

## RECONCILIATION WITH INDIGENOUS PEOPLES



Are you looking for a pledge to get you started on your commitment for reconciliation?

Over 8,300 Canadian have signed this pledge, powered by Indigenous Corporate Training Inc.

The St James United Church Social Justice Committee encourages members of the congregation to reflect on their role in Reconciliation and to actively work to weave these commitments into our daily lives.. You can learn more & download the pledge at [www.ictinc.ca](http://www.ictinc.ca)

Please share the pledge link <https://www.ictinc.ca/personal-pledge-of-reconciliation-with-indigenous-peoples> with your family and colleagues.



If you share on social media use these hashtag : #reconciliationpledge or #imadethereconciliationpledge

### I solemnly pledge to:

1. Learn more about Indigenous Peoples and issues.
2. Continue to look forward to positive change for the situation with Indigenous Peoples.
3. Find ways to address the Indigenous-related myths and misconceptions with my fellow Canadians.
4. Not perpetuate stereotypes in my conversations or observations.
5. Encourage others around me to keep reconciliation an ongoing effort.
6. Read the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's 94 Calls to Action.
7. Read the 231 Calls for Justice in the Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.
8. Actively encourage ongoing support of National Indigenous Peoples Day every June 21st and National Day for Truth and Reconciliation on September 30th for myself, my family, and my community.



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# CONNECTIONS

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

By the Outreach & Communications Committee

Winter 2022

*The people walking in darkness  
have seen a great light;  
on those living in the land of  
deep darkness a light has  
dawned.*



*-Isaiah 9:2*

*Winter 2022*

Dear Friends in Christ,

This Christmas feels different.

There is an energy and activity that wasn't there when the shadow of Covid covered us. There is excitement and enthusiasm to resume the activities and celebrations we had to cancel because of restrictions. There is hope and anticipation that finally we will be able to enjoy gatherings and set aside our worries for Christmas.

It is as if we have been walking in darkness, unable to see the way forward and were uncertain as we made our way. Now that the light has dawned on us, the world around us is filled with colour and we can see things in a new way. Now the world comes alive with promise and hope.

We can marvel at the star shining brightly and understand that something incredible is happening. We can hear the choirs singing and joyfully join our voices with theirs. We can know that the salvation of God is breaking forth into our lives and our world.



So this year let us go to Bethlehem and see the great thing that God is doing. This season let us embrace the hope and the peace which Jesus brings into the world by his birth. This Christmas let us answer the love of God among us with all our hearts.

I know that I'm excited for a more joyful celebration this year. I hope that you can gather with friends and loved ones and resume some of the traditions and activities which have been on pause the past two years.

I pray that as we hold our services on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day that we all experience and know

the blessings of the good news of great joy- Jesus has been born!

May God bless us all this holy season and into the new year.

Yours in Christ's Service,

The Rev. Peter A. Smith



## ST JAMES ARCHIVES NOTICE

Every church congregation goes through changes. Some committees and groups stay as they are, while others merge. Recently some have dissolved. If you have materials such as photos, written stories, etc., the archives upstairs would be interested in adding your items. You can send your keep your memories and group highlights to the office or contact Marlene Groenenberg at 902-863-0078.

- the St James United Church  
Archives Committee



St. James United Church (formerly St. James Presbyterian) Courtesy Nova Scotia Archives

## ANOTHER LOOK AT MAID - A NEW CAMPAIGN FOR COMPASSION

A new campaign, launched by the Christian Medical and Dental Association of Canada and backed by Ontario's bishops, argues that provincial governments need to spend more on palliative care, mental health treatments, social and housing supports to ensure Canadians don't choose doctor-assisted suicide out of despair and frustration.

Vancouver palliative care physician Margaret Cottle, a member of the Euthanasia Prevention Coalition, has thrown her support behind the **No Options, No Choice campaign**. Cottle worries about the moral shape of a society that makes a lethal injection easy but housing, palliative care, effective psychiatric care and home care incredibly difficult.



"What does this say about us as a culture if we do this?" she asked. "In British Columbia it takes less paperwork and less assessment to get MAiD than it does to receive government-supported home oxygen."

To learn more about this effort, visit

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

## CONGREGANT TO BE AWARDED PRESTIGIOUS MEDAL

On 11 January 2023, Tim Hinds, (Capt, ret'd), will in Halifax to be awarded the Queen's Platinum Jubilee Medal by The Honourable Arthur J. LeBlanc, Nova Scotia's Lieutenant Governor.

Tim received multiple nominations for the many areas he's involved with. What was taken into consideration includes, but was not limited to: volunteer firefighter, army cadet instructor, Lions Club (specifically used eyeglass coordinator) and volunteering with the St John Ambulance Brigade in Port Hawkesbury (providing first aid at community events).



