

St. James Visitor

*For Unto Us a
Child is Born*



Christmas 2014

SEASON'S GREETINGS from the Rev. Terrie Burry

I remember some years ago while I was on Christmas break from theology school, I spent an evening at my grandparents' house in Norman's Cove. In an attempt to multi-task, I brought all my yet-to-be-wrapped presents to their place to deal with while I visited with Nan and Pop, catching up with them after a semester in Halifax.

An hour later, the living room floor looked like the devastating aftermath of an explosion in Santa's workshop and, while sporadically wincing in pain from my self-inflicted wrapping paper cuts, I told my grandfather about my Hebrew course that had nearly caused me a nervous collapse. "Seriously, Pop," I said, removing tape from my chin and lining a crease in the wrapping paper, "I nearly lost my marbles over this course. I had to translate Psalm 23 from the original Hebrew into English – and let's be clear, it's not a direct word-for-word translation – and then write a paper about it! It took a week of my life I will never get back. I did, however, learn something that was really interesting and kind of nice."

"And what's that now, me duckie babes?" asked Pop, the one person who could sit and listen forever when I talked theological jargon; he always appeared to be genuinely interested.

"When we were talking about the Psalm and references to shepherds in the Bible, our professor told us about the sheep she had growing up. She liked the passage about Jesus (as the shepherd) saying His sheep knew His voice, because that's how it works with shepherds and their sheep. The sheep will only follow their shepherd and respond to their shepherd's voice. Isn't that really nice?"

Pop begged to differ, passionately. "Mind, now, my duckie babes! Sheep?! Just listen to 'da shepherd?! Sheep are 'da most ignorant creatures ever I saw. Any fool who come along wit' a big enough piece a cabbage, the sheep would go on with him!" He then began a very dignified and reverent rendition of "While shepherds wash their socks by night all seated 'round the tub, and a bottle of sunlight soap came down and they began to scrub...."

I didn't know it at the time, but this would be my last Christmas with my grandfather. And yet, five years later, every time I sit with the ribbons, paper and tape to wrap presents for my loved ones, I remember this night--the smell of his Christmas tree, the warmth of the room, the glow of the lights, the sound of Pop singing about dirty-footed shepherds, knowing I was surrounded by love.

I find there is something about this season of cold, lights, darkness, love and mystery that has a way of causing the past, present and future to flow together in a way I don't experience other times of the year. Maybe you feel the same way. Family traditions, baking, certain smells, take us back to memories of the past. The busyness of the season, all the tasks and errands to be completed, these keep our heads focused on the "right now." The changes that come with the ebb and flow of time--new relationships, the loss of old friends, changing of patterns to accommodate new circumstances--all these things can make us weary or hopeful of an unknown future. In this space, our past, present and future freely mingle, and in these Advent and Christmas seasons, the presence of the Christ Child is found giving testimony of God's plan for the ages.

Friends, may you have a blessed Advent. May you experience the mystery and wonder of the One who comes to us with the royal majesty proclaimed by the stars and angels, the heavenly hosts.

May you find companionship with the One who, in the most humbling of circumstances, took on flesh and bone in the vulnerability of a baby's body that He might later walk among us and show us the way home.

From my family to yours, have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Blessings,

Rev. Terrie





ADVENT: A TIME OF WAITING by the Rev. Pamela Jones-Fitzgerald

Christmas is coming. By the time this newsletter reaches you, we will be way into the days of December. It may seem like it is much too soon to be talking about trees and lights, presents and eggnog. For Christmas is the culmination of Advent.

Advent is all about waiting. It is the season before Christmas in the Church Year. The weeks of Advent occur immediately before the birth of Christ. It is the period of time God calls us to enter into "a set apart time" for a particular intention, a particular reason.

Advent is about anticipating the birth of Christ. It is about longing and a desire that is yet to come...that which is not here yet. And so through Advent God invites us to wait expectantly.

Advent is a very special time of the church year for me. Why, you may ask?

Advent confronts the corrosion of the heart, the cynicism and wrong-doings of this world. Advent addresses the lack of hope, the grief of loved ones lost and even the bitter sting of death, with the ultimate insistence that God has not abandoned the world. Hope is real and something is coming. God has not abandoned us--each and everyone.

Advent charges into the depths of gloom and doom and lost hope....It overturns the tables of despair, announcing there is a new day (the birth of Christ at Christmas) and it is not like anything that has come before.

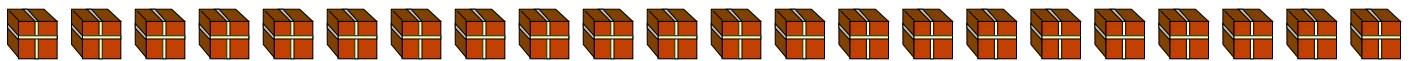
Each December then, we enter into a season of waiting, longing and expecting. God's spirit meets us in the centre of all that may be wrong in our lives.

In Advent we invite God to enter into the deepest places of heartache, cynicism, bitterness and helplessness where we have suddenly stopped believing that tomorrow can be better than today.

Through Advent, God invites us to open up and turn our hearts to the direction of that day...that special morning when the baby will cry his first cry and we, surrounded by shepherds and angels and everyone in between, celebrate those things: love, peace and hope that bring our worn and weary Spirits what we have been longing for.

May you find glimpses of God's hope and light in your Advent days, and then after all the expectant waiting, may your Spirit overflow with all the excitement and love that the birth of the Christ Child will bring.

