

FROM THE MINISTER'S DESK

Late last night the Christmas decorating began. Boxes were dragged out of the crawlspace and up the stairs. Lights were strung and garland hung. Drummer boys and snow globes and crèches were unpacked – along with so many memories of Christmases past. Do you know what made me really smile though? It was when I unpacked a cardboard replica of a country mailbox. It was actually a whimsical gift box but I love it because it reminds me of how much I love mail!

E-mail and electronic cards are great – they keep us in touch with folks far and near. But I confess, it is still the hands-on feel of a card, or even better, a letter, that gets me. I love Christmas cards of all description, especially when they enclose a photo of the family. I even love those yearly newsletters that some folks send! I've often wondered though what it'd be like to get a letter that touched honestly on the year's low points rather than the over the top highlights: "Jason flunked out of school this year and Amy is in trouble again with the law — but we're muddling through. Merry Christmas from our family to yours." I'd actually take some comfort from a card like that!

Most of all though, that cardboard mailbox reminds me of my mum, one of the all time great correspondents. We used to say she kept Canada Post afloat with her cards and regular newsy notes sent to family and friends. I have a stack of them, as I have lived a distance away from family almost all of my adult life. What I treasure beyond words though, is a Christmas card I received from her with unsteady script and stilted wording. It is precious and heartbreaking at once, for it signaled her descent into Alzheimer's. But it also speaks to me of strength, a mother's love, and relentless determination. As my Dad told me later, she had bought the cards and stamps, but then sat looking at them for a long time, trying so hard to remember what to do with them. Then she painstakingly wrote out on a piece of paper what she wanted to say on each card, showed it to my Dad for his input and correction, and then laboriously re-wrote it onto the card.

Whenever I think I am too busy to do something, I am reminded of her persistent and unrelenting hope. And isn't that the deepest meaning of this season? Not that we are to be achieving some Hallmark inspired state of perfection, but rather to accept life with all its messiness, pain, and challenge. After all, God chose to come into this world "born in human likeness, come in human form."

So come, Emmanuel, come into our world, come into our hearts this holy season. Come and find us just as we are – and leave us forever changed.

May the peace of Christ be with you all.

With great love,

Rev. Kelly



PREMIER'S FIRST ANNUAL PRAYER BREAKFAST

On a still-dark Wednesday morning in November, the sky full with the promise of snow, I found myself heading toward the Delta Hotel for the Premier's First Annual Prayer Breakfast. I was wondering what the event would be like, with all those clergy and politicians together in one place - and whether it could truly be non-partisan as promised! I kept all this wondering to myself, as Jane was also in the car – and it was waaaay too early for her! The lobby was already abuzz as we arrived. Leaders and MLAs from all political parties were present, as was his Honour, the Lieutenant Governor Graydon Nicholas, and clergy from all denominations. But while there, as emcee Jack Carr reminded us, we were all “just New Brunswickers”. ECMA-nominated Becka DeHaan woke up certain sleepy heads among us with a jazz-blues piece based on the motto on our provincial coat of arms: Spem redixit – “Hope Was Restored”:

Don't ever let nobody drag your spirit down.
Walk with the rich, walk with the poor,
learn from everyone, that's what life is for
but don't let nobody drag your spirit down!



Scripture was read and prayers were offered by politicians – with, what was to me, surprising candor. They were thoughtful, honest and meaningful as they expressed their faith and hope for the days to come (now if they can just hold on to that as the legislature resumes!) Becka's words reminded me how much we can learn from those who hold distinctly different political or religious views, and what a hopeful sign it is when we can all gather together in one place and feel the presence of the Spirit with us. Spem redixit indeed!

Rev. Kelly

FRIENDS TEAM UP TO HELP FOOD BANK

The congregation of New Maryland United is a strong and regular supporter of the Fredericton Food Bank. This is something we should be very proud of, since it has been ongoing for many years. In my opinion, we owe a special thank you to the Outreach Committee members, who deliver the donations to the Food Bank. As well, of course, NMUC provides help at the Soup Kitchen.