Congratulations, Tim, on your well-deserved recognition!

*Michèle Ashby*

The medal program marks the unprecedented 70th anniversary of the Queen's accession to the throne in 1952 and honours significant contributions and achievements by Nova Scotians.

"The Queen has exemplified the true meaning of public service. The Platinum Jubilee Medal program is a welcome opportunity to celebrate outstanding Nova Scotians who, like Her Majesty, have dedicated themselves to service, community and country, particularly during the pandemic"

- Lt-Gov. LeBlanc

## CHURCH GARDEN UPDATE



The Church Gardeners have finished another year of tending & planting, always planning for next year. Several daffodils were planted that were generously donated by Betty Webber & we put on a lot of compost. Hurricane Fiona did a lot of damage to trees, perhaps the beds will get more sun for more colourful plantings. Anyone with plants or would like to join us, don't be shy. Call 902-863-0078 to find out more.

*Submitted by Marlene & Gerrit Groenenberg on behalf of the Church Gardeners, Liz Millet, Mike Cook, Andrew Murray, Diane Theuerkauf*



## 2023—A MORE SUSTAINABLE YEAR?

A new year, a new start!

Let's consider how we can change our habits, from taking better care of ourselves to taking better care of the world around us.

1. **Buy less stuff** We often hear about reduce, reuse, recycle but we put too much emphasis on recycle and not enough on reduce and reuse. We need to be conscious consumers in the first place and focus on accumulating less "stuff". How did we become so obsessed with accumulating "things"? What are good ways to shrink our carbon footprint? Keep your own knife, fork, spoon and straw (all metal, not plastic) in your car, back pack or purse. When you're offered plastic utensils, use your own. Carefully consider every purchase you make. Do you really need more trinkets?
2. **Less packaging** Avoid buying products with excessive packaging and plastics. Speak up when you see excessive packaging – if stores don't know that people genuinely care about this issue, they'll continue the practice. Use your own shopping bags to reduce plastic consumption. Keep reusable bags in your vehicle trunks. Wash out and reuse baggies.



3. **Share** Share things like vehicles, appliances, power tools and yard equipment with others. You not only help the environment; you get to know your neighbours better.
4. **Buy used whenever possible** If you need something you can't borrow or share, (furniture, clothing, etc), buy it second-hand. And if you have to buy new, look for quality products that are sustainably produced by people who are paid a decent wage – not cheap, "throw away" items. Sustainable clothing can be more expensive, but it's the right thing to do. If it's cheap – there's a reason for that and it's probably not good.



5. **Eat seasonally and locally** Eating produce in season supports local growers and lessens the environmental impact because it means less transportation and less refrigeration.
6. **Grow your own food whenever possible** This is easy if you have a green thumb and some space. If not, support your local farmers' market.
7. **Stop idling** Don't idle your car to warm it up in the morning – reducing your idling time reduces carbon emissions that are harmful to the environment. And it really isn't necessary. Consider turning your car off when stopped at red lights, construction zones, etc.
8. **Use active transportation**

## A MORE SUSTAINABLE YEAR?

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3)

9. **Speak up!** Don't hesitate to voice your opinion – environmental degradation often happens because



- people are too intimidated or afraid to speak up.
10. **Understand your energy use** Be informed about your energy usage. Can you insulate and caulk your home better instead of pumping more heat into the outdoors? Can you car share instead of going it alone? Use water from your dehumidifier to water plants, bushes and trees all summer and into the fall. Air dry laundry on an outdoor clothesline or a rack inside your house. Our efforts are always a work in progress, but every bit helps and makes us more aware of the value of acting NOW! Share with others your passion for the environment and encourage them to think about their consumer habits.

## STATEMENT BY UN SEC'Y GENERAL GUTERRES AT CONCLUSION OF COP27 (excerpts)

"..COP27 took place not far from Mount Sinai, a site that is central to many faiths and to the story of Moses, or Musa. It's fitting. Climate chaos is a crisis of biblical proportions.

The signs are everywhere. Instead of a burning bush, we face a burning planet."

"..From the beginning, this conference has been driven by two overriding themes: justice and ambition.

Justice for those on the frontlines who did so little to cause the crisis – including the victims of the recent floods in Pakistan.

Ambition to keep the 1.5 degree limit alive and pull humanity back from the climate cliff."

"This COP has taken an important step towards justice... The voices of those on the frontlines of the climate crisis must be heard. The UN system will support this effort every step of the way."

