

Message from the Minister

Greeting to everyone at First United and the Bathurst Community.

On September 1st, Ruth and I drove up the highway to Bathurst in a moving van. As we approached Bathurst it was a clear moon lit night and we were aware that we were beginning a new chapter of our lives. Since that day we have appreciated the welcoming atmosphere of the Church community. Your dedication and support for your church is an extremely valuable asset.

In the first month of my ministry with you, we have experienced happy moments, in wedding services and moments of grief and loss in funeral services of thanksgiving and remembrance. We have worked together at church meetings, we planned and conducted worship services. We enjoy the desserts, music and fellowship that are an integral part of you community life. We share informal moments over a cup of coffee and delicious treats and I appreciate when you drop into the office to say "Hello".

When Ruth and I walk our little Jack Russell Terrier, Lily, we often see flocks of Canada Geese flying through the evening sky, as they fly in formation, they are working together to accomplish the common goal of successfully completing their journey. We look forward to working with you and being members of our new church family. May God be our guide on the journey.

Rev. Blair and Ruth Lewis

Rev Blair Lewis - Profile

- Rev. Blair Lewis, originally of Prince Edward Island, was ordained in 1976. He first served in an amalgamated six-point charge in the province and since 1996 he has been the staff chaplain at the Queen Elizabeth 2 Health Sciences Center in Halifax.

- His accreditations include Specialist Certification in Pastoral Care with The Canadian Association for Pastoral Practice and Education and clinical training in palliative care in Montreal. A program on Building Skills in Transitional Ministry, which he completed this year, will serve him well as he returns to the pastorate. Also, he has been active on Halifax Presbytery, Maritime Conference and Capital Health committees.

- Blair and his wife Ruth, who have four grown children, are excited about Blair's call to Bathurst and this new chapter of his ministry.

Chatting with the New Minister

by Isabel MacLaggan

Q. Had you been to Bathurst previously?

A. The only time was back 10 years ago when I was travelling VIA Rail. It was during a winter storm so from the train I could see people clearing away the snow.

Q. What was your early background?

A. I grew up in O'Leary, PEI, did my undergraduate studies in sociology at UPEI, then post grad at Dal. in Halifax. I went back to PEI to work in child and family services. I worked with 35 foster children, making sure they did well at home and at school.

Q. Then what happened?

A. It was at that time that Ruth and I got married. I decided to apply to PEI Presbytery to enter ministry training so I went to AST (Atlantic School of Theology) in Halifax. I served in a few pastoral charges during that time and was an assistant at St. John's United while I did my post grad work.

Q. Did you stay in Halifax?

A. No, I went to Cavendish – Breadalbane Pastoral Charge on PEI. It was a six-point charge so I had three services each Sunday in rotation.

Q. What was the next chapter in your life?

A. I went into general chaplaincy work in Halifax with the United Church. Involved were palliative care, mental health, rehab and transitional care.

Q. What brought you back to the pastorate?

A. I had been thinking about it for three or four years. As when I enrolled at AST, I wanted to help people as they searched for a sense of meaning and purpose in their lives. The spiritual aspect can help people work through obstacles such as death, disappointments and other losses. I encountered a lot of this with the foster kids who used to ask. "Why me and why am I not with my parents?"

Q. How did you prepare for this change?

A. I enrolled in a continuing education course in Ontario. It was a year-long course including online training as well. It looked at the challenges facing the church today and how to help people adapt to change. I was interviewed by a Maritime Conference committee and received my certification last January.

Q. What was your next move?

A. I started looking for a pastoral charge. In my search online last spring, I encountered your JNAC (Joint Needs Assessment Committee) report. I liked the way it was put together so I told Ruth Bathurst looked interesting. We came up for an interview in May.

Q. What were your impressions?

A. We wanted to attend the church service which we did. We liked the theology and liturgy that we heard. Also, as we were taken around, Bathurst reminded us of Summerside.

Q. What are some other observations now?

A. It is obvious how engaged and committed the people are. When I went to the Veterans' Unit I was pleasantly surprised when George Robertson came with me to provide the music. In Halifax, I had to use a laptop for the hymns at the transitional unit. Also, Ruth really enjoyed going to Campbellton last Monday for the UCW rally. I like having greeters at the door on Sunday and someone lighting the Christ candle, for example.