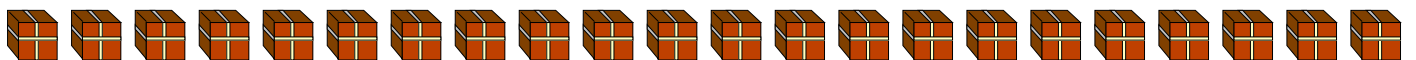
Rev. Pamela



WHITE GIFT SERVICE

Sunday, December 14

Our White Gift Service will be held on Sunday, December 14. This year we are collecting 'new' household articles for Stella Burry Corporation and toiletries, hats, mitts, and scarves for Street Reach. Your white gifts may be dropped off at the church office during the week or placed in the wagon at the church entrance on Sunday morning.



GENTLY USED WINTER BOOTS. If you have adult-size gently used winter boots which need a new home, please consider donating them to Street Reach by dropping them off at the church office before December 14.



YOUTH AND CHRISTIAN EDUCATION PROGRAMS

By Susan Sheppard

We now have three youth groups! The original youth group has grown up and moved in two directions. First, three founders of our youth group have taken on leadership of a Junior High group which meets twice a month. The rest of the group, plus the junior group leaders, have also just begun their own Young Adults group which plans to meet monthly and include their significant others. Ideas for activities and service work were discussed at their first meeting on Monday, October 27. The third group is our original High School youth group led by Rebecca Pike. They have many exciting things planned for the next few months. Junior and Senior High School groups met together for a Halloween Party on Thursday, October 30, while all three groups are planning a party to decorate the church for Advent and Christmas on November 29. They will be organizing and running a Christmas Party for the younger Youth Groups to be held later in December. Our movie night on Friday, December 5, featured "The Nativity Story" and was attended by 7.

Sunday School. The Godly Play materials were moved into their new home on movable shelving units in the Youth Centre. We have 6-10 three to eight-year olds exploring Bible stories in there each week. The nine to twelve-year olds (7-9 children each week) are meeting in the Multi-purpose room with their new curriculum 'Connect' using video presentations, reading, making related crafts and discussing the lesson. Both teachers and children are very enthusiastic about this program. There are several youth helping out with the nursery, and those who are not occupied as helpers (grades 9+) have asked for a program of their own, so we started 'Echo the Story' with them in November. The Sunday School is also working on a drama for the White Gift service being held on December 14.

Confirmation. We have had two confirmation classes so far this year with 9 youth attending. At our October 26 class, the topic was "what do we believe about God?" On December 6, the discussion was "what do we believe about the Bible?" and in preparation, they were invited to attend our movie night.

Dancing. We now have two Liturgical Dance groups. The older girls have a new choreographer for their group and are working on a new worship dance. We had a delightful problem and solution in that several younger girls wanted to join the dancers, but due to the limited space on the chancel, adding to the group would be both impractical and unsafe. So, two of the older girls are working with the younger ones as a separate dance group. Our original group presented their first offering on November 16. It was a beautiful piece danced to the very moving song 'Say Something.' Both dance groups will dance during the White Gift Service. Our six-week session of Sacred Circle Dance has finished; though not well attended, it was enjoyed by those who did come.

The Go Project team led the worship with Sight Restored providing the music on October 19. The participants were all super engaged in Dave Csinos' second talk on building 'church' using Lego as the metaphor. The theme for the closing worship changed midway through from 'sharing light' to the Book of Job because they all wanted to know what this story Rebecca had been referring to all weekend was about. Out came the Godly Play story! When that was finished, someone said Satan can't really be in the Bible, so Rebecca read them the first couple of verses. Now they want to study this story in youth group!



There will be two Go projects in St. John's this summer, the first from July 5-16 and the other from July 26-August 6. There would be an extra \$500 cost to the host congregation, bringing the total we would pay to Go to \$8000. On the other hand, if we get another congregation to host the second program, we would share the cost 50/50 so our cost would decrease to \$4000. They are also looking at hiring staff more locally which could mean summer employment for some of our Go Project alumni.

Youth Retreat. The Conference Youth Forum scheduled for Loon Bay Camp on October 17-19 was cancelled due to low (no) registration. Rebecca and I took on the task of reorganizing the event, in just over two weeks, for the St. John's area because we had a non-refundable

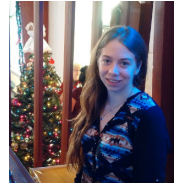
(continued on page 10)



MEET OUR MUSIC DIRECTORS by Marilyn Adams

Amy Dalziel

Amy grew up in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, in a United Church family, and she earned her Bachelor of Music from Mount Allison University. She successfully completed and was awarded a Master of Music degree in piano performance and pedagogy from Memorial University of Newfoundland at the fall convocation. Amy is currently teaching music in St. John's while continuing to explore further opportunities in both performance and teaching in the area. She has worked with several United Church congregations in their music programs and enjoys playing for both traditional and contemporary worship services. Amy also has experience leading and accompanying both small choirs and instrumental ensembles.



Sophia WerdenAbrams

Sophia comes to us from Durham, Ontario, where she began working at an early age as organist and as assistant choir director at their United Church. She completed an undergraduate degree in music (piano performance) from the University of Waterloo. Sophia has worked as assistant conductor to the Chapel Choir as well as the University Choir (a larger community ensemble) and was accompanist and assistant conductor for the Mennonite Youth Singers, a choir for adolescents who sing in community and church settings. She is currently pursuing a Master's of Music degree at MUN in Choral Conducting.