"Our planet is still in the emergency room. We need to drastically reduce emissions now – and this is an issue this COP did not address... The world still needs a giant leap on climate ambition.

The red line we must not cross is the line that takes our planet over the 1.5 degree temperature limit.

To have any hope of keeping to 1.5, we need to massively invest in renewables and end our addiction to fossil fuels... Doubling down on fossil fuels is double trouble"

un.org



## MY FIONA FIG TREE

It's the first snowstorm of the season. Fresh in our heads is Fiona. We can't help but wonder what trees will hold firm, what trees will continue to weaken and inevitably fall.

I'm in a kind of similar pattern as the snow flies and heavily lands outside. In my living room is my challenge for the next few weeks. I call this challenge my Fiona Fig Tree. For years this tree has had an important place in my home(s). Over 35 years, it's stretched and widened so that now if I need to imagine the green seasons to come, I can look at this fig tree.

But when it comes to Christmas this fig tree is sometimes drafted into being a Christmas tree. And that's the problem. It didn't get groomed to be a balanced snug tree like the evergreens we buy and set up. This tree is like a ballerina with branches some thin and flowing, others tightly packed.

Here's how it all started, this December, 2022. I hung two sets of lights on her. She accepted them. Then I experimented with long flowing ribbons. The look was a bit goofy so I took them off and started again, this time adding our home made treasures from old along with more decorations quickly bought on sale. My friend the fig was actually showing brightness and beauty, her lights reflected by various baubles and stars, giving a magical rainbow in some quiet little places. Frequently I would step back to see how it was coming along.

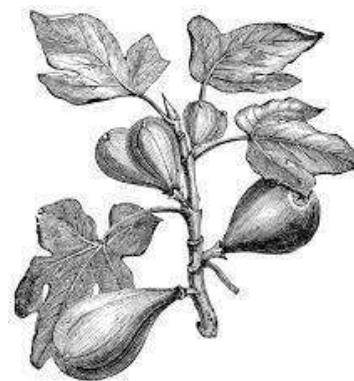
One more step back gave me a sudden urgent jolt! This tree was about to CRASH! It was leaning, leaning way too far over. Rushing to her, I could see her base lifted almost out of the pot. Forget the baubles, the stars, the sparkly snowflakes... She needed a decisive twist so that her major branches could find support from the wall. WHEW!

Now she is just like many of our vulnerable trees scattered across our region. There's plenty of food for thought if you want to go there.

Is this what happens when you force nature to your own purposes?

Is this a lesson on patience and accepting our incompleteness. As I no longer have her beautiful look. Its squashed up branches only reminds me that I overreached!

Is there room for her in the Inn?

