



St. James Visitor

*Peace, Blessings, Hope
and Love*

Christmas 2016

CHRISTMAS WISHES from Rev. Pamela Jones-Fitzgerald

On Tuesday, November 29, Susan and I were part of the Huron Carole at the Arts and Culture Centre. We both sang with the Stella's Circle Inclusion Choir. It was an epic evening!!

The Huron Carole is an advent variety concert begun by Canadian actor and singer Tom Jackson. All funds raised from this Canadian-wide concert go directly to the Food Sharing Association. Tom Jackson is a very humble man, and his message of hope, love and light was everything all of us needed as we listened to his song and story that evening.

As part of his message he explained, "if you are ever really down in the dumps, with no hope and feeling lifeless, take just 30 seconds and close your eyes... listen to the beat of your heart and the rhythm of your breath... Then, and only then in the radiance of this silence, get up and go perform a random act of kindness. It will change your life!!"

What a great message in an Advent and Christmas world bursting with the greed and overconsumption of commercial hallelujahs!!

Jesus was born in the humblest of circumstance, on the margins of society. Yet his life and birth changed the world. Forever!

May the peace, hope, love and light of your 30 seconds of silence bring you to new heights, and may that random act of kindness change your life and a stranger's life--Forever! For that, my friends, is the true message of Christmas!

May Peace, Blessings, Hope and Love be yours this Christmas and into the New Year!

Pamela



BRIDGES TO HOPE

**Providing Help
Providing Hope**

CHRISTMAS SCHEDULE

Saturday, December 24, Christmas Eve

7 pm Family Service with Youth and Senior Choirs

7:45 pm Carols and Communion

Sunday, December 25

11 am Christmas Day Service





GREETINGS IN THIS SEASON OF ADVENT

by Rev. Ettie Gordon-Murray

Life's journey is not without its ups and downs. As acting minister of visitation, it is my privilege to be with you during the changing scenes of life as we, in our human creatureliness, endure and seek safe passage through emotional, spiritual, and physical pain. Pain from the variety of losses that are part of our human experience – the loss of a loved one – loss of our abilities to do things like we used to – loss of a sense of purpose, and so it goes...

In those hard-hitting times, when we encounter mortal limitations, feel wrapped in a sense of powerlessness, and the certainty of the impermanence of life becomes real. Then, in the muck of life, we discover courage to seek and find strength and comfort in the teachings of our faith, while at the same time, growing more intimately aware of the resilience of the human spirit – the resilience of the God-spirit within each of us.

Blessings to you and yours as you journey through the Season of Advent toward the hopefulness found in our story of the birth of the babe in a manger. May God bless each one of us with hearts that are open to know that God is indeed near – *come O come Emmanuel*.

Peace and joy,
Ettie

GENERAL COUNCIL 42 REMITS

Change is coming to the United Church of Canada, and as congregations we are required to vote on a number of items known as *remits*. This is a unique chance to involve members in major denominational decisions that will ultimately be voted on by the pastoral charges boards and councils. There are five Category 3 remits (substantive denominational changing) being voted on by both pastoral charge boards/councils and presbyteries. (1) Three Council Model, (2) Elimination of Transfer and Settlement, (3) Office of Vocation, (4) Funding a New Model, and (5) One Order of Ministry.

Please join us for a series of information/discussion sessions as we prepare ourselves to vote. Ballots for Remits 1-4, have to be returned to General Council by June of 2017, and Remit 5 by February 2018.



Pamela and Susan with the Stella Burry Inclusion Choir

Congregations who fail to return completed ballots will be considered as having voted no.

Information sessions will be held immediately after the 11 am Service on Sunday as follows:

January 29 (Remits 2&3)
February 12 (Remit 1)
March 12 (Remit 4)

The deadline for voting on Remit 5 is February 2018; therefore, we will consider it in the fall of 2017.

Remit information, webinars and study guides are available on the 42nd General Council website at www.GC42.ca/remits.



AOTS MEN'S CLUB

by Clyde Flight

The Men's Club takes this opportunity to wish each and every member of our congregation a joyous Christmas season and a sincere wish for health and happiness in the new year. At this special time in our Church year, our thoughts and prayers also go out to those who have just experienced the loss of a loved one and those with day-to-day health challenges.

We are delighted this Christmas to be sharing our Christmas Social with the members of the UCW on the evening of Monday, December 12, in the auditorium. We also hope to visit several seniors' complexes prior to Christmas, including the Christmas carol sing-a-long on Tuesday, December 13, at Pleasantview Towers, co-ordinated by Rev. Ettie. On Friday, December 16, we will be catering the Memorial University library staff Christmas luncheon, a turkey dinner with all the trimmings, expertly prepared by our "kitchen crew" and served by club members.

