

# CONNECTIONS

“And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger.”

Luke 2:16

Christmas 2024

Dear Friends in Christ,

Many years ago in Bible Study, we were talking about the familiar story of Jesus’ birth from Luke’s gospel. We had discussed all the verses in detail and then I asked if there were any more questions. One of the participants raised a hand and said “What do you suppose the shepherds saw in the manger?”

The gospel is clear that they saw Jesus lying in the manger yet the truth is that the shepherds saw something more than a baby that night. For the people had been praying and waiting for a Saviour, a King, a Messiah from God who would change everything. The prophets had written of the coming Messiah, the angels sang that night about the Saviour’s arrival, and the shepherds rushed to see for themselves the newborn King.

The shepherds saw the baby and



couldn’t have been more excited and thankful. They told everyone what they heard about the child from the angels and they loudly and publicly praised God as they headed back to their flocks. They were promised a gift from God, they discovered the baby Jesus, and their joy overflowed into the world.

I think about that question from Bible Study every time I look at a nativity set and hear the Christmas story. I find myself considering what those shepherds saw and how they responded when they found the child. Then I find myself asking “What do I see when I look at the manger?” and realize each year I see something more about God’s goodness and grace. For when we come in praise and hope to Bethlehem we discover once again the good news of great joy that caused people down through the ages and around the world to rejoice.

May God bless you and your family and our congregations this Christmas season.

Yours in Christ’s service,

The Rev. Peter A. Smith

# Environmental Justice for Every Day of the Week.

## 1. Reduce – Monday

- **Focus:** Reducing waste and consumption helps lessen environmental harm, especially for marginalized communities often burdened by pollution and landfills.
- **Action:** Reduce unnecessary purchases, cut down on food waste, and be mindful of the energy and water you consume. Smaller consumption means less waste in communities that may be disproportionately impacted by environmental degradation.
- **Tip:** Plan meals to avoid over-purchasing, and buy only what you need to minimize waste.

## 2. Reuse – Tuesday

- **Focus:** Reusing products and materials minimizes the need for new resources and reduces the impact on areas facing environmental hazards due to overproduction.
- **Action:** Opt for reusable shopping bags, containers, and bottles instead of single-use plastics. Repurpose old items before discarding them.
- **Tip:** Turn old clothes into rags or repurpose jars for storage to avoid unnecessary waste.

## 3. Refill – Wednesday

- **Focus:** Many low-income communities are affected by pollution from plastic production and waste. Refilling containers



reduces plastic waste, benefiting these communities.

- **Action:** Choose refillable products, like water bottles, coffee cups, or cleaning supplies. Many stores and brands now offer refill stations or bulk buying options.
- **Tip:** Switch to refillable options for toiletries and household cleaning products, cutting down on plastic packaging waste.

## 4. Repair & Repurpose – Thursday

- **Focus:** Repairing and repurposing goods reduces the need for new production, which often harms communities involved in raw material extraction or manufacturing.
- **Action:** Fix broken items instead of throwing them away. Repurpose old furniture, clothes, or electronics. This practice extends the life cycle of products and reduces overall waste.
- **Tip:** Try DIY repair tutorials or visit a repair café in your community to fix items instead

## 5. Replace – Friday

- **Focus:** When something needs replacing, choose products that are sustainable, non-toxic, and come from companies that prioritize ethical and eco-friendly practices.
- **Action:** When replacing items, go for eco-friendly alternatives like energy-efficient appliances, biodegradable goods, and products with minimal packaging.
- **Tip:** Replace plastic items with sustainable alternatives, such as bamboo toothbrushes or cloth napkins instead of paper.

## 6. Recycle – Saturday

- **Focus:** Recycling reduces the need for new raw materials and prevents waste from accumulating in landfills, many of which are located near low-income or marginalized communities.
- **Action:** Make sure to sort your recyclables properly and ensure you're recycling materials like paper, glass, plastic, and metal. Educate yourself about local recycling programs to improve participation.
- **Tip:** Rinse containers before recycling to avoid contamination and ensure they're properly processed.

## 7. Use the Bin – Sunday

- **Focus:** Proper disposal is crucial for keeping harmful materials out of the environment, especially in communities where waste management services are inadequate.
- **Action:** Always use the correct bin for waste disposal: recycling, composting, or landfill. Proper waste management helps prevent pollution and promotes environmental justice.
- **Tip:** Keep waste bins in easy-to-reach areas so you're more likely to dispose of things correctly. Be mindful of hazardous materials like batteries and electronics, and dispose of them at designated collection points.



## The Meaning of Giving

What is the meaning of the word Giving? Giving means to present voluntarily and without expecting compensation. Synonyms: contribute, donate, supply, provide, furnish and offer. Giving can take many forms such as gifts, our time, resources, support or our talents.

2024 has financially not been a successful year for the congregation here at St. James. Our church building is in use more now than ever. The number of people who attend each week remains steady. We have 86 members using PAR as a way to contribute; others are using weekly envelopes.

