

We are at the beginning of Advent 2012 a time of waiting and a time of preparation.

As I write this letter to you I am mindful of all of the events that have taken place in our church family over the past year.

Our ministry of music has been enhanced by the addition of our new baby grand piano.

We have celebrated special services in our church, Services of Baptism, Marriage Services and Services of Thanksgiving and Remembrance, in all of life's significant moments we are not alone God is with us thanks be to God.

Each of us has experienced significant life transitions during 2012.

In June we celebrated with the high school graduates as they made plans for the future. We celebrated the miracle of Easter and today we begin our preparations for the miracle of Christmas.

* We celebrate with Abraham and Sarah—who waited a lifetime for the fulfillment of God's promises.

* We celebrate with The Hebrew prophets—who waited for God's intervention, both longed for and feared.

* We celebrate with John the Baptist—whose ministry marked the end of one era and anticipated the new.

* We celebrate with Mary—whose life was shaped by waiting and by events beyond her control.

In the gospel of Luke we hear a powerful message:

"The Angel said to them, do not be afraid; for see - I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: To you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: You will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger."

The power of love revealed on that first Christmas enables us to discover what can be in the most ordinary circumstances of life.

May this Christmas have the power to enable you and your loved ones to discover possibilities for life and living.

Merry Christmas,
Rev. Blair Lewis

Bathurst Pastoral Council November 27, 2012

The final Council meeting for 2012 was held in the Eddy Room with Brenda Parrott presiding and 14 of the 16 members present.

In attendance were Sandra Boone, vice-chair; Jack MacKay, secretary; Patricia Brown, Margret Demmings, Don Nelson, Vivien Kierstead, Shirley Allain, Wayne Clowater, Beth Sullivan, Bev Murphy, Rev. Austin Jagoe, Isabel MacLaggan, Emma MacKay and Rev. Blair Lewis.

Other members of the Council are Dave Brewster and Ian Hatheway. Devotional thoughts and a prayer by Rev. Lewis opened the meeting after which he gave his regular report.

To a request, First United will be ringing its outdoor bell at noon on Friday, Dec.7 in support of the mental health of New Brunswick children.

Work carried out by the Property Management Team included surge protection bars for the computers rather than the more expensive surge protector. Also completed were structural changes and extensive renovations in the hall basement to better accommodate the Church School and adult education classes. Improvement to the ventilation system for the church and other necessary work needs to be done.

Members of the UCW executive for the coming year include Margaret Demmings, president; Mae Branch, vice-president; Lillian Jagoe, treasurer; and Lois Good, secretary assisted by Hazel Harris. Suggested as a Christmas gift is the UCW recipe book, "Let's Break Bread Together".

Of great concern to Council is the \$5,500 decrease in local givings as of October 31. The congregation is encouraged to consider increasing financial support through their weekly envelope, and especially through PAR, in order to balance the budget at the end of the year and to offset rising costs in the year ahead.

PAR (Pre-Authorized Remittance) is the automatic monthly donation program that regulates the church budget process and helps the donor as well by not having to catch up on missed Sundays etcetera. Further information is available at the church office (546-3532).

The Communications Sub-team, chaired by Stacey Stothart-Kenny, is concerned that church office telephone calls to the congregation could be mistaken for telemarketer calls due to the message delay and the out-of-province area code (613) displayed.

The Nominations Team will be posting 2013 sign-up sheets in the narthex so that people can choose on which team or sub-team they would like to serve.

Peanut Butter numbers for the Volunteer Center are down as reported by the Community Outreach Sub-team. The congregation was thanked for support given to the successful "In the Bag" appeal for the Diabetes Association.

The Pastoral Care report mentioned the grievance and senior care presentation by the minister. The team has sent out 48 cards since September.

Changes this fall in the Church School program have been successful and the teachers are pleased with the increased attendance. Celina Knowles will be helping in the nursery.

The Worship Team commented on the enjoyable puppet show during children's time at the church service. The team reported that Marie Oliver had decorated the church again, with the help of others, in preparation for Christmas.

Much of Tuesday night's meeting was spent in updating the terms of reference for the Council and its teams and sub-teams.

The next meeting of the Pastoral Council will be held on January 29.

Compiled by
Isabel MacLaggan

Pie Making Project

A first time project involving the making and selling of apple pies proved to be a success as reported to the congregation by Brenda Parrott, initiator of the undertaking.

"Yesterday (Nov.24) the Donald Eddy Memorial Hall kitchen was the scene of lots of chatter, lots of laughs, and the making of 96 delicious apple pies right from scratch," said Brenda who is also chair of our Pastoral Council.

She brought together a group of nine women for the Saturday morning money making activity. Over \$500.00 was the result.