Our members have been engaged in interesting discussions at our monthly meetings focused on the past, present and future of St. James as a congregation. Council chair, Trevor Bartlett, was guest speaker at our November meeting and encouraged continued discussion by our members as we go forward with the Joint Needs Assessment (JNAC) process and seek to find the future path for our congregation.

The congregation's continued support of our various fund raising projects has enabled our club to make a significant financial contribution to the budget of our church. This support is greatly appreciated. I take this opportunity to also thank our membership for their work on behalf of the congregation and encourage and welcome new members to join our group. As we sing in a *Voices United* hymn: "Your work, O God, needs many hands to help you everywhere."

PROJECT GRACE

Project Grace is pleased with the wonderful start to our fifth season at St. James. Our fall semester has had a busy schedule! We welcomed over 60 students to the program this year, 25 of whom are brand new and the remaining students who are returning for another great year of music making! Project Grace has also enjoyed having three new teachers on faculty: Dominic Green (beginner violin), Andrew McCarthy (percussion) and Kathryn Stewart (clarinet). We are happy to have been invited to perform with the Coastal Dance Company on Tuesday, December 6, and at our own Holiday Semester Showcase coming up on Saturday, December 10, at St. Andrew's Elementary School.

Project Grace is always looking for volunteers and donations. If you'd like to be a part of the excitement or simply to receive information and updates on our program, please email our executive director Gillian at projectgracenl@gmail.com.

GREETINGS FROM THE UCW

We would first of all like to say a big thank you to you for making our Morning Coffee and Fall Sale a great success.

Our first meeting in the New Year will be on Monday, January 9, at 7:30 pm. We hope to see you there – an evening out to meet old friends and talk about what's happening in the UCW. New members are always welcome. We meet on the second Monday of each month until May, when we break for the summer season and resume again in September.

This year our annual Christmas Dinner will be a little different. The AOTS members and the UCW are combining with their spouses or friends for an evening of fun and fellowship followed by entertainment.

We wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year,

Betty Pilgrim and Barbara Adams, co-Presidents of the UCW





Winter Solstice

Celebrate the Christmas season with an evening of worship around a bonfire. The worship takes place at Susan Sheppard's property on 397 Thorburn Road at 7 pm on Wednesday, December 21.



Dress for the weather (coats, hats, mittens, waterproof boots), bring a mug for hot chocolate and a flashlight. Everyone is welcome.

ST. JAMES

JOINT NEEDS ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE

The following are our representatives:

Karen Brown	Les Dean
Rebecca Pike	Ross Pilgrim
Chris Vardy	

The following are our East District representatives:

Rev. Ian Marsh-McCuish
Brenda Andrews

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN JANUARY

Senior choir changes from Wednesdays to Tuesdays, January 3, at 7:30 pm

Youth Choir and Men's Choir
Wednesday, January 4, at 7 pm

UCW begin their monthly meetings on
Monday, January 9, at 7:30 pm

New Ladies' Group: Monday, January 16
at 7 pm

Friendship Group: Wednesday, January 11,
at 2 pm

AOTS: Wednesday, January 18, at 5:30 pm

Guitar Group, Thursday, January 5, at 11 am

St. James Meditation Group:
- to be announced

RUNNING A CHURCH OFFICE by SuAn Randell, Our Office Administrator

Tasked with the job of running the office of St. James, a multi-faceted service community, my priority becomes efficiency of communication. As the world heralds the digital age with many new ways of communicating that speed up the method and save our trees, St. James is able to offer the following connections for those people who are digitally connected, while at the same time continuing with the old ways for those who wish to stay settled in their approach--a win-win situation.

Every Thursday, at the end of the work day, I send out a Congregational Email with the highlights of the Life and Work of St. James - information that will be available at the Church the following Sunday. This can be very useful for those who, for one reason or another, will be unable to attend the Sunday Worship.

Three times a year, I send the *Visitor* to our email list where it can be viewed in full colour. This creates savings in trees, printing costs, volunteer assembling and distribution. If you wish your name to be added for these services, please drop me an email at info@stjamesuc.org.

Giveings can also be made digitally via the UC Pre-Authorized-Remittance program (PAR). Your monthly donation is automatically offered from your bank account on the 20th of the month, thus facilitating savings of trees and money in actual paper envelopes. Please let me know if you would like to avail of this service.

As we head into another New Year, I wish to offer my thanks and appreciation to the community of St. James for the services it offers, and for us all--a blessed Christmas time with family and friends followed by a happy, healthy and prosperous 2017.