This year more and more members have been using e-transfer ( [eft@stjamesuc.com](mailto:eft@stjamesuc.com) ) to contribute monthly or through Canada Helps. Our total income is up compared to last year at the same time. However, and this should come as no surprise, EVERYTHING is costing us more. From oil to keep us warm, to our insurance for the building, supplies and maintenance, and all the other things from A to Z that go into keeping a building in order.

Christmas miracles have happened for years at St. James but this year with expenses at \$259,411 and income only \$202,457 that gives us only three weeks to come up with \$56,954 that would have us break even. This spread will require an in depth look at our expenses for 2025 when we begin our budget process.

It is easy to raise your PAR. We need a written note dropped off at the office to say please raise my contribution to \$ x.xx. Barb can set you up with envelopes any morning in the office, or give her a call and she will have them ready for you on Sunday morning. The last day for donations this year will be Sunday December 29, 2024. Think about it . . . What Can You Give??

P. Cunningham

**Saint Ninian Street School. First classes: 1872. Last classes 1968.**  
**Used by CACL (the Canadian Association for Community Living) until their new facility was ready. The building was demolished after that and the National Philatelic Centre was built on**



**Saint Ninian Street School**  
**Antigonish, Nova Scotia**

Rev. Thomas Trotter, pastor of St. James Presbyterian Church in Antigonish, is credited with establishing the first grammar school in 1818. By the mid-1820s, Rev. Trotter estimated that around 1000 children were attending school in Sydney County.

In Antigonish there were several private schools and the Roman Catholic Church had Morrison School for boys and the Sisters of Notre Dame had a school for girls at their Mount St. Bernard Convent, which was open to all faiths.

After the introduction of The Free School Act in 1865, some Protestant rate payers in Antigonish mounted a campaign to set up their own separate school on St. Ninian St. In 1872 the first classes were held in the four-room school. Grades included primary, intermediate, and junior high school. The classrooms were heated by wood stoves and a bucket of water and a dipper provided drinking water. There were two privies at the back of the school: one for the boys and one for the girls. These were concealed by a lattice fence. In this school, boys and girls attended classes together.

Ernest and Minnie MacNaughton donated the bell on the roof of the school in memory of deceased family members and it was rung daily to start and end classes,.

It became common practice for Protestant students to take their high school courses at the town high school where boys and girls attended classes together but still used separate doors and drinking fountains. The alternative to this was to send your child to boarding school.

In 1927 all of the town had electricity. The school may have had it earlier but that was the date for the entire town to be hooked on, and in 1950 the whole town had water and sewer available.

In 1935 there were 36 students attending the school. Annie MacNaughton taught primary and grades 1 to 4, and Mary Elizabeth Graham taught the advanced department, grades 5 to 8.

In later years the students walked to the Parish Centre for gym classes. For these 'special' classes the boys and girls went separately. The girls had to change into blue one-piece rompers and the change rooms were down circular stairs to the basement. For Domestic Science the girls walked to Antigonish High School. During their first year they made bib aprons by hand and embroidered their names on them. The boys went to Manual Training to learn woodworking and made small wooden items like crib boards. The music teacher came to the school for music classes and taught the boys and girls together.

In 1953 St. James United Church on Main Street. built a hall attached to the church. There was an official opening celebration after church on Nov. 1st. This would now be the site of future Christmas concerts put on by the St. Ninian Street School students. Students and teachers at St. Ninian Street School used to walk down to the hall from the school for Christmas concert rehearsals. These times were much looked forward to by the children at the school. The Christmas Concert was a very big event for the students, and indeed for the whole town. The hall would be packed with families and friends.

For a couple of years in the late 1950s there were two classes of boys from Morrison School attending classes at St. Ninian Street School due to overcrowding, and in the early 60s classes were traded back and forth as the need arose due to overcrowding in either school.

After World War II and into the 1950s, the northwest section of town really expanded, with many new homes being built. This meant there were a lot of young children in that area. A new elementary school was built on Braemore Ave. It was a large, modern school with plenty of room for expansion so many of the elementary students from St. Ninian Street and Morrison Schools transferred to the new Braemore School.

St. Ninian Street School continued to have classes until the late 1960s. By then there were new schools opening

for elementary and junior high school grades, with gymnasiums, music rooms, etc. Saint Ninian Street School finally closed for classes, but was used by the Canadian Association for Community Living (CACL) until their new facility was ready across the street.

When the old school was demolished to make room for the National Philatelic Centre for Canada Post, the bell was removed and Ernest and Minnie MacNaughton donated it to St. David's United church in Cape George, Antigonish County, as they had no bell to summon worshippers to church. There was a dedication service held at the church, and Mr. MacNaughton was present.

Carol Kell

### **Holly Tea And Sale - November 16**

Another year has passed for the Holly Tea and Sale. The UCW's annual event is an unofficial kick-off to the Christmas season for many attendees. Every year, on the third Saturday of November, folks line up, eagerly waiting for the doors to open at noon.