Brenda extended her thanks to Beth Sullivan, Bev Murphy, Cheryl Brewster, Anne Brooks, Betty Lou Matchett, Lynn Moffitt, Janet MacLaggan and two friends of First United – Kathy Cooney and Margie MacDonald. She also thanked Ruth and Blair Lewis for transporting the apples from Nova Scotia to Bathurst.

"If anyone would like to help us in a future endeavor, we'd be happy to count you in. It's a lot of fun," said Brenda in conclusion.

Following Brenda's report, the minister commented on how dynamic it is to see people of the congregation working together on the various projects.

He mentioned in particular the Turkey Harvest Supper which took place just two days prior to the pie-making project.

The annual feast, involving scores of workers, was prepared for 450 people. As usual, the project was a community-supported undertaking with interdenominational fellowship being another plus.



In picture: Norman Young, Lorne Stymiest, Cheryl Murphy, Haines Scott & Doug Henderson.

Nativity Craft Project for the Church School

A nativity craft project will be carried out in the Church School during the coming Sundays of Advent.

With help, each child will begin to create his or her own Nativity set starting with Joseph and continuing with Mary, an angel and Baby Jesus, the central figure.

The Nativity scene characters will be made with felt pieces of vibrant colors. Then these felt pieces will be mounted on blocks of wood.

This construction project was introduced by our minister at First United, Rev. Blair Lewis and his wife, Ruth who have been preparing the materials for assembly.

"Each of you will be doing your own set," he told the children when they gathered at the front of the church during the November 25 worship service.

One by one, he unwrapped the four samples to show his young listeners. He explained that the shepherds and wise men would be made next year to complete the set.

"You will have an individual set to keep and to have forever and ever. On the back is a label for your name and the year you made them," he explained.

The minister suggested that the children could bring any of their friends to Church School to do the same.

"We always have room for more," he concluded.



Upcoming Events

A Christmas to Remember -Christmas Hymn Sing
December 9, 2012 7pm

Christmas Eve Services

4pm

7pm

11:15pm



A Christmas to Remember Christmas Hymn Sing

Sunday, December 9, 2012 7pm at First United Church,
St. Patrick St, Bathurst, NB.

A peaceful evening of Christmas music will be presented by the *First United Church Senior Choir* along with special guests, *Take Note*. The *BHS Vocal Ensemble* and other youth of our area will also be performing.

Tickets \$10 adults, \$5 children are available at the church office 546-3532 or from members of the choir.

All proceeds will be for the ongoing life and work of the church.

Poinsettia Fund

Once again this year we are hoping to have the beauty of our sanctuary enhanced with poinsettias for the Christmas season. Those wishing to contribute to the annual poinsettia fund may place an envelope in the offering plate on Sunday morning. Please mark clearly on the face of the envelope – Poinsettia Fund with your name, PAR or envelope number. List the names that you wish to have printed in the Christmas bulletin insert. Donations will also be received in the church office – deadline is **December 10, 2012**.

2013 Church Envelopes are available in the Narthex. Please ensure that only envelopes for the current year are used as envelope numbers left unused for a period of time are reassigned.

*May Peace be your gift at Christmas
and your blessing all year through!
~Author Unknown~*

Why Jesus is better than Santa Claus

Santa lives in the North Pole –

JESUS is everywhere.

Santa rides in a sleigh –

JESUS rides on the wind and walks on the water.

Santa comes but once a year –

JESUS is an ever present help.

Santa fills your stockings with goodies –

JESUS supplies all your needs.

Santa lets you sit on his lap –

JESUS lets you rest in his arms.

Santa doesn't know your name, all he can say is "Hi little boy or girl, what's your name?"....

JESUS knew our name before we did. Not only does he know our address too. He knows our history and future and He even knows how many hairs are on our heads.

All Santa can offer is HO HO HO –

JESUS offers health, help and hope.

Santa says "you better not cry" –

JESUS says "Cast all your cares on me for I care for you."

Santa's little helpers make toys.....

JESUS makes new life, mends wounded hearts, repairs broken homes and builds mansions.

Santa may make you chuckle but.....

JESUS gives you joy! That is your strength.

While Santa puts gifts under your tree –

JESUS became our gift and died on the tree.

It's obvious there is really no comparison. We need to remember WHO Christmas is all about.

We need to put Christ back in Christmas;

Jesus is still the reason for the season.

Yes, Jesus is better, even better than Santa Claus

Merry CHRISTmas!!!!!!

2013 Schedule for

First United Church Events

Hosted by Ways and Means Sub-Team

Thursday, Jan. 24

Jiggs Dinner

Thursday, Feb. 21

Ham and Scallop

Thursday, March 21

Roast Pork Supper

Sunday, April 21

Sunrise Breakfast

Thursday, Sept 26

Beef BBQ

Thursday, Nov. 21

Turkey Supper

All dates and events are subject to change