When I heard Elizabeth Thurber talking about the Food Bank's latest initiative—the purchase of the former Green Village Garden Center and their plans for this place, I wanted to help. Sadly, the need for feeding the hungry is growing and this organization is responding in a very positive way. So when my birthday came around, my friends asked me what I wanted to do. We often substitute gifts to charity for ones we would have received. Wanting to do something larger, I asked if they would help me put on a fund raiser for the Green Village Project of the Fredericton Food Bank. They agreed.

And so we held “Fun and Games for the Fredericton Food Bank” at the New Maryland Center on Saturday, November 5th. Admission was by monetary donation, no matter how large or small. Many old fashioned games such as checkers, chess and crokinole were available. There was cake and tea and coffee, plus Andi Emrich came to provide detailed information on the project. Andi is a volunteer with the Fredericton Food Bank and is well acquainted with food security issues in this province. She is a member of the NB Food Security Action Network, Local Foodies of Fredericton, Landless Gardeners and she is currently working as the Traceability Project Coordinator for NB Department of Agriculture, Aquaculture and Fisheries. The turnout was small that day, but everyone agreed that the results were well worth it. Donations totalled around \$5000 with more coming in. One of my friends donated \$1200 of that to provide the food bank with a new brochure. I am very proud of the results. It was really enjoyable to plan such an event instead of a typical party. My friends are wonderful, and I am very privileged.

Lydia



INTRODUCING CAROL CHARTERS

Carol Edna Hayward was born on a farm in Jacksonville, NB, a country community about five miles from Woodstock, the daughter of Roy and Ada Hayward but let's have Carol tell her own story!

“As a young teacher just out of Normal School, my mother had travelled from her home in Sussex to teach in the Jacksonville school. It was in that community where she met my father. Having returned home after serving in World War I, he was farming on land left to him by his father. My parents were married and they raised a family of five. I was born the second of four girls and one boy. My Dad must have been happy to finally have a son as he needed help on the farm!

I started school in grade 1 in September, 1939 about the same time World War II had started. As the war loomed overseas, Their Majesties King George VI and Queen Elizabeth visited Fredericton on their month-long royal tour by train across Canada. My parents took my older sister and me to Fredericton to see them. What excitement! I still remember standing on the sidewalk to watch the young royal couple, the Queen looking so beautiful in her pale blue dress and matching hat.

My siblings and I walked about 1 ½ miles to school. Since it was war time, gas was rationed and so no one would even think of driving us there in the car. In the winter time, being such a small child, I found it difficult to walk through the snow. As a result, I stayed home most of the winter school days. A few years later, our Dad built a box on a long sled so that during a drive we would be sheltered from the snow and wind. So the horses took us to school and Dad brought the team back to drive us home in the late afternoon.

We had fun in the lower grades preparing for Christmas concerts. When we were chosen to say a recitation, we had to stand with our hands at our sides with a reminder to be sure to bow afterward.



This is the recitation the teacher had me say in grade one:

I'm Daddy's little darling;
I'm only six years old;
Santa will come to our house
Cause I'm just as good as gold.



There were also dialogues and singing. Then Santa arrived and handed out treats to every child.

Our school was known as a “Superior School”. Grades 1 to 6 were located in the upstairs and grades 7 to 11 were in the downstairs level, each staffed by a superior teacher with a teacher's license from the NB Normal School. Young people from near-by communities came to our school to finish their high school education. During the war years we sometimes were taught by teachers who had not attended Normal School since the best ones had joined the armed forces. I remember two teachers who came out of retirement to teach the higher grades and they were not among the best! Many NB school houses which had stood for many years eventually had to be demolished or used for other purposes. Our school was no exception. It was closed and hauled to a near-by pasture to store hay for the cattle. A new school for just six grades was built but after many years of use, it too became in need of constant repair and was eventually renovated to become a private home.

When we were younger, we walked about a mile to Sunday School and then rode home with our parents after church. The Sunday School Superintendent was the local blacksmith. My first Sunday School teacher was a neighbour's daughter. The Easter Bunny wasn't around in those days but she gave us each a treat on Easter Sunday. I always liked singing and, believe it or not, the organist had me sing a solo once in a while. When I was older, I sang in the choir with my sisters and elderly women.

