

# Christ is Risen!!!

## **Easter Greeting 2024 from Rev. Neal**

Each Sunday morning, we welcome those present with us, and those joining us via social media. Respecting the latter, though, it pretty well ends there. They, unfortunately, don't get the fellowship that's critical to growing our faith as community. And we, sadly, don't get to grow with them, in person at least.

In some cases, it's by choice. In others, it's through necessity. Still others, a little of both. Whatever the circumstance, though, you may be looking for faith experiences to share at home, or—you might be a grandparent/caregiver wanting to include faith conversations with the younger people in your lives.

Whatever the scenario, we might be able to help. *Living the Seasons at Home*, a resource of ours, is designed to help nurture faith and discipleship outside the church walls. It provides a weekly engagement, including a scripture reading, that'll likely be the same as in church. Sacred presence, then, is always with us. Faith conversations can happen anytime and anywhere. And for you, it's free. :o)

As I write this message on a Friday morning/afternoon, we're quickly approaching Lent 3. Knowing that, should you be interested in doing so, I'd recommend beginning this practice on Easter Sunday [March 31<sup>st</sup>]. The Season of Easter, after all, is a time for joyous celebration. The impossible has happened. Christ is alive in a *new* way!

As the Easter stories of Jesus' appearances unfold, let's recognize Christ lives with us too. Throughout the season, we're introduced to a variety of early followers: women and men, Jews and Gentiles, etc. Each story contains the ancient promises we first experienced at the beginning of Lent: that God is present; that we *can look to the future* in hope and in faith.

Here's the sample for Easter Sunday/Day...

- **Read John 20:1-18** in an age-appropriate Bible or Story Bible.
- **Something to think about, talk about, or do...** "I have seen the Lord" (John 20:1-18). "...they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid" (Mark 16:1-8). This year, we have two gospel stories of the Resurrection from which to choose. In John's gospel, Mary Magdalene has an encounter with the risen Christ. In Mark, the women see the empty tomb and are told by "a young man, dressed in a white robe" they will see Jesus in Galilee. In John, Mary announces what she has seen; and in Mark, the women run away.
- **Together this week...** Read both stories side-by-side and simply reflect on the differences... Share stories about the most amazing thing that has ever happened to you... What is the biggest surprise in each one's life?... How does it feel to be so completely taken unawares?
- **Prayer...** Awesome One, your love and compassion astound us. Thank you! Alleluia! Amen!

Friends, my Easter wish/hope is that we too celebrate joyously, recognizing the impossible has happened, that Christ lives in a *new* way!

Happy Easter everyone!

Yours in Christ, in friendship, and in our ministry together,

**Rev. Neal**

## Up-Coming Events at First United

March 17<sup>th</sup> – Annual General Meeting/Communion

March 24<sup>th</sup> – Palm Sunday – 10 AM

March 28<sup>th</sup> – Roast Pork Supper

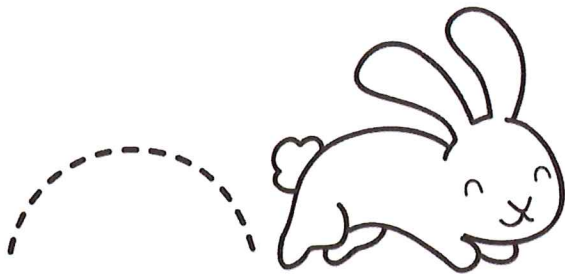
March 29<sup>th</sup> – Good Friday Service – 10 AM

March 31<sup>st</sup> – Easter / Holy Communion – 10 AM

## Newsletters

To date, there are 116 households receiving the newsletter online. We thank all who have requested to be part of our online distribution. If you wish to have your letters in the future sent directly to your email send your request to [firstadmin@nb.aibn.com](mailto:firstadmin@nb.aibn.com)

## **How do you know a rabbit is in a good mood?**



*He's hoppy.*

## Finance Team

Special envelopes for Easter contributions can be picked up from the church office or found in the Narthex prior to the worship service.

**Church Envelopes** - If you haven't had contribution envelopes in the past and wish to have them for 2024, please advise the church office. Another way of making contributions is through PAR.

**PAR** - Pre Authorized Remittance (PAR) is a convenient way to support the ongoing work of your church. Your monthly contributions are taken directly from your bank account or charged to a Major Credit Card. Currently we have 95 households using this method of support. Signing up for PAR takes only a few minutes and can be done for you at the church office. All that is required is a void cheque or your credit card information.

## Community Outreach Sub-Team

The sub-team coordinates ongoing projects:

- peanut butter for the Volunteer Center;
- a pantry, from which the needy are supported;
- support the school breakfast program at 5 individual schools;
- socks for the needy to help keep their feet warm; and
- encouraging folks via *Your Generosity Matters* stories each week.

The above is only feasible due to the generosity of members, so all contributions are greatly appreciated.

