 104 West and follow the signs to The Keppoch. This is a community run and managed, all season, recreation area with trails for walking, hiking, biking, mountain biking, snow sledding, cross country skiing and snowshoeing. Member and day use fees.

Beaver Mountain

Take exit 30 off of Hwy 104 West. Turn left, cross the overpass and turn right on Beaver Mountain Rd past the Riverside Speedway. Note that there may be some road construction for the next year or so. A 6Km series of trails with varying levels of difficulty wind through wooded areas. The main trail is paved and wheelchair accessible. Gorgeous view overlooking Antigonish County.

Jitney Trail, Pictou

The Jitney Trail in Pictou is a beautiful recreational trail (3 KM) with interpretive panels from Pictou's waterfront starting near the Ship Hector, to Brown's Point.

The trail meets up with the Pictou to Oxford section of the Short Line Railway Trail (127 KM). The trail is a former rail bed along the Northumberland Strait and passes through farms and forests. There are several access points to this trail.

Samson Trail, New Glasgow

The Samson Trail is a 4km trail along the river in New Glasgow. A perfect easy trail to enjoy a walk with beautiful views. Enjoy the lovely walking and biking paths along both sides of the river with over 6KM of riverside trails.

Black Duck Cove



The Black Duck Cove Provincial Park in Little Dover has a series of boardwalks and walking trails that lead around the nature area with a variety of vegetation and views of the Atlantic Ocean. The swimming beach has lovely soft sand and a protected beach. Benches and picnic tables make it easy to stop and relax whether you are a swimmer or not. The Canteen at the parking entrance has ice cream and meals with picnic tables and benches in the sun or shade. Locals as well as visitors frequent the place as it is one of the few places available for food in the area.

Guysborough Trails

The Shoreline Walking Trail starts at the end of Guysborough Main Street and winds along Chedabucto Bay along a grassy track. Interpretive trail signs describe the history dating back to the 1600s when the area was buzzing with ship building and a large vibrant port. For a longer hike, the Trans Canada trail runs through Guysborough (45KM) on the bed of a railway abandoned in the 1930s. The Guysborough Trail was the first section of the Trans-Canada Trail to open in Nova Scotia. It offers a spectacular view from the McAlister Bridge and portions of the trail go along the scenic Chedabucto Bay and other portions along the Salmon River, across a suspension bridge and views of beautiful waterfalls.

Boylston



The Boylston Provincial Park has picnic tables and grassy area with lovely views of Chedabucto Bay. Walk down to the left of the entrance gate along a shady boardwalk to take you to a footbridge over to a small island. A swimming, beach walking looking for pebbles and a shady island path are fun for the whole family. The park is just a few KM before you reach Guysborough town.

Celtic Shores Cape Breton.

For hikers and bikers, the Celtic Shore Coastal Trail winds along the coast of Cape Breton from Port Hastings to Inverness. This 92KM all-purpose trail is relatively level and built on the bed of old railway tracks. It is well surfaced with many entry points along Hwy 19. Interpretive signs describe the history of the area and nearby communities, industries, and people, and how the trail was built. Spectacular views of the ocean, beaches, headlands, farmlands, meadows, and multi-colored wildflowers are around every corner. Well marked signs show amenities and distances. Along the Ceilidh Trail there are lots of opportunities to enjoy and learn more about the distinctive and popular Cape Breton music. The trail is great for snowshoeing and cross-country skiing in the winter.

Green Burial – How to End Your Time on Earth Naturally!

Green burials are becoming increasingly popular amongst true environmentalists and there are many reasons why.

What we now consider a “traditional” or “conventional” burial has not really been around that long. Historically people “laid out” and buried their own family members in simple pine boxes. Death was a much less feared part of the life cycle because we were more familiar with it.

It’s only recently that the dead have been embalmed and buried in the types of cemeteries we have become familiar with today.

These are the problems with the current form of burial: 1) embalming, (used to delay decomposition), involves formaldehyde and other chemicals – extremely toxic substances which both leach into the earth and can harm the funeral home personnel who are exposed to them; 2) the use of caskets includes either the waste of often rare/tropical hardwoods, transported from great distances at huge environmental cost or metals – neither very environmentally friendly; 3) cemeteries frequently use cement, (often lined with highly toxic polymers), or metal vaults to prevent shifting of caskets as they settle in tightly crammed areas; and 4) cemeteries generally require great quantities of water, and insect and weed killer to be maintained to our “standards”.