This year, the Christmas room was beautifully decorated and filled with holiday decor. The bakers in our congregation generously filled the baking room. Our silent auction had close to 50 items available for bids. In addition, we had a beautiful jewellery table and several overflowing new-to-you tables.

For many, the highlight of the day is the actual Tea meal. Our \$12 tea ticket provides a plate of sweets and sandwiches, not to mention all the tea and coffee you would like. The 123 attendees kept a team of friendly and efficient servers on their toes. In these busy times, finding a minute to sit and visit with friends and family can be difficult. All who attended enjoyed that time.

There are many ingredients to go into the making of a delicious cake. Similarly, this two-hour event takes many hours of hard work and many hands to do that work. The convenors are so grateful:

- to all those bakers who got flour and chocolate on their counters to bring us delicious goodies,
- to everyone who donated items for sale,
- to those volunteers who gave of their time to decorate the space, iron the table cloths, and help sort and price items,
- to those volunteers who did the literal heavy lifting and moved furniture and set up the tables,
- to those volunteer who came on the day dressed in their Christmas sweaters, full of smiles and energy to work,
- and finally to the kitchen staff who put in hours on hours to make sandwich fillings and sandwiches and create such full plates of goodies.

Hopefully next year's event will bring just as much fun and community spirit!

Christine Briand



**Photographs of the Holly Tea & Sale submitted by Carol Burley**

**Book Review by Michèle Ashby: Rat Tales**

A “zine” by Sara avMaat, paperback, 10 pages, hot off the press! Available in our church library. In **Episode 1: Wesley Asks Why?** we find Wesley, an African giant pouched rat finishing a hard day of clearing land mines. As he chats with an old colleague and a newcomer, they attempt to figure out why humans engage in wars and leave destructive land mines behind themselves. They discuss alternates to war. It’s a heavy topic but the rats are so adorable and interesting you could almost forget that. If, like me, you had never heard of these rats, they do exist! They not only perform mine clearing, they search for people buried under rubble after man made or natural disasters, diagnose tuberculosis, and help prevent the illegal transport of endangered wildlife. To learn more, go to [apopo.org](http://apopo.org). I for one, hope Wesley returns for an Episode 2 soon.

## The Ministers of Saint James United Church: A History, Volume 2

As one drives over the first series of hills from the West in Antigonish County, the first major water course encountered is James River. Continuing to town, the prominent feature on the Main is the steeple of Saint James' Church. Both of these features are named after the same person directly or indirectly: that person was James Munroe.

In 1804, in at the house of Nathaniel Symonds, a group of like-minded Protestants gathered and agreed to form a church community which for several years met regularly without any regular minister. During that time, the community had received pastoral visits from several itinerant missionary ministers in this province: Reverend Mr. James Munroe and Reverend Mr. Weeks. In 1806 the community issued a call to James Munroe to come and be their minister. He accepted and spent the rest of his life here.

James Munroe was born in the community of Orbliston in Moray, Scotland in 1758. This was a farming hamlet on a ridge to the northwest of the Spey River about 3/4 of the distance between Elgin and Fochabers. He seems to have done his theological training in both Aberdeen and Edinburgh and there encountered individuals who made a significant contribution to his future adventures. In June 1781 he was ordained into the Church of Scotland at the Chapel of Ease in Pluscarden, Moray, Scotland.

Pluscarden is an interesting location, as at the time that he was ordained next to the village one would have seen a magnificent ruin of one of the larger abbeys in Scotland. This has recently been restored to its medieval appearance and is once again an active monastery. Originally it was founded in the year 1230 by King Alexander the Second of Scotland as a Valliscaulian priory which was a small offshoot of the Cistercians. There were three such priories of the order founded in Scotland, all by Alexander II : Beaulieu, Pluscarden and Ardchattan. Ardchattan on the west coast is associated with clan MacDougall but may have been the origin of the MacPhersons (*mac a Pheirsen*), the Parson being *Gille Chattan Mor*, the first prior of the priory. Beaulieu, of course, has been closely associated with MacKenzies of Kintail and the Frasers of Lovat. The Reformation in Scotland disestablished the Roman Catholic Church in 1560 but did not abolish monks and priests in the same way that happened in England after the Dissolution of the Monasteries. The result in Pluscarden was that there was a small Roman Catholic congregation functioning independently, clandestinely, in the ruins of Pluscarden Abbey until the restoration of the Roman Catholic Church and the Catholic Emancipation Act of 1829. An interesting modern feature is that the local Presbyterian Church, in the village of Pluscarden which is a descendant of the chapel of ease in which Mr. James Munroe was ordained, was closed by the Church of Scotland last year and has now been taken over by the local Roman Catholic congregation. Furthermore the first modern Roman Catholic bishop in Scotland was James Gillis, who, although born in Canada, grew up in Fochabers which is about 4 miles from where Rev. James was born. It would seem that Moray was ecclesiastically a fairly tolerant area. Musically, William Marshall "the King of Strathspeys" according to Robert Burns, was born in Fochabers as well.



