

Advent and Christmas greetings from the Minister's Study

In the first chapter of the gospel of John we read about the word of life.

"The word was the source of life, and this life brought light to people.

The light shines in the darkness and the darkness has never put it out."

During the busy weeks of advent and our preparations for Christmas and the birth of the Christ Child we celebrate a season of **hope, peace, joy, and love.**

We celebrate hope in our lives as we anticipate the coming of the Christ Child into a world in need of hope. We celebrate the hope that shines like a star on the horizon to lead us forward as a people searching for new possibilities in our lives and in our world.

We long for peace, inner peace to calm our spirits and assure us that no matter what may be God is with us and we are not alone. We search for outer peace in our world, a peace that enables us to reach out to our brothers and sisters in many lands.

We see joy filled faces of children who keenly anticipate the excitement of the season. The joy of the Christian faith that is central to all we do and are. The spirit of joy enables us to reach out to others. I think of the work that the Sunday School children and teachers are doing to develop an awareness of our environment and our responsibility to take care of our world.

As we approach Christmas the power of love is revealed through the birth of the baby Jesus in a manger.

A love that gives without counting the cost, the love that weaves compassion and justice together, the love that endures when the going gets rough, the love that was revealed in the life and sacrifice of Jesus.

In looking back over 2014 we reflect on all that has happened during the year. We pause to experience the present moment and we look forward to the New Year ahead through faith in the life-giving power revealed in the life of the Christ Child.

For children, this is a time of excitement and anticipation; for others, this is a season filled with responsibilities, activity and hopefully some excitement and anticipation!

Some are traveling during advent and Christmas to be with family or friends, while others spend the coming days quietly at home. "With all who come to the stable, no matter who we are, no matter where we come from, no matter where we are heading, we celebrate Christ's light, born again into the world!"

May this be a special Advent and Christmas for each of us as we experience in a new way God reaching out to us in the spirit of love and hope.

May the blessings of Christmas be with one and all!

Rev. Blair and Ruth Lewis

Upcoming Events

Dec. 14th Communion Service 10am
Dec 18th Christmas Hymn Sing Concert
"Peace on Earth" 7pm



Christmas Eve Services

6pm Family Service
10:30 pm Communion Service



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 14, 2014.**



A Christmas Hymn Sing Concert: **"Peace on Earth"**

The annual Christmas Hymn Sing will be held on Thursday, Dec. 18th, 7pm at First United. Come join with us as we celebrate the Christmas season with familiar carols as well as new selections you are sure to enjoy. The choir will be joined by Take Note, BHS Choir and other special guests. Cost \$10 Adults \$5 Children. Tickets are available from choir members and the church office 546-3532.

Each Sunday, during the Advent season, there will be a display of Nativity Scenes in the Narthex of our Sanctuary. If you have a treasured Nativity Scene that you would like to share with others for a Sunday, please contact Beth Sullivan at 549-4367.

Did You Know: A couple of really good ways to keep updated on First United Church events are to check out our website www.firstunited-bathurst.ca or to follow us on Facebook. Here you will find upcoming events as well as cancellations if the need arises.

Newsletters: We are hoping to compile a list of those people who would like to receive their Newsletters directly to their email address. Send your request to receive yours by email to firstadmin@nb.aibn.com.

2015 Envelopes: The Givings Envelopes for 2015 are located in the narthex. Please insure that envelopes for the correct year are used as individual contribution #'s have changed.

2015 Schedule for

First United Church Events

Hosted by Ways and Means Sub-Team

Thursday, January 29	Jiggs Dinner
Sunday, February 22	Chicken Bouillon
Thursday, March 26	Ham and Scallop
Sunday, April 26	Sunrise Breakfast
Thursday, October 1	Beef BBQ
Thursday, November 26	Turkey Supper

All dates and events are subject to change



Choir Appreciation: During the Sunday morning worship service, November 16, there was a time of appreciation for the choir members and their many years of contribution. The faithfulness and ongoing commitment of all First United Church choir members, past and present, were acknowledged and celebrated. Those receiving special recognition were Jessie Horsley, Isabel MacLaggan, Florence Erskine, Lorne Stymiest, Briddy Payne, Helen A. Knowles, Barbara Hinton, Hazel Harris, Joseph A. MacDonald, Don Tozer and Don Nelson. A number of those honored are still active in our choirs today. Music plays an integral role in all our worship services and celebrations. The dedication of our choir members, both Senior Choir and Men's choir under the leadership of our Musical Director, Martha Vickers, is much appreciated. New members are always welcome, Practice is held each Wednesday at 6:30. All you need to bring with you is your love of music and singing.

A Remembrance Day Celebration

By: Isabel MacLaggan

A fitting and well-supported Remembrance Day event was held at First United Church on Nov. 4. Organized by First United's Pastoral Care and Membership Team, the special event began with a mini concert in the sanctuary by pianist Linda Knowles-MacPherson.

This was followed by a few selections by vocalist and guitarist Joanne Dempsey of Stonehaven and the singing of popular songs by more than 60 people in attendance.

A screen presentation by Don Eddy depicted parade highlights when the North Shore Regiment held a recent D-Day observance in Bathurst. Also included was a Terry Kelly song with a significant message.