I attended Woodstock High School but after not doing very well, I switched to Woodstock Vocational School. Students willing to enroll in Home Economics the first year were then permitted to take the Business Education course the following year without finishing high school. During those two years I boarded near the school with the United Church minister, his wife and two little boys.

Following graduation I decided to work in Fredericton. My cousin had sent me an ad from the 'Gleaner' stating that the Hartt Shoe Company needed a stenographer. I applied and was accepted. My starting pay was \$20 a week! I boarded with my cousin and her family in New Maryland but I found it difficult to find a drive home at the end of the work day. So I was glad when a friend invited me to room with her on the north side of Fredericton. Each day we drove to work by bus but we had to walk from the end of the Carleton St. Bridge to our places of employment.

Cecil and I met in New Maryland at his mother's small store, a gathering place for young people in the evenings. He was back home from out West where he had worked in the woods. We eventually married and this past fall we celebrated our 59th anniversary. During the early years of our marriage, Cecil worked as a hired man on farms but later he became a heavy equipment mechanic. We have 2 daughters, a son, 7 grandchildren and 5 ½ great-grandchildren. We are fortunate to have most of them living quite near us, except for a grandson and his family who live in Grande Prairie, Alberta.

When I moved to New Maryland, I sang in the church choir and when my children were old enough to attend Sunday School, I played the organ for their worship services. I also joined our United Church women's group, The Women's Association, better known as the W. A. In those days, we took turns holding the monthly meetings in our homes. Over the years I was president and secretary ... but not all at the same time. I also joined the New Maryland Women's Institute which had existed in the community since 1915. The W. I. members met each month through those 96 years until last spring when the decision was made to disband. I was the secretary for 27 years, being the last one to serve in that position. We had fun times! In 1974 our group flew to Newfoundland and we were billeted with the W. I. members there, staying in Morton's Harbour, Virgin Arm and Carter's Cove. The following year the Newfoundland members came to visit us. While they were here, we arranged for Jean Emslie to drive us all by bus to visit places of interest.

In the 1980's before Lib Charters retired from teaching, she invited me to join her in trips by car. We went to PEI and to Ontario to visit friends of Lib's, and to Newfoundland to visit her son and family. She and I still try to find time to enjoy a fun game of Scrabble.

For quite a few years I belonged to a bowling group. Whenever I made a good score, I was sure to phone my son just to brag a little! I belong to the Quilters group in our church, still sing in the choir and have been a member of the WA/UCW for almost sixty years.

In 1957 Cecil and I decided to build a house instead of continuing to rent. It was built in New Maryland beside Victoria Hall. We lived there about forty years before buying a house in Nasonworth where we have lived for sixteen years."

So now we have been introduced to Carol Charters. Her friends at New Maryland United Church wish her many years of good health and happiness with her husband and family.

FROM THE SUNDAY SCHOOL

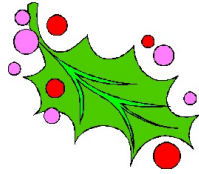
The Sunday School has been active this fall with the children working away at their "Sunday School Challenge". Twelve challenges have been identified with the goal of completing all before June, 2012! Feel free to drop by and see what the children are working on and the progress they are making. They are excited about participating in White Gift Sunday on December 4th and in the Huron Carol presentation on December 11th. January will bring the launch of the Sunday School Mission & Service project for this year.

Merry Christmas and Best Wishes for the New Year! *from the Sunday School!*

Myrna Tracy & Sharon Scott



FROM THE FRIENDSHIP GROUP



The December luncheon will be held Monday, December 5th, 12 noon at the Diplomat Restaurant, Woodstock Road. Everyone is welcome to attend. Please contact Marjorie Olmstead (459-7328) or Ruth Landers (459-8304) if you are interested in attending.