We welcome Amy and Sophia as our Music Directors at St. James. We are thrilled to have such talented individuals to provide leadership and direction as we further explore and develop an exciting music program in our congregation. Please feel free to come speak with them and get to know them better.

FINDING THE MISSING PEACE – SuAn Randall, Office Administrator

The English proverb, 'Necessity is the mother of invention' could well be turned on its head these days to say 'Invention is the mother of necessity.' Before my cell phone and laptop existed, I managed quite well, or so I thought. Yet now that these technologies are ubiquitous, they have become essential components of my daily life. Don't get me wrong; I treasure inventions that can aid my lifestyle. However, there remains one precious commodity that cannot be produced in any factory, nor will ever roll off any assembly line, and that is, quite simply, peace.

Songs have been written about it, pilgrimages made to various locations and ironically, wars waged, all in the pursuit of peace. One of the greatest messages of this Christmas season is 'Peace on earth; goodwill to all.' The fact that we repeat this wish year after year indicates that it still eludes us. I believe, however, that peace is already and forever within our being and totally accessible. It is closer than my heartbeat, more a part of me than my own name; it is more ethereal than my subtlest of thoughts. In other words, it is always there for the reminding.

These days we need a toolbox of strategies to reconnect ourselves to our peace. Living under the umbrella of St. James and involvement in its various activities is certainly one. Promising ourselves a day or two this holiday season without a cell phone or tablet by our side is another. Perhaps the most time-tested and true habit to come to know ourselves as peace is to just close our eyes, take a few minutes (3-7), allow our stomach to move gently and deeply up and down in rhythm with our breath, and then redirect our thinking to know that whatever we see or do not see with closed eyes is just perfect. During this time, the infinitely vast, peaceful space that is forever within us and around us, whether we perceive it as something or nothing, is instantly accessible.

This last strategy can be done anywhere, anytime, except when driving of course. At this time of celebration, I wish peace on earth; goodwill to all.

Aum, shantihi, shantihi, shantihi
Om, peace, peace, peace





AN INVITATION TO THE CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE by Marilyn Adams

This year only one service is scheduled for Christmas Eve – approved by the Worship and Sacraments Committee.

The recommendation for this change came from the Worship Team (formerly Music and Liturgy Committee) following lengthy discussions regarding the format and attendance at both Christmas Eve services in the past few years. Much consideration was given to the diverse needs of our congregation and a commitment to providing a meaningful experience on the Eve of Christ's Birth including the celebration of Communion. As examples, our seniors who are unable, for various reasons, to attend the later service for Communion and/or do not find the Family Service inspiring; families with young children who need to be settled at a reasonable hour thus exempting them from partaking in communion; persons who must travel on Christmas Eve to be with their loved ones but who also want to connect with their church family; and the unpredictable weather at this time of year (safety being a concern). The recommendation for one service formatted to meet the needs of our congregation evolved from this discussion.

The service this year has been planned to encourage and enable all members/families to rejoice together on this most Holy Eve. Recognizing the time constraints for some of those who are working, the exuberance of young children, young families with infants, our youth, the middle aged, and older members who perhaps can no longer tolerate the noise and activity of the traditional family service, we are presenting a new arrangement.

The service has two components: a traditional Family celebration and a Communion celebration. The Family component will begin at 7 p.m. and transition into the Communion Service at approximately 8 p.m., concluding at 8:30 p.m.

The service has been designed to enable families to join the service or conversely exit the service during the singing of any carol. You can come and stay for the entire 90 minutes, participate in the Family portion of the service, join partway through the service or, leave, as your circumstance dictates. Ushers will be able and willing to provide assistance and direction during the service.

At approximately 8 p.m., the transition for Communion will occur with the playing/singing of several Christmas carols. The ushers will be directed to close the sanctuary doors at a given time to allow for personal spiritual reflection in preparation for the celebration of Communion.

We realise this will be a learning experience for all of us, and we ask your patience through this endeavour. We are not discouraging the meeting and greeting of friends and family as we gather and/or depart – both vestibules will be available along with the Fellowship Room for extended conversations. We encourage you to continue to share season's greetings with your church family.

The Worship and Sacraments Committee, through the Worship Team, will conduct an evaluation of the success of this new format in the New Year. Your feedback will be essential to this process.

We invite all who are able to come and join in the true celebration of Christmas. To those who cannot, we wish you a most holy and blessed Christmas season; we will include you in our prayers.

WINTER SOLSTICE - December 21

We will be holding our annual Winter Solstice Service at Susan's house again on December 21 at 7 p.m. Dress warmly and bring a mug and flashlight.



CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES

7 pm Traditional Family Service

7:45 pm Musical Transition

8 pm Celebration of Communion



CHRISTMAS GREETINGS FROM YOUR CHURCH COUNCIL by Clyde Flight

As Chair of your Church Council, I want to express sincere gratitude for your support of our Church during 2014 and to offer best wishes at this special time in our Church Year.

We were delighted to welcome Dr. Carmel Doyle as our special guest at our Anniversary Service on Sunday, November 16. Dr. Doyle is an adjunct professor at Queen's College, Memorial University. Her message was very timely and inspiring, and we are extremely grateful to her for taking the time to be with us. The coffee hour following the service was well attended and an opportunity to spend time together as a Church Family.

