



## Happy Thanksgiving

When we celebrate the special days in the church year we quickly realize that every day of celebration has a unique history and meaning. The origins of Canadian Thanksgiving are more closely connected to the traditions of Europe than of the United States. Long before Europeans settled in North America, festivals of thanks and celebrations of harvest took place in Europe in the month of October.

The very first Thanksgiving celebration in North America took place in Canada when Martin Frobisher, an explorer from England, arrived in Newfoundland in 1578. He wanted to give thanks for his safe arrival to the New World. For a few hundred years, Thanksgiving was celebrated in either late October or early November, before it was declared a national holiday in 1879.

November 6<sup>th</sup> was set aside as the official Thanksgiving holiday. On January 31<sup>st</sup>, 1957, the Canadian Parliament announced that on the second Monday in October, Thanksgiving would be "a day of general thanksgiving to almighty God for the bountiful harvest with which Canada has been blessed." Thanksgiving was moved to the second Monday in October because after the World Wars, **Remembrance Day (November 11th)** and Thanksgiving kept falling in the same week. When we celebrate Thanksgiving we think about the passage of Scripture from Matthew 6 versus 25 to 28.

***"Do not be worried about the food and drink you need in order to stay alive, or about clothes for your body. After all, isn't life worth more than food? Isn't the body worth more than clothes? Look at the birds: they do not plant seeds, gather a harvest and store it in barns; yet your Father in heaven takes care of them!"*** *"When we offer thanks to God we offer thanks for the blessings that we have experienced in our lives rather than focusing on what we do not have."*

To be truly thankful is a radical act. When you're cold and hungry, a bit of food and some warmth is the difference between misery and happiness. This leads to the false belief that a little stuff brings a little happiness, a lot of stuff will bring a lot of happiness. Genuine Thanksgiving involves being truly thankful and appreciating what we do have in our lives.

This year we are very mindful of the plight of refugees flooding into the European countries. We are challenged here in our own country to address issues relating to the mass migration of half the population of Syria and neighboring countries. When we offer thanks to God for the benefits that we experience in our lives we are freed to share with our brothers and sisters who have lost everything.

May this be a special Thanksgiving for you and your loved ones. As we offer Thanksgiving within our families and within our church family may we discover creative ways to reach out to our brothers and sisters here in Canada and across the sea.

*Rev. Blair Lewis*

## Highlights – Bathurst Pastoral Council

September 29, 2015

In attendance to form a quorum were Sandra Boone as Council chair, Judy Losier as secretary, Aldra Carson, Wayne Lord, Don Nelson, Linda Newell, Ian Oliver, Brenda Parrott, Rick Watling and Isabel MacLaggan. Rev. Blair Lewis opened the meeting with prayer.

Following considerable discussion on the refugee crisis, it was agreed to investigate different ways of helping financially.

As of August 31, local givings were \$1000 below budget while Mission and Service givings were down as well. Total revenue was \$4,300 above budget but expenses were up by \$2,300.

Overall there was a gain of \$2,000 in the financial picture, but with a \$20,000 "deficit" budget for 2015, finances are actually down by \$18,000.

A major expenditure was the kitchen renovation costing more than \$8,400 towards which Ralph Jennings' \$10,000 donation was earmarked, Don Nelson reported as chair of the Property Management Team. He also said the hall is rented for election day on October 19.

The Pastoral Care Team followed up on the \$100 donation made to a young person receiving musical training after she lost all her possessions in a house fire.

The Christian Development Team meeting on September 15, chaired by Brenda Parrott, dealt with church service formats, greeters, baptisms, Bible Study, large print hymnals, sound system improvements and the Christmas hymn sing planned for mid December.

The Open Circle UCW reported catering for two funeral receptions, new flowers for the church, and hosting the Miramichi Presbyterial fall rally on September 19.