## Ways & Means Team

The Ways and Means team would like to express a sincere thank you to all who helped in anyway with our Take-Out suppers in 2023. The generous sponsorship of the Hatheway Group of Companies, Kent & White Insurance, Kenny's Trucking, The Shine House (Division of Stothart Automotive) and McDonald's Restaurant (Bathurst) allowed the Ways & Means Team to generate just over \$18,000 overall last year.

The team is always looking for people to join their preparation, serving and clean-up crews. Even if you are available to only work a couple of functions, it would be a great help to the team. Call the church office to volunteer – 506-546-3532.

On February 25<sup>th</sup> we held our first sit-down meal since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic. It was a successful event, which thanks to the sponsorship of **Jean Coutu (Beresford) & Websolutions.ca** the team realized a profit of \$2,151.

The next Ways and Means team event will be held on **Thursday, March 28<sup>th</sup>** - a sit down or take out **Roast Pork Supper**.



Our next Newsletter will be circulated in the fall, for Thanksgiving. Have something that you would like to be included that would be of interest to our church family? Send it to the office at [firstadmin@nb.aibn.com](mailto:firstadmin@nb.aibn.com). The cut-off time for submission is September 20<sup>th</sup> at noon.

## **Council Highlights from February 20<sup>th</sup>**

Council met on February 20<sup>th</sup> with all members present. Sandra opened the meeting with the Land Acknowledgement statement pertaining to the unceded Mi'kmaq territory. Rev. Neal led in prayer.

Debrah Watling was welcomed as the new secretary of Council. She succeeds Judy Losier who served in that capacity for many years.

Also present was Church Treasurer, Dave Morison, who reported a 2023 net income of slightly more than \$10,000 in contrast to the budget pegged at minus \$5,900. Dave attributed the positive outcome to a number of bequests and living donor gifts.

Consequently, local givings came in at \$204,222 compared to a budgeted figure of \$176,500, a difference of \$27,722. Overall total revenue reached \$291,491. Adversely expenses for 2023 went over budget by \$16,664.

Among other reasons for a positive financial picture was the \$13,515 revenue from the Bathurst Community Market and other rentals.

Adding to the upbeat at the meeting was when Bill Stack called First United "a caring church; what a wonderful congregation this is, I couldn't sit here and not say this".

Martha Vickers reported the United Church of Canada, abiding by the law of Canada, has new sexual response policies. Entitled "Policies on Harassment and Misconduct", the scope is to process complaints that occur in the performance of work undertaken on behalf of the church, both clergy and laity. Martha and Jini Palmer are First United's representatives on the Fundy St. Lawrence Dawning Waters Regional Council, which is promoting the policies, Martha being on the executive as well.

Rick Watling's Nominations report named several team vacancies as he challenged volunteers to step forward and share the work. First United is entitled to a third member on the Regional Council apart from the minister.

Wayne Lord, chair of Ministry and Personnel, said salary raises were approved for the coming year. As contained in the Finance Management report to Council, the wage increase is 6.3% across the board for all staff.

The Christian Development Team reported on plans for Palm Sunday, March 24<sup>th</sup> and Easter Sunday, March 31<sup>st</sup>. Robbie will be on vacation for several

months. Brenda Parrott has decided to withdraw as chair of Christian Development after 10 productive years in the role.

The Ways & Means Sub-Team, co-chaired by Wayne Lord, reported 400 tickets were printed for the Turkey Supper in November. The February 25<sup>th</sup> breakfast will be the first sit-down meal since Covid-19. Several new volunteers were mentioned but more volunteers are needed for the sit-down meals to continue. A Roast Pork supper will be held on Thursday, March 28<sup>th</sup>.

Insurance coverage on the Church property for the coming year calls for a payment of \$1,021 per month. By sharing the risk through the new self-insurance program, as established by the United Church of Canada, the savings for First United will be at least \$1,700 for the year.

Council voted to accept the new policy on Stewardship. A committee is in place to accept gifts through bequests and other methods for which charitable tax receipts will be issued. The committee attended two zoom seminars hosted by the United Church of Canada.

Council also voted in favour of creating a self-determining Indigenous church within the United Church of Canada. In doing so, Council followed the lead of our Regional Council. The proposal, that promotes partnership rather than submissiveness, still needs to be approved by a majority of the 16 Regional Councils and about 2,000 pastoral charges across Canada.

The Annual General Meeting of Bathurst Pastoral Charge was set for Sunday, March 17<sup>th</sup> following the church service. The next Council meeting will be held on May 14<sup>th</sup>.

*Respectfully Submitted  
Isabel MacLaggan*

**What do rabbits say before they eat?**



***"Lettuce pray."***

## West Bathurst Cemetery Team

The West Bathurst Cemetery Committee is responsible for the upkeep of Saint Luke's "Old Scottish" Cemetery on St. Luke's Court and the West Bathurst Cemetery on St. Anne Street. Committee members are Robert Branch (Committee Chair), Heidi Jansson, Robert Willis, Byron Mclean, Lester Scott, and Gary Branch (Secretary).