SOME OF OUR FOUNDING MEMBERS AT OUR 58TH ANNIVERSARY



From L-R: Nancy Hickman, Baxter Howse, Verna Howse, Marina Adams, Shirley Burse, Joan Barbour, Nina Abbott, Lorraine Boland, and Dr. C.W. and Joyce Cho.

THANK YOU

The Church Council would like to thank our many members who organized, contributed to and participated in our 58th anniversary celebrations and fundraiser on Saturday, November 19. Special mention is given to our St. James Guitar Group and George Sheppard, Auctioneer Extraordinaire. It took a lot of hard working people to make it the success that it was.

We thank the Senior Choir, Sight Restored, and the PWC Chamber Choir for their excellent concert on Sunday evening, December 4.

And finally we extend a special thank you to the members of 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)

PAR is a program administered by the United Church of Canada. 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 post-dated cheques at the office and we will deposit them accordingly.

CHRISTMAS OFFICE SCHEDULE

December 19, 20, 21, 22:
open 9:30 am to 1 pm and from 1:30 pm to 5 pm
December 26: Closed
December 27, 28, 29: open 10 am to 3 pm
January 2: Closed

The financial year end is December 31, so if you do make a contribution outside of regular hours, please use the lock box and ensure that your contribution is clearly marked for 2016.

Please remember NOT to keep any valuables in your car, especially over the Christmas holiday period.

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

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

*Christmas
Offering*



NAME _____
AMOUNT _____
ENV. # _____

Please note: The financial year end will be December 31. If you make a contribution for 2016 by January 1, 2017, it will be recorded in 2016. After January 1, it will be recorded in the 2017 financial records.

We appreciate your special contribution at year end. Please call our Treasurer, Jean Thompson, if you have any questions.



CHRISTMAS THOUGHTS by Michael Ralph

We are in the season of giving. Brochures fill our mail boxes. Advertisements for this cause and that cause fill the radios. Groups have their charitable auctions and their annual food drives. All too often it seems that somehow between Halloween and New Year's Day the world suddenly discovers there is hurt and pain and loss and that this can all be addressed and remediated in that eight-week period if we provide enough money.

As a community, we have a need to support our religious institutions with our resources, not necessarily our finances. It is a human reality that we want to share the critical events of our lives within a religious community – to bury a parent, to baptize a child, to marry. We want something beyond ourselves and we want to reach out beyond ourselves into that tradition which gives us comfort and strength. Our obligation is to make this possible by having an institution available to comfort and to reassure and to guide us along this path in the structure and company of others in a non-judgemental way.

If we are going to give anything this season, it is to give ourselves to the possibility of change - to be open to seeing the joy of faith and acts of kindness at unexpected times and from the unexpected person. We need to be able to trust without being naive. We need to be open to discussion without being so insecure that we either wilt or become mindlessly angry and defensive when challenged.

To do this we need to know ourselves and to go through the tempering fire of study and the challenge of being part of a faith community at a level we are comfortable with. If there's anything worth giving to, it is to that process.

When I consider the cats of our lives, who teach us so very much, I am reminded that in any healing process we need to be patient and to reach out and let gentleness and kindness take its course. At my local no-kill shelter, I have over time seen that semi-feral cat emerge from hiding, the introvert blossom in play and the established group accept new members to a greater or lesser degree. I admire the volunteers who make that possible by providing a place of hope through acts of kindness and love. If they, while coping with great pain and limited financial resources, can do so, then we as a church can do no less. That is a cause worth giving to.

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. This year donations to the Memory Tree will be used towards our operating expenses.

Name of person donating: _____

In Memory of: _____

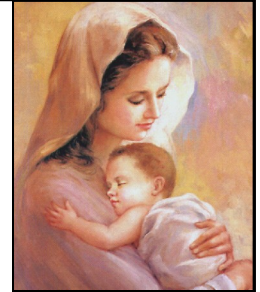
Address: _____ Env #: _____ Deadline: Monday, December 19, 10 am

Merry Christmas from SuAn, Lorne, Linda, and Keith



OUR MOTHER'S LOVE CONTINUES TO NURTURE OUR FAMILY

by Donna Pyne



Turning 98 on December 9th, this will be my mother's 99th Christmas. Mom holds Christmas in her heart all year through and is admired by everyone who meets her. She is especially loved by her 11 children, 24 grandchildren, 26 great-grandchildren and 2 great great-grandchildren.