If you’re thinking that cremation is a better environmental alternative, it is – slightly. But not much! Super high heat is required to cremate a body – releasing large quantities of fossil fuels and greenhouse gases and using enormous amounts of energy. Also the “ashes” are extremely salty, so if they are “scattered” they actually harm the soil and can hinder plant growth. Estimates are that a single cremation uses enough natural gas to run a typical Canadian home for almost two weeks and releases up to 5.9 grams of mercury. A significant environmental footprint!



So what is a “green burial”?

Green burials return a body to the earth in as natural a state as possible. They involve no embalming, little “wrapping” of the body and frequently not even a headstone – except perhaps the planting of a tree or shrub, or a flat indigenous stone. Communal memorialization may be preferred over individual stones. As in all modern cemeteries, there are carefully kept records and GPS mapping.

Many environmentally conscious people now consider this sustainable option when planning for their own deaths or the loss of their loved ones.

The body is not cremated, embalmed or buried in anything toxic. No chemicals are involved. A body that is not embalmed can still be prepared in a respectful way for viewing, if that is the deceased and family’s wish.

The body can be wrapped in a natural, biodegradable shroud or buried in a plain pine box. The body is allowed to return to its natural state of total decomposition. Recycling at its finest! The surrounding green space becomes the final resting place.

A green burial is simple, plain and unpretentious. The cost is lower and a portion of it may be used toward restoration and stewardship work at the site. These burials conserve natural resources by not using chemicals, precious woods, steel or concrete. They eliminate the use of toxic substances. They may be used to preserve natural areas. Depending on the type of cemetery they may help restore natural landscapes

with native trees and wildflowers, offering food and refuge to birds and other wildlife. The protected land can become a monument to the lives of those buried there.

Some people have concerns such as will animals disturb the grave site? Surprisingly, only 12" of soil are required to protect against animals digging into graves. Green burials eliminate the odours of decomposing organic materials. Will nearby water quality be harmed? Not at all. Because they don't have fertilizer run off or toxins, green burials produce cleaner water than urban, suburban, or agricultural areas. Soil is a remarkably efficient filter. Green burials are completely legal. What we think of as laws forbidding simple burials is usually individual cemetery rules. No Canadian law requires burial vaults. But some cemeteries prefer them for ease of maintenance. No law requires embalming.

There are three types of green burial cemeteries in Canada: Hybrid Burial Grounds, (conventional cemeteries that allow for burial in any type of container, including a shroud, without an outer burial container (vault or liner), Green Burial Grounds, (settings that prohibit outer burial containers, bodies embalmed with toxins and containers made of anything other than green or plant-derived materials) and Conservation Burial Grounds, (these have the strictest standards of the three and "must involve an established conservation organization that holds a conservation easement or has in place a deed restriction guaranteeing long-term stewardship" and "be owned by, or operated in conjunction with a government agency or a nonprofit conservation organization.")

Three cemeteries in Nova Scotia will currently accept green burials, but they are all located near the Halifax area. Could the St James United and St Pauls Anglican Cemetery in Antigonish be used as a Hybrid Burial Ground? There are members of each of these churches who are interesting in pursuing this

possibility and who have written to our Cemetery Committee raising the issue.

If this eco-friendly method of burial interests or intrigues you, please consider the following actions:

- 1) Learn more about green burials. Google any of the following: The Green Burial Society of Canada; Green Burial Nova Scotia; Talk Death – Green Burial in Canada; Death Matters – Green Burials; and A Green Goodbye.
- 2) Contact local cemeteries saying you are interested in green burial and learn if there are any options in their by-laws that allow us to be more environmentally conscious.
- 3) Contact local funeral homes as well. Pre-planning is the best way to ensure that your loved ones know what kind of burial you would prefer upon death, but will also remind the funeral industry that there is interest in green burials.
- 4) If you own land, consider donating it for green burials.

Recently the Green Burial Nova Scotia Working Group Committee has become a project of Halifax's environmental charity Ecology Action Centre's "Built Environment Committee".

The more people request green burials, the more they will become available.

Our bodies, returned to the earth through decomposition, can help create new life. Our nutrients can feed commemorative trees and shrubs, in turn creating new forest or parkland. Nature lovers can rest in green settings knowing that in death, they have helped to create an organic oasis.



Bethany Garden Launch

After years of planning and construction, the Bethany Centennial Garden was blessed and opened to the public. Rev Peter Smith attended. It is now available to the whole public. Below is a brief description. It can be reached by walking past the St Martha's parking lot or from the Highway 337 there's a path beginning near the top of the Hospital Hill, across from the Parkland. It promises to be a very special place with its steeple and pool, plus winding paths amongst old foundations. The labyrinth has been incorporated into the whole design.