In 1785 we find James in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania at a meeting of the combined Synod of New York and Pennsylvania. He was then employed by the Newcastle Presbytery of the state of Delaware. In 1786 he was inducted into the Presbyterian Church in Nottingham, Maryland, which at that time was about 10 miles from the centre of Baltimore but is now part of the northeastern suburbs of that city. He apparently had been invited to the United States by Reverend Doctor Witherspoon who was the founder of Princeton University. According to Reverend Father D.J. Rankin in his **History of Antigonish**, they were related, but this unlikely as they came from quite distant parts of Scotland, James Munroe from Moray, and Witherspoon from roughly 30 miles east of Edinburgh. He had emigrated to America before James Munroe had studied in Edinburgh. It is therefore more likely that they had connections through the divinity school in Edinburgh. He was apparently quite disappointed in the United States and very shortly afterwards came to Nova Scotia and New Brunswick and was an associate of the of the Presbytery of Truro which was the only presbytery in Nova Scotia at the time. He acted as an itinerant missionary minister across Nova Scotia and compiled a detailed account of each county, outlining its economy, inhabitants, and prospects for all the mainland of the province, Cape Breton being a separate colony at the time. Unfortunately much of the work has been lost although there are numerous references to its completeness. The only the parts which still exist are outlines of Lunenburg, Queen's, Shelburne, Yarmouth, and Digby Counties, with partial records of Annapolis and King's Counties. In 1800 he was in Newport but did make itinerant missionary visits to Stewiacke, Musquodoboit and in 1797, Antigonish. He was impressed by Antigonish and bought a good deal of land from Mr. John Wright who had originally obtained it from John Brierly, including what was called Indian Gardens at the time. The settlement had not changed very much after the influx of European settlers in the 1770s as there was little shipping available due to the Napoleonic Wars from about 1790 until 1814 except for the brief "Peace of Amiens" from 1801-1803. One of the local results of that armistice were the "Ships of 1801" which brought a mixed Roman Catholic and Protestant Highland population to Nova Scotia in circumstances which caused a scandal in Britain resulting in enforcement of the Slave Regulations to prevent overcrowding of the emigrant ships. Many families in the predominantly Scottish areas of Nova Scotia can trace their ancestral arrival to those three ships.

Although a resident in Antigonish from the period of his acceptance of the call to what was the "Dorchester Presbyterian Church", he still travelled fairly frequently and on one occasion while traveling to Pictou, he became stuck in snow and was unable to ford the river in front of him, spending the night in a tree as he was afraid of being attacked by bears. This occurred approximately where the present Highway Number 4 crosses James River and is the reason for the river's name.

The community suffered immense physical struggles during the years he was here with a fierce gale late in the summer of 1810 destroying most of the crops as they were ripening as well bringing down large areas of forest. 1815 was known as the "Year of the Mice" when all over Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island the planted crops were destroyed by voracious mice swarming over everything, followed by a plague of fleas. Crops were devastated and almost no seed was left for planting the next year. It did not get easier; the following year was known as the "Year with No Summer" as there was frost

during every month and snow in June and August due to global cooling caused by the eruption of the Tambora volcano in Indonesia. Nothing had ripened for a second year, the crops failed, and famine prevailed. Nathaniel Symonds, after much effort, did obtain a grant of 100 pounds from Governor Sherbrooke in Halifax to buy food for famine relief in Antigonish. Times were tough! James Munroe was a spiritual tower of strength during this time of struggle and exhausted himself trying to provide spiritual leadership for the community. By 1818, times were changing and the sense of pilgrimage through the wilderness, as had happened with the Israelites before them, began to ease. As well, there was the arrival of many new people who were principally Gaelic speaking Roman Catholic Highlanders from the Rough Bounds of the West Highlands: *Na Garbh Criochan*. We may speculate that he was not particularly doctrinaire in his approach to the arriving Highlanders as he had had previous experience in both Scotland and Maryland of living with mixed Protestant - Roman Catholic communities. Although some of the restrictions on being Roman Catholic in the British Empire were easing at that time, it was still illegal to be Roman Catholic with severe limitations on civil rights until 1829. This was true everywhere Britain governed except in the Diocese of Quebec, of which Antigonish at that time was a part, due to the Quebec Declaration of 1760 and the Treaty of Paris of 1763. In 1818, he had a stroke and indicated to the congregation that they should find a new minister. They did and Reverend Mr. Thomas Trotter was called, accepted, and inducted with Reverend Mr. Munroe presiding. In 1819 he died and was buried in the church cemetery. You may seek out his tombstone in the cemetery behind the church.

In honour of his dedication, the name of the church was changed from the Dorchester Presbyterian Church to Saint James, commemorating his efforts.