Q. Do you like the team model we have?

A. Yes, having the teams is really helpful. It lightens the load for me so I can focus on sermon preparation and other work. My goal is not to come and upset the applecart but rather to collaborate and explore possibilities of what might work. Also, the team approach provides people with the opportunity to use their skills.

Q. What are your impressions of Bathurst?

A. Ruth and I like the opportunity to be part of the wider community. We find people are welcoming and friendly not only at the church but everywhere. We attended the BBQ at Holy Family Church and we were introduced to Father Levi Arseneau. We are encountering French spoken in the stores and I find French words I learned in school are coming back. When one of the neighbours came by, we talked about how the two cultures are working side by side. On a lighter note, Bathurst offers a different pace of life and there certainty is less traffic.

Calendar of Events	
Oct. 11	Thanksgiving-Communion
Nov. 8	Remembrance Service
Nov. 19	Turkey Supper
Dec 6	Advent Carol Sing

Bathurst Pastoral Council

The Pastoral Council held its first meeting of the fall on Tuesday, September 29th with Chair, Brenda Parrott, presiding and all except three of the 17 members present. Rev. Blair Lewis was welcomed and was asked to have the opening prayer.

A committee with power to add will advance H1N1 pandemic planning as it affects the pastoral charge. Named to the committee were Emma MacKay, Patricia Brown, Vivien Kierstead and Rev. Blair Lewis.

Church Treasurer, Dave Morison and Isabel Clouston, Office Administrator, were commended for their expertise and cooperation.

The Financial Management Team reported revenue to the end of September is \$101,044 with summer givings showing an increase. Expenses are in line with the budget.

"We encourage people to enroll in PAR (Pre Authorized Remittance). It is the easiest way to regularly contribute to the church. A quick visit to the church office is all you need to get started", stated Cathy McLaughlin, Team Leader.

The next Council Meeting is November 24th.

Memorials

Memorial cards are available both at the church and at Elhatton's Funeral Home should you wish to donate to the church in memory of relatives and friends. Receipts will be issued at the church office.

Also, the memorials co-ordinator, Shirley Sealy, arranges to have one or more people at the Funeral Home at the time of a death when the family requests it. Cards and receipts are available at that time.

Should you wish to volunteer two hours in this way from time to time, please contact the church office (546-3532)

Worship Team

The Worship Team is asking for donations of jams, pickles, vegetables and such to decorate the sanctuary for Thanksgiving Sunday. Articles are to be brought to the church this week.

The seven-member Worship Team held its first meeting of the fall on Wednesday, September 23rd with the chair, Heather Smith presiding.

"It was a get-acquainted time with our new minister, Rev. Blair Lewis," said Heather following the meeting.

"We explained what our traditions have been as to the upcoming church services and fall programming but not saying we couldn't change. Commenting on what he saw on our First United website before he came to Bathurst, the minister said he was impressed with the special service we have for our high school graduates in June," Heather further commented.

She said still a major concern, not just for the Worship Team, is the need for more operators of the sound board in the sanctuary. Instruction will be given to anyone interested in sharing the duties for one Sunday a month. The need is urgent! Please contact the church office to indicate your willingness to participate.

Fall services of worship include Communion on Thanksgiving Sunday, October 11th and the Remembrance Day service on Sunday, November 8th.

Members on the Worship Team besides Heather are Sharon McKinnon, secretary, Shirley Gammon, Anne Brooks, Kim White, Nora McLean and Pat MacIntosh. Church organist Martha Vickers and Rev. Blair Lewis are non-voting members.



Education & Program Development

"We had a good meeting," reports the team leader, Marg Demmings, "even though all members were not present."

Marg went on to list the many events planned for November when the team met September 24. Included are the return of Bible Study, the continuation of the walking program in the hall and Seniors' Morning Out to be held later in the month.

An exciting new happening will be an evening of fun and entertainment with the showing of a DVD of the Paul McCartney concert held in Halifax during the summer.

"It is in the planning stages for November too. Anyone can come – young and older. Our minister has the DVD so the suggestion came from him," explained Marg.

Rev. Blair Lewis attended the meeting as he has been doing when each team meets. It is a good way of becoming familiar with what has been going on at First United.

Marg also said the E&P team hopes an event can be arranged around Valentine's Day for the young people of the grades 3-8 age bracket.

Other members of the Education & Program Development Team are Sylvia Donnelly, secretary; Elaine Godin, Pat MacIntosh, Gayle Ferron, Amy Cormier (new), Gail McLellan (new), Megan Martell, Julie Spence(new) Samantha Brown(new), and Debbie McLean who joins the team as Church School Co-ordinator.