September 21st, a Feast Day for the Sisters of St. Martha, marks their arrival to Bethany property. Yesterday, on the 100th anniversary of this event, Sisters were delighted to officially open the newly



constructed, although not yet complete, Bethany Centennial Garden, built on the site of their former Motherhouse. The festive day started with a special Mass celebrated by Bishop Kirkpatrick. Sisters toured the garden throughout the day and, at 4 PM, Sr. Brendalee Boisvert, the Congregation Leader, welcomed a small group of guests for an official opening and blessing ritual. Covid-19 pandemic has limited our ability to share this event with the wider public, but, in Martha spirit of hospitality, we are extending our welcome to this Garden to everyone and are pleased to share with you the video from the event as well as a few photos.

Thank You for a Day to Remember

As Aug. 11 was approaching, messages were given to my family, please, no special celebration, to which they agreed. "Instead, let's have a family picnic at our favourite park in Arisaig."

Early in the morning of Aug. 11th a neighbour called me and asked if I had been down to my mailbox. I said I hadn't, but curiosity got the better of me. I was thinking, naturally, of balloons and ribbons. Many of you may have seen my birthday twin, kilt, and teapot, sitting in all their glory. And so began the day, and later at the park my family

presented me with a basket of cards and letters from people near and far.

I finally began to open them (at 2:30 a.m.), and there were tears of joy, laughter, and memories from old and new friends. I can't thank everyone individually so please accept this as a heartfelt thanks for warming an old gal's heart.

Many years ago when leaving a congregation, a special gift was given to me which said, "A friend is someone with whom I can be sincere. Before them I may think aloud."

I consider you all my friends.

Blessings and love,
Betty Webber

The Vaccine Protocol at St. James

On October 4, 2021 the Province of Nova Scotia is introducing the Proof of Full Vaccination Policy which will require participants to show proof of vaccination (or proof of medical exemption) for some activities.

We have been told that church services are considered an essential service so while everyone is encouraged to get vaccinated no one will be asking to see proof when you come on Sunday morning. However, we have also been told that proof of vaccination will be required to attend weddings, funerals, and social gatherings held at the church. More details will follow from NS Public Health and will be posted in the bulletin and on our website.

If you have been fully vaccinated and don't have a card showing that yet you can go to <https://novascotia.flow.canimmunize.ca/en/portal> and print yours off. There are numerous places around town to get the card laminated as well (Staples, Five to a Dollar, CACL, and the People's Place Library). If you prefer you can just print off the sheet or even take a picture of it with your phone. Let's all do our part to keep each other safe!

A Note from Rev. Peter about Visits at St. Martha's

Normally I go up to St. Martha's once or twice a week to see who is in hospital and drop by their room for a visit and prayer. The last eighteen months because of Covid restrictions put in place by the NS Health Authority dropping by to see who is in hospital hasn't been possible.

The current policy is that I can only visit in the hospital if I have been requested by the person in hospital or their family and have been cleared by Spiritual and Religious Care. So if you are in hospital and would like a visit please email (minister@stjamesuc.com) or call my study (902-863-2859) or you can ask one of the hospital chaplains- Rev. Doug, Father Andrew, or Sister Catherine- to contact me so I can arrange to come and visit.



RELS397.20

Christian-Muslim Encounters: A 1400-Year Conversation Winter 2022

The Syriac, Coptic, and Arabic-speaking Christians of the Middle East were the first Christians to encounter Islam in its nascent form. This Christian engagement with Islam shaped the lines of theological disputation from the 7th century onwards. What were these conversations like? What can today's Christians and Muslims learn from these early encounters?

The course begins with a brief introduction to Christian and Islamic theology, which already hints at these conversations. This leads to an examination of a section of the Qur'an that highlights some of the key issues of theological disagreement (and agreement) and that sets the stage for the next 1400 years. We then look at some of the earliest theological writings in the history of Christian-Muslim encounters before moving on to reflections on modern and contemporary methods and debates from a variety of perspectives, from attempts to find unity to conversion-oriented outreach. The course uses a variety of types of sources, from original primary source dialogues and debates in translation from Arabic, Syriac, and Coptic, to secondary source commentaries on them, to contemporary novels and films.

The course is taught by Dr. Linda Darwish, Department of Religious Studies, StFX University. It will be held on Monday and Wednesday evenings from 6:30-7:45, Jan.-April 2022. You are warmly invited register for credit or audit. Seniors 65+ can register for free!