Our committees have been hard at work on the various aspects under their oversight, and we appreciate the leadership they have been providing. As evident in the work of the Comprehensive Review Task Group, these are difficult and changing times in the life of our United Church. The recent report from the Comprehensive Review Task Group has been included on page 11 of this publication for your information.

As we approach year end, we are once again calling on our people to make a special effort to respond positively with your Christmas donation. As in other years, we began 2014 with an optimistic expectation of revenue, but we are currently running behind that expected figure. On a positive note, donations this year to our roof debt have been in the \$15,000 range as of the end of November. Your Church Council has an optimistic expectation to reduce this loan to zero with a concerted appeal during the coming year.

As a congregation, we have a proud history of dedicated financial support of the life and work of St. James. If you feel you have not met your personal financial commitment to your church for 2014, please use the remaining days in December to prayerfully consider how you can help us reach our financial goal.

On your behalf, I offer thanks to our staff for their tremendous work throughout the year and wish them the Blessing of a Joyous Christmas Season. On behalf of your Church Council, I extend the wish that your Christmas Season will be rich with love and friendship and is filled with the promise of a wonderful year ahead as we work together in the life of St. James United Church. Please do not hesitate to contact any member of Council if you have questions or concerns.

Did you know that this year United Church [Mission and Service](#) will support 86 congregations in 37 presbyteries, 13 Conferences, 6 theological schools, 3 education centres, 39 chaplaincies, 75 community and justice communities, 15 overseas personnel, and 97 global partners in 25 countries?

An Advent blessing and thank you to all the people of St. James Pastoral Charge for your Mission and Service giving of \$28,659 to the end of October, 2014. You are making a difference in the lives of people here in Canada and around the world.

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT ST. JAMES

UCW monthly meeting	2nd Monday 7:30 pm
AOTS monthly meeting	3rd Wednesday 5:30 pm
Friendship Group	2nd/4th Wednesday 2 pm
Guitar Group	Thursdays 10:30 a.m.
Youth Choir (Ages 8-18)	Wednesday 6:45 pm
AOTS Choir	Wednesday 8 pm
UCW Choir	As needed
Senior Choir	Tuesday 7:30 pm
Sight Restored	Saturday 10:30 am
Senior Youth (Ages 14+)	Two Saturdays/month 7 pm
Junior Youth (Ages 11-13)	One Saturday/month 6 pm

PROJECT GRACE

Please Help Stuff Our Stocking: Project Grace is having their first annual supply drive to collect small items needed for the programs at Cochrane Street and St. James United Churches. Our wish list includes: duo tangs, pencils, strings and rosin for violins/cellos (all sizes), Size 2 and 2.5 clarinet reeds, cleaning cloths for flutes and clarinets, valve oil for trumpets, cleaning paper for flutes, cello end pin straps, or books from the Piano Adventures collection by Faber & Faber. Want to donate but need some help? The elves at Long & McQuade Musical Instruments would be happy to help you select items to stuff the Project Grace stocking!





Financing Major Projects

Two major renovations projects commenced on the St James church property in the summer of 2012 with completion in the fall of the same year and consisted of new roof shingles for the church and extension plus all new windows and doors for the Hillcrest Daycare (10 Paton Street).

The loan with the Bank of Nova Scotia to carry out a portion of the noted work commenced September 2012 with an opening balance of \$75,000 and has been proceeding very well from the income proceeds from the Hillcrest Daycare rental. The balance of the loan to date is \$43,750.

Your Property Committee and Church Council have an initiative to try and pay the loan off a little earlier than planned to enable St James to use the daycare rental income to offset other rising operating and maintenance costs and save on the loan interest payments.

Your support, no matter the amount pending your circumstance and ability, on this new initiative, either in this calendar year or next would be most helpful. Thank you, Bill Legge, Property Chair



If you have not received your special givings envelope, please use a blank envelope and include the information outlined or ask your usher at church for this one.



St. James United Church
ST. JOHN'S, NEWFOUNDLAND

*Christmas
Offering*

NAME _____

AMOUNT _____

ENV. # _____

On behalf of the congregation, we extend a special thank you to the UCW and AOTS for their support during the year. Their efforts to organize special events and make financial contributions to M&S and the life and work of the church are greatly appreciated.

PAR Program (Pre-Authorized Remittance)

It's time to take note and check the number of unused church envelopes left in your box. Statistics show that, on average, most people have at least 10-12 left on December 31 each year. However, families using PAR have their contribution "on the plate" every month. This is much appreciated for carrying on the day-to-day business of the Church during times of low attendance. Please consider using PAR if you are not already doing so.

PAR is a program administered by the United Church of Canada. Many people use it for their offering, finding it a convenient way to take care of their regular commitments to the church whether they are at home or traveling. You decide the amount you wish to donate to the church, and your bank account will be debited on or about the 20th of the month. We will give you small cards to put in the offering plate in place of envelopes.

Visa/Master Card. If you prefer, use your Visa or Master Card for PAR.

Post-Dated Cheques. OR, you may leave your post-dated cheques at the office and we will deposit them accordingly.

Donate Electronically. Go to our website, www.stjamesuc.org, and click on the "make a donation" button.



Please note: The financial year end is December 31. If you mark a contribution for 2014 by January 1, 2015, it will be recorded in 2014; contributions made after December 31 will be credited to 2015. Please call Jean Thompson, if you have any questions.