John Hamilton

### **Antigonish Affordable Housing Society Strikes Gold!**

The Antigonish Affordable Housing Society, (AAHS), announced in October that they have been the beneficiaries of the generosity of some of our congregants. An article in the October 29th *Guysborough Journal* revealed that Paul Davie and Dr Amy Hendricks are in the process of donating almost 20 hectares of land to the Society for a proposed development to be named "Sugarloaf". The land, widely known as the "Floyd property", is ideally situated along Route 337, close to St Martha's Regional Hospital and downtown Antigonish. Tentative plans will see over 50 apartments constructed on the site. The need in our county is great, as Colleen Cameron, AAHS Board Chair noted. 62% of surveyed Antigonish respondents stated they spend more than 30% of their income on housing. There will be an estimated shortfall of 1,000 housing units here by 2027. The kindness of Paul and Amy is a wonderful gift to our community and will assist many residents as the new development eventually takes form in a few years. Additionally, they have donated land to the Antigonish Association for Community Living and have plans to build a medical clinic, more apartments, and an art-music venue, according to the Journal article. Kudos to this big-hearted couple and their community building foresight!

## Palestine Land Exercise

On October 6, the Social Justice Collective of St. James welcomed a group from Halifax to present an interactive informational play about Palestine.

The Palestine Land Exercise (PLE) is nearly a decade in the making. Doug Rigby had been facilitating the Kairos Blanket Exercise for a few years. Through his work as a member of the Halifax group, Canadians Arabs and Jews for a Just Peace in Palestine/Israel (CAJJP), he thought a similar interactive play might work to encourage conversation and understanding about the area. Doug wrote the first version of the program in 2015 under the title K'n'an Exercise. The K'n'an Exercise was posted on the Internet, inviting communities to use and modify it. A

group from a Mennonite Church did just that and added in the personal stories. In 2023-2024, the Mennonite group and the Just Peace Working Group, a subgroup of the United Church, edited and updated the script. Since its early development, Palestinians have been involved, including Dr. Ismail Zayid, now 92 years of age, who played himself in the Canada Park story. Dr. Zayid is a Palestinian-Canadian from the now-destroyed village of Beit Nabu. His former home lies under Canada Park. He openly speaks and writes about his family's experience, including telling his story during the PLE. Since May 2023, the Halifax PLE team has led the Palestine Land Exercise for 13 church and community groups in NS, including St James. They have also trained several facilitator teams that are working to present the PLE across the country. Since February, the Moncton PLE team has led the Palestine Land Exercise for eight churches and community groups. They have also adapted the PLE to French to reach more New Brunswick and Quebec communities. Volunteers from a variety of backgrounds come to be trained as facilitators. UNJPPI, the United Network for Justice and Peace in Palestine/Israel, is a grassroots network of United Church members and other friends who

support a non-violent solution to the Israeli occupation and a just peace in Israel/Palestine held training for 50 volunteers from all across Canada. Training was also held for Palestinian Muslims at the Ummah Mosque in Halifax.

Volunteers from these training sessions are working on further translations to Mandarin and Cantonese, and supporting materials are being requested to lead PLEs in British Columbia, Saskatchewan, Ontario, Prince Edward Island, and even Sweden. Still, other volunteers are working on adapting the PLE for youth. Approximately 35 people attended the PLE at St James, including members of our church and other residents of Antigonish

Christine Briand



## What are we afraid of?

In the lead-up to the Palestine Land Exercise (PLE), I was advised that our church office was getting calls and emails ranging from concern to bewilderment to outrage. The question at hand for those who reached out was - Why would our church hold such an event? I found the whole idea of complaints very confusing. What are we afraid of? Don't we come together once a week to sing, pray, read scripture, and examine what those words mean for us in modern times? Isn't holding or attending Sunday service an act to build community in shared knowledge and understanding? I didn't know what to expect from the PLE, but I knew it would be more information than I had about that corner of the world, increasing my knowledge and understanding.

Proverbs 18:15 says, "An intelligent heart acquires knowledge, and the ear of the wise seek knowledge." Nearly 35 people came that day to acquire knowledge. Not everyone was from St James membership. When we went around the room with introductions, some of the folks indicated that they were from other churches, other faiths, or other countries - living here as newer residents in Canada. The great thing was that, with all those 35 people, there were 35 mouths and, more importantly, 70 ears. We had all come to hear and learn.

The PLE was advertised as being similar to (or based on) the Kairos Blanket Exercise. If you have been to one, you know it is interactive learning. The program started with the facilitators asking everyone to act as residents of Palestine and stand on a piece of fabric on the ground. Some of those present were given numbered personal stories and were, at various times, asked to read these first-person accounts of life in the region. The facilitators then lead the participants through the area's history, as much as one hour would allow.