Reporting on the September 26 Miramichi Presbytery meeting, Isabel MacLaggan said the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the United Church of Canada was the theme. Marion Green of Burnt Church is the new chairperson and Dave Morison of First United is the new treasure. Presbytery is willing to offer financial assistance to a refugee project initiated by a sponsoring body.

Of the 13 persons currently seeking ordered ministry admission to the United Church of Canada, five are from the Presbyterian Church in Canada. Delegates heard a report on the General Council sessions held in Newfoundland in August as given by its two representatives, clergy and lay.

The Hospitality and Friendship Team continues to have successful after-service fellowship time as reported by Aldra Carson.

Nominations Chair Rick Watling said Nancy MacKay is a new member on the Ministry and Personnel Team. As chair of this Team, Wayne Lord reported having had a meeting earlier in the day.

Rev. Lewis gave an update on the Comprehensive Review that the national church is conducting on necessary changes in governance in order to combat critical rising costs. Among the changes will be going to a three-council system from the current four-council system of Congregation, Presbytery, Conference and General Council. More information will be made available as it is received.

The next Council meeting will be held on Tuesday, November 24 at 4:00pm.

*Isabel MacLaggan*

*O Lord  
that lends me life,  
Lend me a heart  
replete with thankfulness.  
~William Shakespeare~*



### *Upcoming Ways & Means Event*

*Harvest Turkey Supper - Nov. 26, 2015*



### *Thanksgiving Service*

*10am - October 11, 2015*

*Anyone wishing to contribute items to decorate the church are encouraged to bring them in by 4pm Thursday Oct. 8<sup>th</sup>.*



### *Christmas Concert 2015*

*The choir of First United will be hosting its annual Christmas concert in mid-December. More information will follow when the date is confirmed.*

**Church School** has resumed for the fall season. Join with our energetic group of leaders and students on Sunday mornings. All are welcome. We are looking for Teachers and Nursery staff to work on a part time or rotation bases. 1 or 2 Sundays a month. Call the church office for more information 546-3532.

Financial report as at August 31, 2015  
Local givings are \$1,100 below budget  
Total revenue is \$4,500 above budget  
Total expenses are \$2,300 above budget

**Newsletters:** We have 46 households currently receiving their newsletters via email. Please consider adding your name to the list. Send your request to firstadmin@nb.aibn.com. Special envelopes for Thanksgiving contributions can be found in the Narthex. Approximately 350 members of our church family receive three letters yearly at the cost of around \$1.00/letter.

### **A Thanksgiving Quiz**

1. On what day does Thanksgiving occur in Canada?
2. What year did Thanksgiving become a holiday in Canada?
3. Canadian Thanksgiving shares the date with which American holiday?
4. Which province is the largest Canadian producer of cranberries?
5. Which French explorer founded the Order of Good Cheer, known for their huge feasts of thanks?
6. This unfiltered, unsweetened, non-alcoholic drink is often enjoyed as a festive alternative to wine at Thanksgiving dinner?
7. From 1921 to 1931, Thanksgiving was held together in November with which Canadian holiday?
8. Milk, eggs, sugar, nutmeg, cinnamon, cloves and ginger are the other ingredients in which kind of pie?

### **Thanksgiving Scavenger Hunt**

As seasons are changing, nature's most beautiful colours are combined with the fresh, crisp air. This is the perfect time to get outside with family and friends! Create your own unique Thanksgiving scavenger hunt. It could be as simple as sending little ones around the yard to find leaves, acorns, bark, etc or make it more challenging for an older group. Send them out to take digital photos of the things they are thankful for along with a list of items to find such as; a house with smoke coming out of the chimney, a pumpkin, a bale of hay, a rake, etc. You can make it as challenging as you want!

### Answers to Quiz

- 1) 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday of October
- 2) 1957
- 3) Columbus Day
- 4) British Columbia
- 5) Samuel de Champlain
- 6) Apple Cider
- 7) Remembrance Day
- 8) Pumpkin Pie