CHRISTMAS GREETINGS FROM ST. JAMES (AOTS) MEN'S CLUB

by Les Dean



We are taking this opportunity to thank our St. James congregation for its continued support throughout this past year for the various projects which we have undertaken. We continue to thoroughly enjoy service to St. James, including our participation in our church ministry and outreach activities.

As in past years, the Christmas season is a busy and enjoyable time for our club. We will be hosting our Christmas social on December 10; and on December 14 at 7:30 p.m., we will be visiting with the residents of Kelly's Brook Apartments. We are also looking forward to our visit to Tiffany Village on December 19 at 2 p.m. and to our participation in Rev. Pamela's carol sing at the new senior's residence at Pleasantville.

We hope that you will all have a pleasant and enjoyable Christmas season and that you will be blessed with happiness and good health in the New Year.



THE HOLLY AND THE IVY (A Traditional Christmas Carol)

THE HOLLY AND THE IVY
WHEN THEY ARE BOTH FULL GROWN
OF ALL THE TREES THAT ARE IN THE WOOD
THE HOLLY BEARS THE CROWN.

"The custom of bedecking the house with evergreens dates back to Pagan times when they were offered in homage to woodland spirits and gods as symbols of everlasting life. Life giving qualities are particularly invested in the holly, with its shining green leaves and striking red berries. In combination with the female ivy, it promised new life and fertility to the entire household. The church promoted the holly as a symbol of good luck, linked with Christ's agony and crucifixion; the sharp leaves represented the crown of thorns and the red berries His drops of blood."

CHRISTMAS GREETINGS FROM THE UCW - Barbara Adams

How quickly the year passes! It's hard to believe that 2015 is fast approaching.

It was again another busy, successful and productive year for the UCW, even with our declining membership. **We always encourage and welcome new members.** You will find friendship, fellowship and inspiration from being a part of this church group.

The fall was an especially busy time for UCW. In October we conducted the service for Laity Sunday. Betty Pilgrim competently delivered the meditation, "Christ's Spotlight on Life's Mysteries," and of course, the UCW added their beautiful voices to the service. All reports are that UCW, in its capable way, did a very admirable job.

Our Annual Morning Coffee and Fall Sale is always popular. Although a great deal of work goes into this event, we are rewarded by the number of people who attend. This year we raised just over \$7,000, our most successful year to date. Much of this money will be given to the church to help with its expenses. We are glad that we can make this contribution to St. James.

We are looking forward to our annual Christmas hot turkey dinner being held in the church auditorium on December 8. We are again having a local catering group prepare the meal; we have always been very pleased with their service and presentation. The meal will be followed by a Christmas worship program, concluding with seasonal music from the St. James Guitar Group. At this time, the UCW will collect a gift of money that will be used to purchase gift cards for needy families touched by St. James.

On behalf of Betty Pilgrim (Co-President) and all our members, I wish you and yours a Merry and Meaningful Christmas and a New Year filled with Peace, Love and Joy.



SUNDAY SCHOOL AND YOUTH GROUP – Rebecca Pike

Season's Greetings! The Sunday School is running smoothly; our new format has gone over great with parents, children and teachers. Slowly our numbers are growing which is a great sign. The children have been working hard at a play for the White Gift service, and they are excited to share it with the congregation. Our Youth Groups are having fun-filled months with meetings, discussion groups and movie nights. Both groups had a joint Halloween party and are now looking forward to a joint Christmas party being held for them by the new Young Adult group. The fall of 2014 has been filled with new adventure, and we are looking forward to even more excitement in the New Year. Both the Sunday School and Youth Groups always welcome new members. For more information please contact myself or Susan.

I want to take a moment to thank all the people who make these groups possible. To the Sunday School teachers, Mary, Susan H., Denise, Sarah and Jennifer, you are my rocks! The Sunday School would be nowhere near as successful without each of you. To the young ladies who give their time each Sunday to help with the Sunday School, Hannah, Katelyn, Kennedy and Allison, it is an honour to get to be your leader. Each one of you is a beautiful young woman with a beautiful soul. To Chelsea who has taken on the Junior Youth Group, it is amazing to have you back; your passion and spirit are wonderful. Thank you to Leah and Olivia for being a support to Chelsea; it is wonderful to see the group in what used to be youth develop into young adults. To the parents of both the Sunday School children and the youth, your support is unending and I appreciate every one of you. To Susan S. you are the rock of the programming for children and youth; you are an amazing resource that we are lucky to have. Finally to my parents and my boyfriend, thank you for dealing with my crazy schedule and for being an unwavering support to me. More than anything, thank you to all these people and the congregation for believing in not only me but in the Sunday School and the Youth groups.

Have a joyful Christmas and a blessed New Year!

Memory Tree Form

At this time of the year thoughts of our loved ones are never far from our minds. One of the ways we acknowledge this is through the Memory Tree. For a donation of \$5, a colored bulb will be changed to a white one in memory of your loved one.

The changing of the lights is a beautiful seasonal visible symbol. Even when the tree comes down, the gift continues in the ongoing projects at St. James.



Name of person donating: _____

In Memory of: _____

Address: _____ Env #: _____



Deadline: December 18 at 10 a.m.

Merry Christmas from the staff at St. James:

SuAn, Linda, David, Lorne, and Keith



CERTAINTY



At daybreak, I strolled in the valley,
As the cattle grazed on the hill;
I saw sparrows and robins nesting,
And heard the whippoor-will.
Flowers and trees were in blossom,
The bees buzzed to and fro,
And I said: "God must be real,
For nature tells me so."