The morning program continued in the Ruth Morrison Fellowship Room with emphasis on the wall plaque and two honour rolls bearing the names of church members who served in the two World Wars.

There are two hundred and thirty-six names, twenty-five of which paid the supreme sacrifice. A moment of silence in their memory was observed by the gathering.

Present as a special guest was Eugene Godin, vice-president of the Herman J. Good V.C. Branch No. 18 Royal Canadian Legion. He spoke briefly of his more recent war and peacekeeping experiences in the service. He explained the significance of a few of the museum artifacts displayed in the room. Godin emphasized how fortunate Canadians are to live in a country not devastated by war.

Among other program highlights was the reciting by memory of "In Flanders Fields" by Cleveland Jagoe, a veteran of the Second World War. Helen Knowles gave an explanation of the story behind what is depicted on a ten-dollar bill. A show of hands revealed that almost everyone has had a family member in the service.

Among articles on display by Jean Babin was a suggested order of service to be used in churches when hostilities in Europe ceased or when the Second World War ended. The pamphlet was produced, at the time, by the Canadian Council of Churches.

Another display item was the "Welcome Home" December banquet invitation used at First United Church. The banquet was held in honour of the men and women of the congregation in the armed or auxiliary forces during the Second World War. Lunch was served and among the delicacies was the traditional 'war cake' made by Lynn Moffitt. The blessing prior to the lunch was given by Rev. Blair Lewis.

Members of the Pastoral Care and Membership Team are Patricia Brown, Gwen Sturgeon, Dorothy McCallum, Mae Branch, Lois Good and Isabel MacLaggan. Also on the committee are Rev. Blair Lewis and Lynn Moffitt who represents the community outreach sub-team.

*Christmas
is not as much about
opening our presents
as opening our hearts.
~Janice Maeditere~*

H

ighlights – Bathurst Pastoral Council
November 25, 2014

- ❖ The final Council meeting of 2014 was held in the Eddy Room with council Chair Sandra Boone presiding and Rev. Blair Lewis leading the opening prayer.
- ❖ The minister reported on his supervision of the ministerial intern in the Red Bank Pastoral Charge as well as on his work with Jean Herman who is in the process of transitioning to the United Church of Canada.
- ❖ His initial requirement is a two-year course on the polity and theology of the United Church. An immigrant from Belgium in 2009, he is currently doing supply work in the Loggieville/ Black River Pastoral Charge. He had been attending worship services here at First United during recent months.
- ❖ Ministry and Personnel Chair Jack MacKay said meetings were held with members of the church staff. He noted good rapport among the employees.
- ❖ Church Treasurer Dave Morison said local givings are \$2500 below budget due to a low experienced in July. He is hopeful the situation will improve before the year's end. Expenditures are under budget.
- ❖ In his report to the Financial Management Team, Wayne Clowater stated that Ways and Means meals in 2015 will be changed to the last week of the month.
- ❖ The Pastoral Care and Membership report informed Council that special events will be held from time to time to replace the weekly Do Drop In gatherings. The pre- Remembrance Day event was attended by more than 60 people of our congregation.
- ❖ Council approved changes to the fee structure for weddings and funerals.
- ❖ Through the Community Outreach Sub-team, a donation of \$100 has been given to each of the four English schools. The money will be used where needed such as for scholastic books or for the breakfast program.
- ❖ Reporting on Miramichi Presbytery, Isabel MacLaggan said Vivien Kierstead will be missed, not only as a representative to Presbytery but also as an active member of our congregation. As Council secretary, Judy Losier will send a note of appreciation to her husband.

- ❖ It was stated that First United is entitled to four representatives to Presbytery considering our large membership. Nominations chair Rick Watling will follow up on this observation. Bev Murphy is First United's third representative.
- ❖ Council received messages of gratitude from several recipients of the choir appreciation awards. In turn, Don Eddy will be thanked for the volunteer work he did in preparing the framed pictures which were presented to 12 people.
- ❖ Reporting on Hospitality and Friendship, Aldra Carson spoke about special receptions and she recognized the help received for the weekly after-service social time.
- ❖ The importance of picking up regular newsletters and church envelopes in the narthex was stressed considering the sharp increase in postage costs.
- ❖ The UCW reported on a fall rally, catering to four funeral receptions, giving \$2,000 to the general fund this fall, member donations to the Red Stocking Fund and baby food to the volunteer Center as Christmas projects.
- ❖ The Property Management Team reported on a multitude of ongoing repair and maintenance projects. As a cost-saving measure, a mechanical timer will be installed on the lights that shine on the church's exterior.
- ❖ Heather Smith of the Christian Development Team said the Sunday School children will be creating Christmas cards for hospital patients and shut-ins. The Clowaters and Watlings decorated the church for the Christmas season. Nativity scenes are on display in the narthex. Congregation members are invited to add theirs by contacting Beth Sullivan.
- ❖ An ad hoc committee was named to review our same gender marriage policy as it relates to the work being done by Maritime Conference in this regard.
- ❖ The next Council meeting was set for January 27.

*Submitted by:
Isabel MacLaggan*

*A single leaf
working alone
provides no shade.
~Chuck Page~*