The fabric available to participants to stand on at each event mentioned got carved up. If you could still fit on the blanket, you could stay. If you could no longer fit, you were asked to return to your seat as a refugee displaced from your home. UN Resolution 181 - the 1947 Partition Plan, carved up the land in one way. The Arab-Israeli War of 1948 was yet another carving of the land. The end of that war saw an international recognition of the borders. There was still further movement of people following the Six-Day War in 1967. Two Oslo Accords have tried to settle the fighting for land control.

With every new intervention - war or armistice, the land for Palestinians shrank. That concept was made so much more real and difficult as we watched fellow participants try to squeeze into the shrinking fabric they were "allowed" to be on. For me, watching more and more people flee to their seats as newly displaced refugees made the pain of that displacement all the more palpable.

Remember, as well, that as participant learners, we were in a warm, safe hall. We were well rested and well fed and knew that when the day's learning was over, we could head home safely to, as they say, return to the regular programming of our lives. The reality is that each displacement event that was discussed was not a few moments of shuffling. It was homes being bulldozed and families having to leave, often at gunpoint or in fear of violence. Some were leaving behind farmland that had sustained their family for generations, and some were leaving behind family members too weak or too old to flee in a hurry. As difficult as it was to watch the representation of forced displacement in that hall during the PLE, I know that it was much quieter than the reality of the event it represented. There was no shouting, no gunfire, no heavy equipment

the event it represented. There was no shouting, no gunfire, no heavy equipment rattling through the group. There was not one anguished cry from us watching or being displaced.

Personal stories were added and spoken at times close to historical events. Two stories stood out to me. The first was of a Jewish mother (I think she was American-born) who had moved to Israel and married and raised her family. Her two oldest children had served their mandatory duties in the Israeli military. Her third child would not serve. He was a conscientious objector. The story told that she could not understand his perspective nor his choice but that she took the opportunity to learn why, and now, she tries to assist other mothers of conscientious objectors. This spoke to me because someone she loved had, through their actions, challenged her to think more broadly and understand more deeply what was happening in the world around her. She was living in a safe Israeli home, and her family had served in the IDF, but she was now on a journey to question everything she was taught to believe about the land she now called home. I was touched by this because I had chosen to attend the PLE so that I, too, might understand more about the painful and complicated history of the land.

The second story, which has haunted me, was told in the words of a Halifax resident, Dr Ismail Zayid, a former resident of Beit Nabu village. His entire village and several others in the West Bank were evicted and bulldozed in 1967. Up to 10,000 people from over 1400 homes were roused from their sleep and forced to leave the villages. They were told to march to a new location, days away by foot. Five people died on the journey. Another 18 were too old or infirm to leave, and their homes were demolished on top of them.

The land was turned into a picnic park named Ayalon or Canada Park. According to Wikipedia, the park has manufactured forests, Mediterranean woodlands, and local flowers. It also contains recreation areas, water features, and panoramic views. The road leading to the park, which carries some 300,000 annual visitors, is named after John Diefenbaker, who opened it in 1975. The park also contains the bodies of the 18 people who were buried in the demolition of the villages.

It is one thing, I think, as a Canadian to avoid conversation about Israel and Palestine by pleading ignorance. I don't know enough about it. It is another to learn of Canada Park and our role as taxpayers and a nation and how we are complicit in the crimes of the region.

After the interactive history of the land and personal stories, participants had a conversation circle to find ways to discuss this. Being angry at the actions of the current or former Israeli government is not anti-Semitic. How do we understand what we had just learned and share it in a way that acknowledges this difference between Zionist and Zionism, between the Israeli government and Jewish people?

To describe the hatred or hostility toward Jews, the term anti-Semitism was popularized in 1879 by German journalist Wilhelm Marr. However, the ideology that fostered that hatred was by no means new at the time of Marr's writing. Some records indicate that hostility toward Jewish people may be as old as the faith itself. The PLE story started with the rise of anti-Semitism in Europe in the late 1800s. That wave of hate triggered an exodus of Jewish settlers to leave their homes in many European countries and relocate to the area we had come to discuss. I think that history stops so many of us from engaging with this issue; we don't have the knowledge or the language.

My friend’s father had survived one of the holocaust camps. I knew this, but the first time I met him, I saw the tattoo as he held out his hand to me. I saw the ink that marked him as a child, as not a human being but a number - to be tortured, experimented on or murdered without a second thought. I knew what happened during WWII, but to see the ink, stopped my breath and my conversation.

I have cried at occasional struggles in my life and have maybe felt that I was not treated fairly on occasion. Still, I can not imagine the experience of the Palestinians now. I can try, but I will never truly understand the fear felt by all people around the world who are denied humanity - through policy or actions of war. I will never understand the feeling of being rounded up and forced into certain spaces: reserves, camps, or settlements, or forced adrift and told to find a new home. I will never understand. But I will try. I will try by reading, learning, and asking. I will try attending events like the PLE that open up stories and histories from which I have been shielded. I will use what I learn to talk to others and challenge governmental policy in Canada and abroad. I will try to look at the ink on the skin of some and the blood and tear stains on others and not lose my breath or my words.