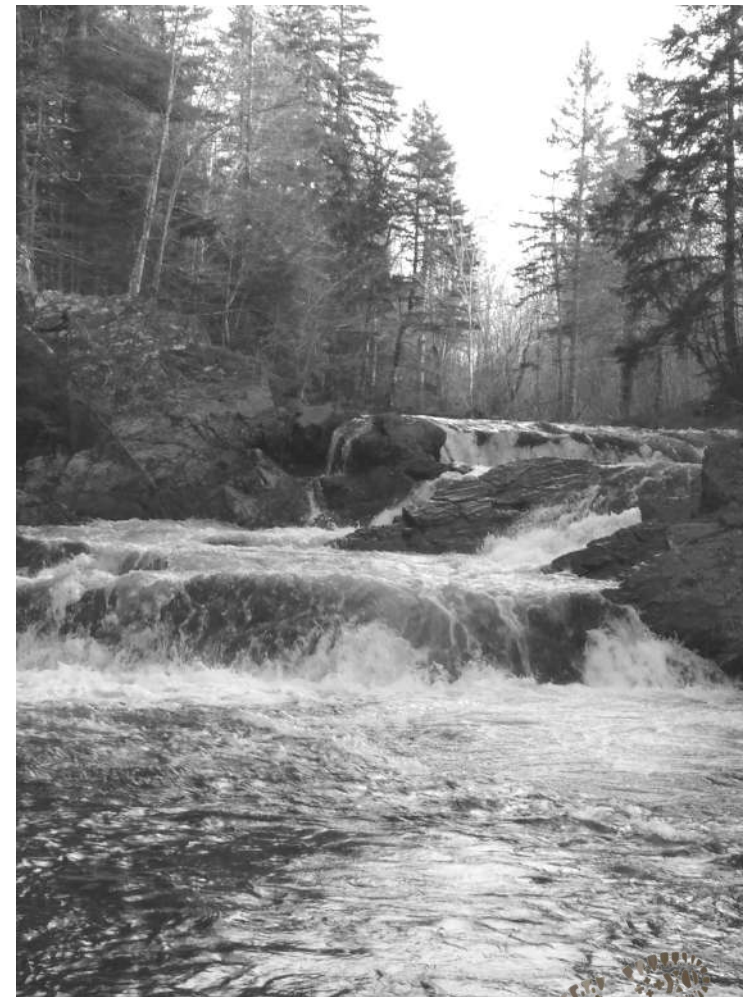


- Fran Wittgens

## BLACK AVON FALLS

Recently, Gerrit and I checked out Black Avon waterfalls, a beautiful spot. The trail is relatively easy and close to the Heatherton-Guysborough Road. These falls are well worth the visit (500m before the stop sign to Black Avon Fraser Grant Rd.)

- Marlene Groenenberg



## CHRISTMAS Q&A (con't)

### Where is the story of the Wiseman and the star?

The story of the Wiseman is found in the second chapter of the Gospel of Matthew (Matthew 2:1-12).

Although we are not actually told in the Bible how many Wiseman there were, traditionally it has been assumed there were three since there were three gifts presented to the newborn king.



### Was Jesus really born on December 25th?

None of the Gospels actually record the date when Jesus was born. Early Christians celebrated it at different times of the year until about the 3rd century AD. December 25th was chosen as the date for Christmas by many churches because that is when days stop getting shorter and begin getting longer. An appropriate time to celebrate the arrival of Jesus the "light of the world".

- Rev. Peter Smith

## CHRISTIAN MEDITATION GROUP WELCOMES STFX STUDENTS

A few weeks ago, two students joined us in our Tuesday afternoon meditation session. Another had visited a few weeks before. These visits were for them a course assignment for their World Religions class (taught by Linda Darwish and Ken Penner amongst others from the Religion Dept. at StFX). The purpose being to expose themselves to different faith traditions. We were elated to welcome them and to introduce them to the practice of Christian meditation. After a 20 minute meditation, we had a friendly chat with them, asking them what has been their experience so far, visiting the Antigonish Mosque and the Hindu temple in Frankville, attending the Diwali, Festival of Lights.

For them, discovering new religious traditions has been an eye-opening experience that may contribute to make them better global citizens, making it easier to connect, to interact with people from various faiths and cultural traditions.

This brief encounter with these students had also contributed to expand our own horizons.

Our group is always welcoming and open to anyone interested in this practice of stillness in our lives. We meet Tuesdays at 3pm in the multi purpose room.

- Marie Brunelle



## CHRISTMAS QUESTION & ANSWER

### Where is the story of Jesus' birth in the Bible?

The story of Jesus' birth is found in the second chapter of the Gospel of Luke (Luke 2:1-20). The Bible story tells of Joseph and Mary travelling to Bethlehem and Jesus being born in a stable and visited by shepherds who had been told the news of his birth.



*Nativity of Jesus, by Botticelli, c. 1473-1475*

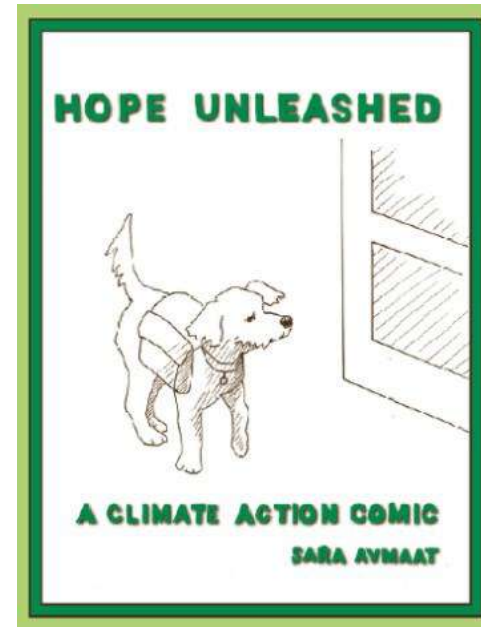
### Why was Jesus born in a stable?

The Bible says nothing other than there was "no room for them at the inn." (Luke 2:7) Presumably there was such a crowd in town because of the order to be registered for the census that there were no free rooms anywhere for them to stay.

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## BOOK REVIEWS



### Hope Unleashed: A Climate Action Comic

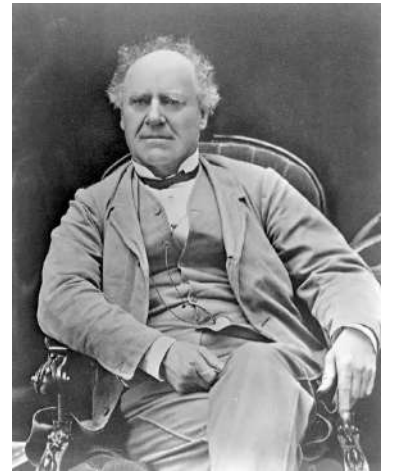
Published 2022, 36 pages, \$7.00. Available at the 5¢ to \$1.00 Store, Happenstance and The Curious Cat Bookstore.