Community Outreach

The Community Outreach Sub-team, which is under the umbrella of Pastoral Care, coordinates several projects that have a community emphasis and focus. Shari Smith-Ellis, who leads this sub-team, has scheduled the first meeting of the fall for October 5th.

Community Outreach includes:

- ~ A monthly soup and sandwich or spaghetti meal for the Bathurst Volunteer Center
- ~ Promotion of peanut butter donations for the Center
- ~ Donation of various supplies to local schools
- ~ Collection of Shoppers Optimum Points to meet various community needs.
- ~ Support for the annual Relay for Life initiative

~ Organization of our annual Christmas appeal that results in direct support of needy families

~ Encouragement for financial support of the Mission and Service Fund of the United Church of Canada.

Other members of the sub-team are Bev Murphy, Ruth Laszewski, Marlene Boyd, Lynnette Moffitt and Helen Sullivan-Doucet.

Ways and Means

The Ways and Means Sub-team is very pleased with the carpentry and installation of new sinks that Archie Fowlie has completed in the kitchen of Donald Eddy Memorial Hall.

"In the kitchen we now have two deep sinks to handle the big pots and roasters along with four shallow double sinks. Then there's a standard-size single hand sink in the adjoining room. All are stainless steel", said Haines Scott, chairman of the 15 member sub-team.

"Our annual turkey dinner is coming up on Thursday, November 19 when we cook 21 turkeys. It's a biggie but we're ready for it. We're so happy for our clean-up crew and the others, especially having the deeper sinks and improved island", Haines added.

He and his co-workers are looking forward to getting two five foot stainless steel tables to replace the old wooden ones at a cost of slightly more than \$700. If all goes as planned, the new tables could be in use on November 19. In long-range planning, Haines said he would like to see the eight stoves gradually replaced. They are located on the upstairs and downstairs levels of the hall.

This kitchen upgrade was a scaled-down undertaking compared to what was initially included in overall hall renovations a few years ago. Further donations towards the cost are needed and anticipated.

A Harvest of Music featuring local talent was held October 3 to kick off the Ways and Means events for the coming year. The turkey dinner in November is the next project and the 2010 schedule of meals and concerts has been tentatively planned already.

Annual Remembrance Service

Each year, on the Sunday immediately prior to Remembrance Day, we honour our war veterans as well as those who lost their lives in war.

This year our Remembrance Service at First United will be held on Sunday, November 8th. Understandably, there are fewer and fewer veterans to attend this special observance even though all local veterans are welcome. Still some do come and it is an important event for them.

Chad Nelson will be on hand to play the trumpet for the Last Post and Reveille. Bev Murphy says the usual soup luncheon for everyone will follow in the Donald Eddy Memorial Hall.

It was at the Remembrance Service three years ago that our renovated church hall was rededicated in memory of Captain Donald Norval Eddy after whom the building was named 60 years previously. Guest speaker for that celebration was Dr. Alexander Colville, an internationally renowned Canadian war artist during the Second World War.



Do Drop In

The weekly "Do Drop In" every Tuesday morning still proves to be a great fun and fellowship time for men and women of all ages.

Held in the Ruth Morrison Room at the church, the informal get-together has people "dropping in" for mid-morning coffee, tea and light snacks. More importantly, they seem to come for the casual conversation, friendliness and lots of laughter. There is no charge and no donations are expected.

Some people linger while others come and go at different times. The fellowship event is slated for 9:30-11:30am. It is hosted by members of the Pastoral Care Team.

The first "Do Drop In" this fall was on September 15th with Lois Good as the hostess. The attendance on September 22nd doubled when different people came to be hosted by Faye Robertson. Everyone was glad to see Harold Gammon who is getting into his fall schedule too.

Other team members who take turns for the weekly event are Mae Branch, Isabel MacLaggan, Dorothy McCallum, Gwen Sturgeon and Pat Brown, chair of the Pastoral Care Team. Even when it isn't their turn to host, they still "drop in" to enjoy the light and sometimes more serious conversations.

An open invitation is extended to one and all to join us whenever you can.

Sunday Church School

As parents or guardians, you managed to have the children ready for the opening of day school, in September! Now, why not help them to get ready for life in another way – by nurturing their spirit, that is!

Registration for the 2009-2010 Church School program continues with two classes already underway. Children of pre-school and kindergarten age form one class and the second class has children of grade one and upwards.