I will do all of those things from my safe, warm home. I am sure that when I go to sleep tonight, I will not have to climb out of the rubble of my home in the morning. I am sure that when I walk to work, I will not have to fear a sunny day as drones move in the sunshine. I am sure that when I want to gather to pray or to celebrate, my group will not be on an aerial map as a target or a threat. Because I know all these things, I wonder what are we afraid of? Why can’t we learn and have the painful conversations that are needed to bring an end to violence? Proverbs 4:7 says, “The beginning of wisdom is this: Get wisdom, and whatever you get, get insight.” The PLE helped me with that.



## INTRODUCING GERALD GLOADE - MI'KMAW ELDER

Over my life, I have written many documents about forests, wildlife and the environment. Years ago, I was asked by the government to write Home Study modules on woodlots and they assigned a government illustrator to draw pictures to accompany my words. I drove to Truro for a meeting, and on my way into the room, someone asked me who I was meeting with. I told him it was a person named Gerald Gloade. His eyebrows raised and he said, "Oh the Indian guy. He doesn't say much. Watch out, you can't trust those Indians." My own eyebrows raised, and in the meeting I could see that Gerald was not treated the same as me, or the "white men". I tried to speak up in the meeting, but it did not change people's attitudes. Afterwards, I went to Gerald and apologized for the way he was treated, and asked him how he withstood such treatment. He shrugged his shoulders and said, "Things will never change. It's the way we've always been treated, but I know who I am and I am proud of my heritage."

I loved his art then, and I love it even more now. It delighted me to hear Gerald Gloade speak recently at the Heritage Museum, invited by our church, and to see how graciously and beautifully he shares his art, wisdom, culture, without any judgement, or resentment. Now, as a treasured award-winning Mi'kmaq Elder, he told me he rejoices in his job, which allows him to celebrate, illustrate, and teach about the wonders of Mi'kmaq spirituality and connections with nature. Gerald's story is just one of many that illustrates the racism and irreverences that Mi'kmaq individuals and communities experienced in Nova Scotia. While many strides have been made to improve, there is still a long way to go. Gerald's gentle acceptance of his story and his wonderful sharing of his beliefs and art is a shining example to all of us of humility, grace, and love for the Creator. Over the next year, in Connections, we will introduce you to some of the esteemed elders we have right here in Antigonish County.

Anna Camozzi

## Rich Harvest of Fall Experiences

St James has ventured onto some new terrain this fall. The desire to extend our learning and build new relationships with our Indigenous neighbours led us to organizing a day trip to Debert and Millbrook as well as to host Elder Gerald Gloade here in Antigonish. The first event was on Oct 26th and it involved 17 individuals. Car-pooling helped make it convenient and fun for all. We first went to the Interpretive Trail in Debert and then the Millbrook Heritage Centre and the Alan Syliboy Art Gallery. November 22nd St James co-hosted with the Heritage Museum to a capacity crowd, offering a presentation on the Mi'kmaq calendar. Called 13 Moons, this calendar follows the patterns of life and culture of the Mi'kmaq. Gerald Gloade shared how one small event, such as a certain insect appearing, would signal the time for fishing. We saw how interconnected the world is throughout the year. Both days brought real enthusiasm making future plans more likely. A trip in late spring or early summer to Goat Island is hoped for. Below is some feedback from participants at the 13 Moons event. We hope these remarks kindle even wider interest!

"It was a true blessing and privilege to have Gerald Gloade with us in Antigonish, sharing stories that helped us gain awareness of the incredible understanding of the patterns of nature, gained through centuries of observation by the Mi'kmaq, integrated with a profound spirituality of the land. We were gifted by Gerald Gloade's stunning artistic abilities, shared throughout his presentation" Kathryn Anderson

"The 13 Moons presentation given by Gerald Gloade last Friday was so helpful in improving my understanding of the relationship between Mother Earth and the Indigenous Peoples, in this case, the Mi'kmaq

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Their close ties to nature - the water, the air, the land - ensured not only their physical survival but how much they thrived culturally as a people, sharing the blessings of Mother Earth with the other species of plants, birds, fish and land animals. Gerald's stories were much appreciated too!" Joanne Patience

"Gerald's presentation was a glorious blend of story and image which I can't ever remember being matched. What an artist!"

John Graham Pole

Fran Wittgens

**THE 13 MOONS OF THE MI'KMAW ECOLOGICAL CALENDAR**

**A TALK BY ELDER GERALD GLOADE**

**Nov. 22  
1pm**

**All are welcome!**

**Antigonish Heritage Museum**  
20 East Main Street,  
Antigonish

**NALIKITUNIEJK HERITAGE MUSEUM**

Future issues of Connections will include articles about Judy Julian Paqtnkek, Elder, who worked on X project and many things and in Elder Council with Gerald Gloade, Sr. Dorothy Moore, sister of St. Martha Order of Nova Scotia, and senator Paul Prosper lawyer former Chief of Paqtnkek and now Senator of Canada.