At noontime, I sat by the seashore,
To count the boats in the bay,
But my eyes wandered hither and thither,
To see the children at play;
They romped and swam together,
While the waters were ebb tide low,
And I said: "God must be real,
The children tell me so."

In the evening, I stood on the hilltop,
To watch, as the sun went down;
Shedding a glorious radiance,
On all the world around;
To rise again, on the morrow,
To shed the same bright glow,
And I said: "God must be real,
The sunset tells me so."

At midnight, I lay in the hospital,
Ill, lonely, and full of fear;
White-robed nurses flitted around me,
And death seemed ever near.
Came: "Fear not, I am with you always,"
In a voice that was sweet and low,
And I know, now, God is real,
For He has told me so.

*Sadie Saunders, Carbonear, NL
(Sadie was the mother of Phil and George)*

YOUTH AND CHRISTIAN EDUCATION PROGRAMS (continued from page 3)

Contract with our guest speaker, David Csinos. Even with such a short lead time, the revised version of the youth retreat went well. On Friday evening we held a forum for Sunday school teachers, youth leaders, clergy and parents. Four people attended, two from the RC church, one Anglican and one United. Dave presented a thought provoking talk on "Reimagining Faith Formation" followed by a lively discussion. Participants exchanged emails to keep each other informed of events taking place and hope to start a youth workers' network.

Seven participants from St. James and three from Cochrane Street United attended the Youth portion of the event. I think they found the talk on Spiritual styles challenging, but interesting, and a few light bulbs went off about why some things in church don't 'fit' with all people. They had fun playing and creating together as well. When asked "what was the highlight?" the 1.5 hours of Spiritual practices done in silence in the dimly lit basement won hands down.

Obviously, this event was not a financial success but the spin offs, I think, will be great--from the possible establishment of an interdenominational leaders' network, to friendships with another local congregation, to seven young people who want to find out more about the Bible and extend Spiritual Practice nights to the wider congregation.

Thank you to the St. James Men's Club for their donation of \$200 towards our expenses. Thanks also to Steve Pike and Michael Dowden for doing the shopping, meal preparation and clean up. Dave Csinos said at the end of the event that he can see real hope for the church in our youth and in our care and nurture of them.

Winter Solstice. Our Winter Solstice gathering will be at my garden on Sunday, December 21, at 7 p.m. All are welcome. Oddly enough, I have an interview with a researcher in British Columbia tomorrow about this service. She is doing a paper on signs of hope in the United Church of Canada. How she found out about our little celebration I do not know!

UCW Retreat. I was the guest speaker at the East District UCW Retreat on October 4th at Burry Heights. The topic was "Flexibility on our Faith Journey." I talked about the stages of faith development, challenging ourselves and providing safe, encouraging, welcoming places for children, youth and adults to question, learn and support each other on their journeys.

—Christmas Wishes to You from St. James Youth

BRIDGES TO HOPE



Please bring a non-perishable food item for our Food Chest when you come along to service so we can help others in need.



THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA

L'ÉGLISE UNIE DU CANADA

The Comprehensive Review Task Group has shared an update that contains the broad directions it plans to put forward in its final report, which it expects to be available in the first part of 2015. To read, the update, please visit: <http://www.united-church.ca/communications/news/general/141125-0>

Comprehensive Review Task Group Shares Broad Directions

The Comprehensive Review Task Group first gathered two years ago “to examine the comprehensive vision and circumstances of The United Church of Canada and develop a report and recommendations for the 42nd General Council 2015 that will best enable the church to live faithfully in God’s world at this time in the church’s life.” We were told everything was on the table, but little did we know just how large the table would turn out to be. We are pleased today to share the broad directions we plan to put forward in our final report, which we expect will be available in the first part of 2015.

While the impetus for the Comprehensive Review was both financial and structural, the main purpose is to enable the church to participate more energetically and faithfully in God’s new creation. The United Church has been living beyond its means, and as givings continue to decline we need to reduce spending above the congregational level by \$10 million. As our membership shrinks, the church also no longer has the volunteers it needs to run its existing structures and effectively engage in ministry and mission in our current context. But in our broad consultations across the church, research, and analysis, it also became clear that structural change, while a necessary step toward sustainability, is just part of what is needed to revitalize the church. Revitalization will also depend on spiritual renewal and investing energy and resources in innovative and reinvigorated ministries that authentically engage people in their faith journeys. The task group believes a sustainable structure is a key step toward the spiritual renewal the church has been yearning for.

Throughout the past two years, the task group has been committed to listening to the wisdom of the church and communicating regularly about its work. That’s why last year we asked communities of faith—more than 600 in all—to share their hopes, dreams, and frustrations with us. It’s also why we shared two discussion papers, Fishing on the Other Side and Trust God; Trust the Body, which contained preliminary structural concepts we were working with, as well as the wisdom we gathered from presbyteries and Conference meetings about these concepts. While this and other feedback confirmed some of our preliminary concepts, it also prompted us over the past few months to shift our thinking significantly on others. We shared our new working model with the Executive of the General Council at its meeting on Nov. 15-17, 2014, and are grateful for the faithful and honest engagement of that body, which has helped us further clarify and improve our thinking.

What haven’t changed are the principles we believe must guide any structural change. We believe local communities of faith need to be at the core of the United Church, with resources and energy focused on supporting their vitality. We believe that being united strengthens our faithful response. We believe governance and administrative structures should be simplified so people and resources can be focused on ministry and mission. We believe we should live within our means and our funding mechanisms should be transparent. We believe oversight and discipline functions should be separated from collegial support. We also believe we must continue to live into our commitment to right relations between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples.