This charming and educational comic book, written and illustrated by Antigonish's own Sara avMaat, is aimed at the young teenage audience, but will be appreciated by adults too. Maude the dog is perplexed by her person, Patrick's, despair. He's suffering, (like so many of us), from climate anxiety. So she sets out to find ways to change his attitude, and in the process learns a lot about the climate crisis and what some smart people are doing to try to mitigate it. It draws on Nova Scotian examples and lists local resources. An enjoyable book that is sure to delight anyone who reads it! A copy will be available in our church library shortly.

- Michèle Ashby

## Western & Eastern Rambles: Travel Sketches of N.S. by Joseph Howe.

Joseph Howe (1804-1873) was a publisher of the "Novascotian". While on his journey around N.S. looking to collect money for payment of subscriptions, he wrote his "Rambles". This



was well before becoming premier of our province. This publication was based on his personal observations of the communities he visited while on horseback, stagecoach and on foot. However, his views of Antigonish were far from spectacular. "Antigonish is the shire town of the county of Sydney, owes its name to the Indians, the word signifying, 'River of Fish' or as some have it, 'Forked River'." As he wrote of our churchyard; "The old Presbyterian Meeting House is quite a small building-a new one of large dimensions was begun sometime since, but has never been completed. It would be an ornament to the village if finished-as it is, it rather detracts from, than adds to its appearance." He goes on to say many negative comments about our town. Well if he were alive today, he should quickly change his tune, our church is definitely an ornament to our community. Our congregation does many good deeds, which is more important than looking pretty. Of course, his views were his own, Antigonish proved itself more worthy of acclaim than he wrote about our town & county in the mid 1800s.

\*quotes from pages 182-187. dated 22 June 1831.

- Marlene Groenenberg



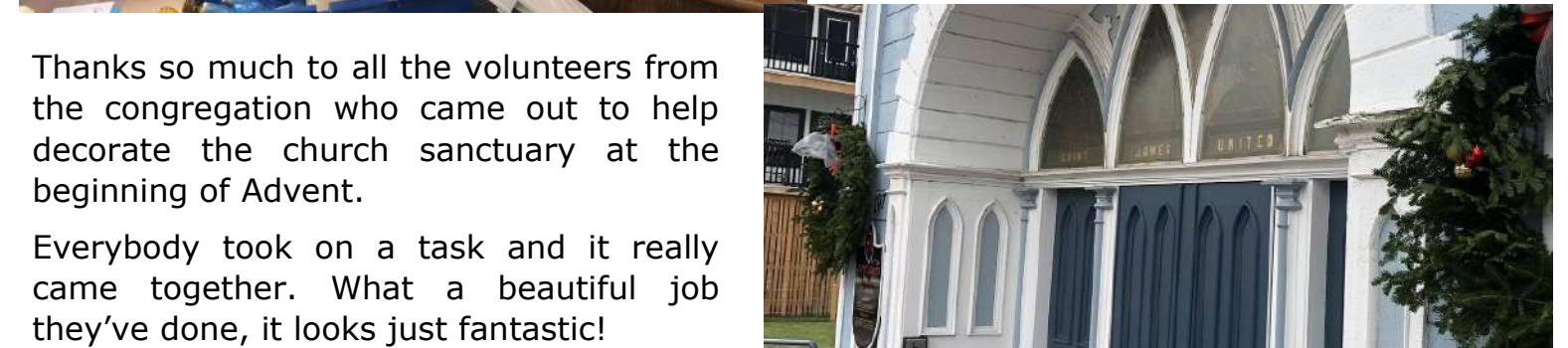
# PHOTO GALLERY



At the last community hot meal of the year, the RCMP team prepared an amazing full Christmas dinner for all. Plates piled high with generous servings of turkey and gravy, potatoes, turnip, rolls, and a selection of wonderful homemade pies for dessert. All served in style by Mounties in red serge!

Everyone who came out also received a thoughtful gift bag.

Beginning in the new year, hot meals will be held on Thursdays as well as Tuesdays. If you would like to help or contribute with this program, contact Pam Cunningham.



Thanks so much to all the volunteers from the congregation who came out to help decorate the church sanctuary at the beginning of Advent.

Everybody took on a task and it really came together. What a beautiful job they've done, it looks just fantastic!