We are at the time ( December) when the moon is highest in the sky, so the Mi'kmaw called it Chief Moon. There has been a Moon Project aided by both Indigenous knowledge and custom as well as Settler science and traditions. Working together, this process is now called "Two Eyed Seeing or Etuaptmunk". This concept was developed by Elder Albert Marshall and his wife Murdena Marshall, from Eskasoni.

Below is a 12 month calendar, with verbs demonstrating the actions for each month. It shows how fully integrated time and nature are.

In most years we see 12 full moons throughout the year. But sometimes there's a need for a 13th moon. At 29.5 days per cycle this adds up to 354 days, leaving 11 days short. This explains how occasionally Mi'kmaw elders speak of the need for a 13th moon to align with natural events.

This information was shared at the 13 Moons Presentations co-hosted by St James and the Heritage Museum on Nov 22, 2024. The calendar and its interpretation comes from Mi'kmaw Moons, A Two Eyed Seeing Approach by David Chapman and Cathy Leblanc. The website gives very interesting background.



In a manner similar to several other traditional cultures, the Mi'kmaq divide the year into 12 intervals, each associated with ecological events around them, according to the gradual change of the seasons. Here are the 12:

Mi'kmaw	Pronunciation	English	Date Range (approximate)
Punamujuik'us	Boo-na-moo-joeey-goos	Tomcod Spawning /Frost Fish	5 January – 3 February
Apuknajit	Ah-boo-gah-na-jit	Snow Blinding	3 February – 5 March
Siwkewiku's	See-uke-ay-we-goos	Spring / Maple Sugar	5 March – 4 April
Penatmuiku's	Ben-a-dim-oooh-we-goos	Birds Laying Eggs	4 April – 5 May
Sqoljuiku's	Skoalch-oooh-we-goos	Frogs Croaking	5 May – 5 June
Nipniku's	Nib-nee-goos	Trees Fully Leafed	5 June – 6 July
Peskewiku's	Bes-gay-we-goos	Birds Shedding Feathers	6 July – 7 August
Kisikewiku's	Gis-ig-ay-we-goos	Berry Ripening	7 August –7 September
Wikumkewiku's	We-goom -gay-we-goos	Mate Calling	7 September – 8 October
Wikewiku's	Wig-gay-we-goos	Animal Fattening	8 October –7 November
Keptekewiku's	Geb-deg-gay-we-goos	Rivers Starting to Freeze	7 November – 6 December
Kesikewiku's / Kjiku's	Ges-ig-gay-we-goos	Winter / Chief Moon	6 December – 5 January

Several members of St. James United Church visited the Millbrook Heritage Centre and Alan Syliboy Art Gallery in Debert in October.



**Not sure what to do with leftover turkey once the Christmas crowd has gone home? Here's one thought.**

- **Turkey Pot Pie**
- 2 cups frozen peas and carrots
- 2 cups frozen green beans
- 1 cup sliced celery
- $\frac{2}{3}$  cup butter
- $\frac{2}{3}$  cup diced onion
- $\frac{2}{3}$  cup all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon ground black pepper
- $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon celery seed
- $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon onion powder
- $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon Italian seasoning
- 1  $\frac{3}{4}$  cups chicken broth
- 1  $\frac{1}{3}$  cups milk
- 4 cups cubed leftover cooked turkey
- 2 (14.1 ounce) packages pastry for a 9-inch double-crust pie

### **Directions**

1. Gather the ingredients. Preheat the oven to 425 degrees F (220 degrees C).
2. Place frozen peas, carrots, and beans in a saucepan with celery; add enough water to cover and bring to a boil. Reduce heat to medium-low and simmer until celery is tender, about 8 minutes. Drain.
3. While vegetables are simmering, melt butter in a saucepan over medium heat. Add onion and cook until translucent, about 5 minutes. Add flour, salt, pepper, celery seed, onion powder, and Italian seasoning and whisk until a paste forms, about 1 minute. Slowly whisk in chicken broth and then milk until incorporated; bring to a simmer and cook, whisking constantly, until sauce thickens, 3 to 5 minutes.

4. Remove thickened sauce from the heat; add cooked, drained vegetables and cubed turkey and stir until filling is well combined.
5. Set out two 9-inch pie dishes. Fit one pie pastry into the bottom of each dish. Spoon 1/2 of the pot pie filling into each dish, then lay remaining pie pastries over top. Pinch and roll the top and bottom pastries together at the edges to seal. Use a sharp knife to cut several small slits in each top pastry to allow steam to release while cooking. Place pies on baking sheets.
6. Bake in the preheated oven for 15 minutes. Check the top crusts for browning; if they are browning too quickly, cover with aluminum foil. Continue to bake until the crusts are golden brown and the filling is bubbly, 15 to 20 more minutes.
7. Remove from the oven and cool for 10 minutes before serving.