(continued on page 12)



Comprehensive Review Task Group Shares Broad Directions (cont'd)

As we begin to write our final report, we feel it is important to share with the church the broad directions we are planning to recommend. They include:

- A faith project with significant resources to renew current ministry, enable new forms of ministry, enliven and equip our leadership, and lift up and celebrate our successful ministries.
- A continuing process for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in the church to co-create structures and processes that work for justice and right relations between us, at a pace that is appropriate and respectful.
- A structure made up of three councils, instead of the current four courts:
 - Vibrant and diverse communities of faith that would take a variety of forms.
 - Regional councils that would support the work of communities of faith.
 - A denominational council with representatives from each community of faith that would elect a Moderator and vote on denomination-shaping issues.

A significantly smaller denominational executive to reflect the principle that all voices of our diverse church must be heard but not necessarily always be present.

- A College of Ministers that would uphold denominational standards for ministers and deal with cases of discipline.
- Strong encouragement for ministers to explore whether to set up an association or networks for collegiality and peer support.
- Clusters of neighbouring communities of faith that would come together to explore ministry, and networks that would continue to connect those with like interests.
- Changes that would mean ministry and mission would be funded from donations to the Mission and Service Fund, and support structures through an assessment of communities of faith.

We know you will have questions, but we ask for your patience. We expect to share our final report, along with accompanying material to help you explore the recommendations, by March 2015. More information on how to direct your responses to the final report will be available later from the planning committee for the 42nd General Council. **The Council will meet in August 2015 in Corner Brook, Newfoundland, to consider our recommendations.**

The members of the task group thank you. We have worked hard to be transparent and build trust. And you have joined in the process with enthusiasm, patience, and hope. We hope that sharing our work in progress will contribute to this faithful and hopeful conversation.

This communication is also available [online](#).

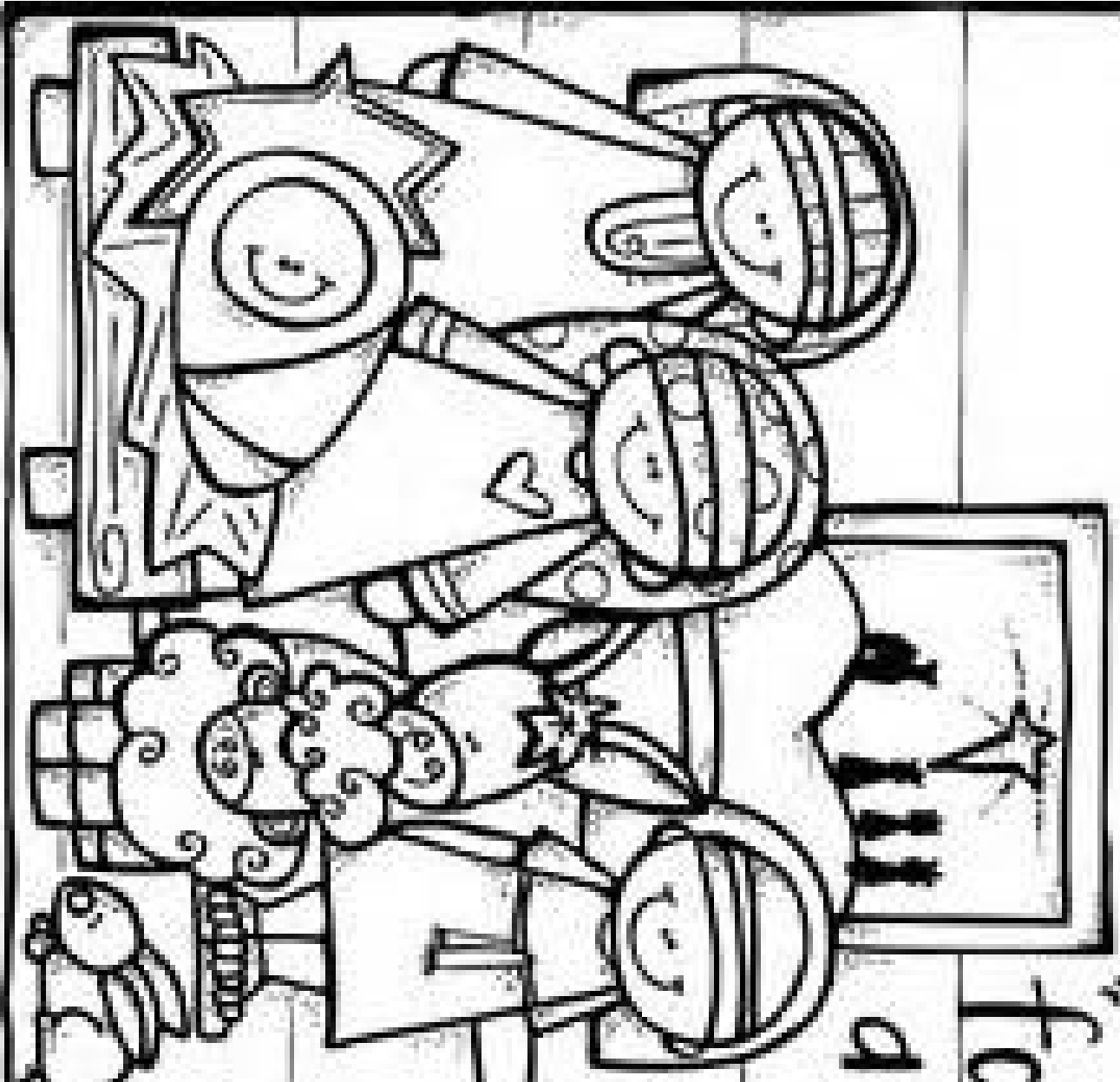
You can contact the task group at compreview@united-church.ca.