Lester Scott did an excellent job for the 2023 mowing season. A spring clean-up of the two cemeteries will take place in May. The cemetery records have been updated. Work still to be completed with volunteer help includes monument repair and removal of dead trees.

As of December 31, 2023 the West Bathurst Cemetery Fund total was \$83,292. We continue to be thankful to everyone who supports this fund through PAR and donations. In 2023 the donations total was \$1,450 and the investment income was \$2,472.

*Gary Branch, Secretary*

## Irish Music Afternoon



**The Treble Makers**, under the direction of Linda Knowles MacPherson, will be providing an afternoon of **Irish** musical entertainment at First United Church on Thursday, March 14<sup>th</sup> from 1 to 3 PM.

There is no admission fee. However, donations to the life and work of First United would be appreciated or non-perishable items for the church pantry.

## The Treble Makers



Hazen, Linda, Ann Marie, Karen, Julia, Charles and Don

Did you hear about the most beautifully decorated eggs?



***They were to dye for!***

**Calling all Graduates:** If you are a potential graduate of the class of 2024, for either BHS or ESN, please advise the church office. The First United Church service honoring our graduates will be held in June, 2024.



## ***Cool Whip Cookies***

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

1 box of any flavour cake mix – chocolate, red velvet, lemon, etc.

8 oz. Cool Whip

1 egg

½ cup powdered sugar

Mix all ingredients in a bowl with a mixer; drop by teaspoonful into powdered sugar; place on cookie sheet.

Bake for 12 to 15 minutes, cool before removing from cookie sheet – ***Enjoy!***



*This recipe has been posted previously in our newsletter, however it is so easy and the cookies are delightful so I've shared it again!*

*Margaret*

**"IT'S NOT OFTEN A MILLION-DOLLAR  
BUILDING IS ERECTED LEAVING ONLY  
\$32,000 IN THE RED"**

That was the opening statement that appeared in one of the provincial daily newspapers prior to the dedication of our new First United Church edifice in 1998 - 25 years ago already.

*"The idea to build a new church was born 20 years ago,"* the newspaper article continued. *"And even though the people started putting money away in a fund for that purpose, the plans were put on hold until late in 1996."*

In addition to the amount in the new building fund, a generous bequest by a parishioner was made to First United for the same purpose. After careful deliberation and open dialogue with the congregation, the vote was to proceed with the project.

Then in the spring of 1997 faith in action took the form of a major stewardship appeal under the heading "Reaching Beyond". The sod-turning ceremony took place in June and one year and five months later the new church was dedicated to the glory of God.

The new structure was conveniently attached to First United's 51 year-old Donald Eddy Memorial Hall on St. Patrick Street. It was less than a block away from the site of the former church that was adjacent to the Gloucester County Courthouse, and also on St. Patrick Street. The 81 year- old place of worship had been built in 1917 during the First World War. It was demolished prior to the 1998 official opening of the new church.

*"Old Meeting the New"* was the caption for one of the articles that appeared in a special edition prior to the opening. Moved to the new church were all six stained glass windows, the three-manual Casavant pipe organ, chimes, solid oak pews, communion table, baptismal font, memorials and other furnishings, all part of First United's heritage.

Following the de-consecration service there was a parade of banners, flags and symbols across the Murray Avenue intersection to the new location. The young people of the Sunday School were joined in procession by the choir members in red gowns and by others of the congregation, all carrying hymn books.

Another interesting youth activity, involving the six to eight year-olds, was the transfer of the smallest organ pipes to the new sanctuary. Some of the 1,247 pipes were as small as lead pencils.

A time capsule was encased beyond the cornerstone in the front wall of the new building. It contained significant symbols and records of church and community life in 1998. Also, a commemorative plaque was designed in grateful recognition of the support through donations and pledges.

The new United Church edifice was officially opened and dedicated on Sunday, November 15, 1998. Morning and afternoon church services followed by an Open House in the evening on that date 25 years ago. Then, just two years later, in 2000, another celebration was held—**the burning of the mortgage!**

Actually the massive project embracing faith, trust and compromise evolved into a \$1.35 million undertaking when other costs were taken into consideration.

Such costs included complete refurbishment and rebuilding of the pipe organ, the dismantling, cleaning and reassembling of the stained glass windows and the refinishing of the dark oak pews, not to mention contractors and architect fees, landscaping and more. This resulted in a \$115,000 mortgage in 1998. As remaining pledges came in over the five succeeding years, the money was used to complete other work on site.

It is interesting to note that the chair of the building committee at the time was Lester Scott. With the same interest and fervour today, Lester continues to have First United as an important part of his life.

**25 Years**  
**November 15<sup>th</sup>**  
**1998 to 2023**