I am always thankful to my mother for the wonderful childhood she gave us, but at this time of year, I am particularly thankful for the magical Christmases she provided. Our father was a police constable and could not be of much assistance to her with child care, housework, and shopping. Christmas must have been a stressful time for Mom but she never let it show. She seemed almost as happy as her children and instilled in us the magic of the Christmas spirit.

In addition to all her regular responsibilities, Mom would bake several "dark" and "light" fruit cakes and dozens of cookies. What delicious aromas spread from the kitchen; how happy we were to sample the tasty results. I can smell the wonderful scent of the freshly cut tree and see the brightly wrapped presents around it on Christmas morning. Mom would look as surprised as we were and would remind us to be thankful for our gifts. Then she would go to the kitchen and cook the best turkey dinner while we played and watched our favourite Christmas movies.

Mom baked bread almost every day. A special memory is coming home from school to the wonderful aroma of bread fresh from the oven and eating warm slices of it with butter and molasses. She would always make raisin bread for Christmas and, until recent years, she gifted all of us with our own supply of homemade Christmas raisin bread. I have not tasted bread anywhere that even comes close to the delicious goodness of Mom's.

What seemed most remarkable to me was when Mom cooked, and every meal was a "cooked" meal, there was always "lots." Mom's pot was never empty. This is something I have found more and more amazing as I have had my own children and realize how much a growing family can eat. There was always a crowd at home for meals, but Mom never seemed to reach the bottom of the pot. Invariably, there were one or more friends staying and, on occasion, whole families would arrive just as we were ready to eat. Mom would cheerfully insist that they stay as there was plenty. Of course, she would serve everyone before herself and would see who wanted seconds before she ate.

My mother's generous nature has pervaded all aspects of her life. She filled our cozy home with love and a comforting sense of security. Although we may have lacked material possessions, I never noticed and I never felt in need of anything. Mom was always there to watch us as we left the house and to greet us when we came home. She was the first to get up and the last to go to bed. There were nights she did not go to bed at all. Quiet rustlings could be heard as she baked, ironed clothes, mended tears, or soothed a fretting child back to sleep. Caring for her family brought her happiness, and she asked for nothing in return.

Still vibrant and young at 98 years of age, Mom still has a witty sense of humour, loves hugs, and can beat anybody in a game of Scrabble. And as always, she continues to nurture and unconditionally love each of us.

Thank you, Mom, for everything you have done and for everything you have done without. You inspire me always. I love you forever. Have a magical and Merry Christmas!

Hugs,

Donna

We gratefully acknowledge a donation from Tiffany Village Retirement Residence to help offset the costs of printing this publication. Tiffany Village is located at 50 Tiffany Court, St. John's.



WORSHIP SCHEDULE JANUARY TO APRIL 2017

DATE	TIME	DETAILS	Music
January 1	11:00 am	Celebration of Epiphany (Baptism)	Volunteer Choir
January 8	9:30 am 11:00 am	Contemporary Worship Baptism of Jesus (Communion)	Sight Restored Senior Choir
January 15	9:30 am 11:00 am	Contemporary Worship 2 nd Sunday after Epiphany Week of Prayer for Christian Unity COFFEE HOUR - Congregation	AOTS
January 22	9:30 am 11:00 am	Contemporary Worship 3 rd Sunday after Epiphany	Sight Restored Senior Choir
January 29	9:30 am 11:00 am	Contemporary Worship 4 th Sunday after Epiphany	Youth/UCW
February 5	9:30 am 11:00 am	Contemporary Worship 5 th Sunday after Epiphany (Baptism)	Sight Restored AOTS
February 12	9:30 am 11:00 am	Contemporary Worship 6 th Sunday after Epiphany	Senior Choir
February 19	9:30 am 11:00 am	Contemporary Worship 7 th Sunday after Epiphany COFFEE HOUR –Senior Choir	Sight Restored Sight Restored
February 26	9:30 am 11:00 am	Contemporary Worship Transfiguration Sunday	Senior Choir
March 1		Ash Wednesday	To Be Announced
March 5	9:30 am 11:00 am	Contemporary Worship Lent 1 (Baptism)	Sight Restored Senior Choir
March 12	9:30 am 11:00 am	Contemporary Worship Lent 2 (Communion) International Women's Day	Youth
March 19	9:30 am 11:00 am	Contemporary Worship Lent 3 COFFEE HOUR – Prop/M&P/Finance	Sight Restored AOTS
March 26	9:30 am 11:00 am	Contemporary Worship Lent 4	Senior Choir
April 2	9:30 am 11:00 am	Contemporary Worship Lent 5 (Baptism)	Sight Restored Youth
April 9	9:30 am 11:00 am	Contemporary Worship Palm Sunday	Senior Choir

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