Coffee Hour Schedule

January to March 2015

January 18	Congregation
February 15	Church Council
March 15	Congregation





for unto us

dchik is

born

and his

name still

is called

Wonderful

Isaiah 9:6



A B C D E G H I J L
 N O P R S T V W Y

I bring you
 of great
 that will be for

Today in the

town of David has

been to you; he is

the



Go Project Staff
 Amy, Rhonda, Mark, and Paige
 At Fort Amherst enjoying icebergs
 Summer 2014



The following letter was received from the Rev. Paula M. Gale, President, NL Conference, in response to our invitation to be guest speaker at our 57th Anniversary Sunday service in November.



THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA / L'ÉGLISE UNIE DU CANADA

Newfoundland & Labrador Conference / Synode De Terre-Neuve et du Labrador

East & West Districts

New World Island, NL

Fall 2014

Dear Friends in Christ of the Church Family of St. James United,

As I hear of the good news happening in your midst this weekend, I wish so much that I had been able to accept your invitation to be with you for this 57th anniversary celebration. As President of NL Conference this year, I am blessed to be able to share with church families as they celebrate milestones such as yours but, as I am also the representative to the Executive of General Council for West District, I am in Toronto this weekend attending meetings.

Do accept my sincere congratulations and those of all of your brothers and sisters in Christ who call the United Church in NL Conference their spiritual home. As our Moderator the Right Rev. Dr. Gary Paterson said at an anniversary service recently, quoting the American poet Robert Bly, "The more we can give thanks for, the stronger we will be." You, as a worshipping community, have so much to be thankful for over the last 57 years. Not only for the wonderful faith community you have provided for all of the people who have called St. James their church home, but also for all of the witness in Christ's name you have been able to provide to the wider community and world.

I would venture to say that our world needs to know the presence of God more today even than when you first came together as a congregation. There are great needs in people's own spirits and in the collective nature of our world. I know that the words of the prophet Jeremiah are true for each of our church families and for us as a conference and as the United Church of Canada. *"For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the LORD, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope."* (Jeremiah 29:11) These are changing and often uncertain times for us in the church but we know that God has been good to us in the past and will continue to be into the future.

It is my prayer, as the President of NL Conference, that God will strengthen you all as you continue in ministry as Jesus' faithful disciples. Our United Church of Canada in this conference and across the wider church is strengthened when people of faith like you all step forward in hope and show the world that the church is alive and well in our communities.

With God's richest blessings,

Reverend Paula M. Gale, B.A., B.E., M.Div.

President, NL Conference

Accessibility at St. James United Church

Hearing devices

Wheel Chairs

Enlarged Bulletins

If you wish to use one of the above services we offer, please check with one of our ushers and they will be happy to assist you.



WORSHIP SCHEDULE - January to March 2015

Date	Time	Details	Music
January 4	9:30 am 11 am	Contemporary Worship Epiphany Sunday (Baptism)	Sight Restored Senior
January 11	9:30 am 11 am	Contemporary Worship Baptism of Jesus (Communion)	AOTS/UCW/Youth
January 18	9:30 am 11 am	Contemporary Worship 2nd Sunday after Epiphany (coffee hour - Zone Members)	Sight Restored Senior
January 25	9:30 am 11 am	Contemporary Worship 3rd Sunday after Epiphany	AOTS/UCW/Youth
February 1	9:30 am 11 am	Contemporary Worship 4th Sunday after Epiphany (Baptism)	Sight Restored Senior
February 8	9:30 am 11 am	Contemporary Worship 5th Sunday after Epiphany (Communion)	AOTS/UCW/Youth
February 15	9:30 am 11 am	Contemporary Worship Transfiguration Sunday (coffee hour - Church Council)	Sight Restored Senior
February 18	7 pm	Ash Wednesday Service	
February 22	9:30 am 11 am	Contemporary Worship Lent 1	Sight Restored AOTS/UCW/Youth
March 1	9:30 am 11 am	Contemporary Worship Lent 2 (Baptism)	Senior
March 8	9:30 am 11 am	Contemporary Worship Lent 3 (Communion) International Women's Day	Sight Restored AOTS/UCW/Youth
March 15	9:30 am 11 am	Contemporary Worship Lent 4 (coffee hour - Zone Members)	Sight Restored Senior
March 22	9:30 am 11 am	Contemporary Worship Lent 5	Senior
March 29	9:30 am 11 am	Contemporary Worship Palm Sunday	Sight Restored AOTS/UCW/Youth

TO CONTACT US:

St. James United Church
330 Elizabeth Avenue
St. John's, NL A1B 1T9
709-722-1881
Emergency Pager 727-4067

info@stjamesuc.org
www.stjamesuc.org
Facebook: St. James United Church
Twitter: StJamesUnited

Full-time: Rev. Terrie Burry
Visitation: Rev. Pamela Jones-Fitzgerald
Youth Ministry: Susan Sheppard