Sixteen children were registered on the first day. Registration forms as well as the class schedule are in the church narthex or can be picked up at the church office. All children are welcome!

"Of course, we are always looking for more teachers even for just one Sunday a month but we do have enough teachers to start our fall program," reports Debbie McLean, the Church School co-ordinator.

Debbie, who is returning as coordinator, says more high school kids are needed as helpers. The curriculum used is entitled "The Whole People of God". Help is given to the teachers as they proceed with the program. The theme each Sunday coincides with that of the minister since the same calendar is used. The children stay for the regular service until story time after which they go to their classes.

The teachers returning are Elaine Godin, Jodie Lee, Rhoda Sherrard and Anne Buzas. Jennifer Oliver-Lavigne and Vicki Sealy are newcomers. Actually Jennifer was responsible for the infant nursery last year but has moved up to teach the older ones.

A well-equipped nursery is located on the hall's lower level as well. Also, the room is available for parents to visit during the church service if necessary.

More information on the Church School can be obtained from Debbie McLean (548-5351) during the evening or from the church office (546-3532)

TAB – Take A Break

The first TAB outing for the fall season was held on Wednesday September 23. The organizer, Marg Demmings, said there were about 25 crafts people and hobbyists in attendance. This activity has maintained exceptional interest in recent years and not only for members of our own congregation. Everyone is welcome!

TAB is held every Wednesday morning in Rooms 1,2,and3 downstairs in the Donald Eddy Memorial Hall from 9am until noon. It is a time for fun, work, talk and to enjoy a coffee with new and old friends.

"Actually there were two new people there. It was great to see Barb Dobson and Hope Scott back again," commented Marg the next day.

The crafts groups include:

1. Cro-knitting and Crocheting with Peggy Roy
2. Cross-stitching with Sherry Mitton
3. Knitting with Helen Sullivan-Doucet
4. Quilting with Hazel Harris
5. Painting – self-help group

Starting in November:

- ~ Swedish weaving with Edie Gammon
- ~ Scrapbooking and card making with Eleanor Scott
- ~ Rug Hooking – Who is interested?

"Yes, we are hoping to have a rug hooking group. Rather than latch hooking with tiny pieces of material, we would use yarn but with the same technique," explained Marg.

"There seems to be a growing interest in this craft. I'm interested in learning this technique myself. I understand a workshop has been organized locally so once learned the participants could hook together at TAB, just as the painters do now," Marg added.

If enough interested people call the church office at 546-3532 or Marg Demmings at 546-4685, rug hooking will be added to the TAB program.

"TAB is always open for other suggestions or new ideas. If anyone has a craft or hobby to share with others or would like to learn from others, please contact us. Suggestions could be photography, stamp or coin collections, genealogy, card playing, sketching and more," Marg concluded.

Extra – Extra!

~ Church organist Martha Vickers is planning an Advent Carol Sing for Sunday evening, December 6. Anne Swan-Boudreau and Krista Quinn will help her and Kim White has volunteered to do posters and tickets for the event.

~ The 2009 box of church envelopes includes a special one for Thanksgiving which you are asked to use. Those on Par (Pre-Authorized Remittance) will be making their contribution of thanks otherwise.

~ For new subscriptions to the Observer, a United Church of Canada publication, please contact the church office (546-3532) IMMEDIATELY. The annual subscription rate is \$15 (tax included). Renewals are also payable at the office. Actually people were asked to subscribe by last Friday, October 2.

~ "Come, Visit the Stable", a pre-Christmas activity at First United in recent years, will be discussed at the October 19th meeting of the Worship Team. The display of nativity scenes has been associated with the arrival of the Advent Season which this year begins on Sunday, November 29.

~ There is a desperate need for someone to chair the local group committee of the Boy Scouting Movement, and for a few other members, reports Jim Walker, the Cub leader at First United. Fifteen boys and one girl have been registered with one part time and three full time leaders in place. Meanwhile Mae Branch reports 19 Beavers are registered and there are four leaders. The big news is that the First United groups received the provincial award for the most growth this past year.

~ The Bathurst Pastoral Charge website (www.firstunited-bathurst.ca) was in steady use during the summer.. There were 567 visits in September to gain information on upcoming events, announcements, church services in advance, terms of reference, lists of team members and more. Suggestions are always welcome.

~ Those who are on Rogers with no Talk-mail hook-up with the church office could keep abreast of happenings and other info by giving your email address to the office.