Connie Jones, Marjorie Olmstead, Ruth Landers

NMUC CHRISTMAS CARDS



Don't miss out on getting some of the 2011 NMUC Christmas Cards! Limited quantity left!

Pam Gonnason has incorporated her note card winter design of the church into beautiful Christmas cards. The cards are 5"x7" and are produced on high quality gloss paper with coordinating envelopes on sale in packages of 4 cards and envelopes for \$10. All profits will be donated to NMUC for Outreach or other programs in need. Available for purchase at the church office or directly from Pam.

"LET US CELEBRATE FAMILIES"



Did you receive an Advent Calendar in your bulletin recently? This is a fun way to donate a monetary gift to the Mission and Service Fund while helping NMUC meet its commitment for the year. Just follow the directions from November 27th to December 23rd and then bring your money container to church on December 24th.

FROM THE UCW



The UCW Christmas party will be held at the home of Dorothy Webster, 215 Bradshaw Drive on Wednesday, December 14th at 6:30 pm. Devotions: Maureen. Appetizers and Dessert Buffet: Everyone. Entertainment: "Reveal Your Talent": Members. Yankee Swap. For more information, call Dorothy at 457-9795.

UNITED CHURCH CALENDARS



To purchase a United Church calendar (\$6), see Linda Watson or phone her at 459-3944 .

THE MITTEN TREE



The Mitten Tree is ready to receive any knitted items you would like to contribute during the Advent season.

WINTER WARMTH



For some time now, NMUC has teamed up to assist the Monday morning Drop-In Centre at Christ Church Cathedral Hall. A need was evident for warm winter wear for the folks who attend - in particular for men.

A huge thank you to those who donated coats, boots and warm clothing!

There is no way to describe the delight on the faces of the recipients!

HATS OFF!



- to Rev. Kelly for always going “the extra mile”.
- to Doug Watson, Jim Merrill, Ralph Brannon, Dave Ward, Keith Ball, Matt Reicker, and Craig Ball for replacing the schoolroom ceiling.
- to the Listers for painting the side steps and side door.
- to Pam Gonnason for creating the NMUC Christmas cards.
- to the volunteers who help with the clean-up after each function
- to the dedicated Sunday School teachers and Nursery helpers
- to Lorna Ball and Sheila Power for providing the “Remembering Your Angels” project again this Christmas season!
- to all the NMUC committees who keep our church on the move!

FROM THE GREEN COMMITTEE

In November, the Green Committee had a display and shared an information sheet on shampoos. The message was to increase awareness of the large number of chemicals used in personal-care products, some of which are carcinogens and allergens. The goal was to encourage you to read the labels on your personal-care products and compare them with those listed on the Fact Sheet. We would like to have feedback on the home-made shampoo which some of you took home to try. A big "Thank You" goes out to all for your continued support of our efforts to bring you an awareness of the dangers our good earth is presently experiencing.

We wish you all a joyous Christmas and a new year filled with peace.



Ann Urquhart, Rev. Kelly, Carol Ross, Marg Frenette

FROM THE CHOIR LOFT



Choir has been busy with regular practice for Sunday services, Advent season, as well as the Carol Festival at St. Paul's United Church, which is being held on December 7th at 7:30 pm. Once again the Cambridge Narrows and Grand Lake choirs will be joining us for this wonderful evening of Advent bliss. We hope you can come and help support the food bank in this presentation. Our road trip this past Sunday to Gagetown's "Christmas in the Village" was a wonderful time of practice with a fabulous lunch and entertainment by a local singing group. The Choir Christmas party will be held at David and Loraine Wards on December 17th at 6:30 pm with a pot luck and Yankee swap. We thank them for opening up their home for this festive gathering. Karen, our pianist, will be going home to Truro for Christmas and we wish her a wonderful time with family and friends. Vivian Ni will be playing at our 7 pm Christmas Eve Service and at the New Year's Day service. Rev. Jane Johnson has graciously volunteered to play for us at the 10 pm service on Christmas Eve and at the 11 am service on Christmas Day.

On behalf of the choir members, we extend to one and all

" Merry Christmas and Blessings for a Healthy and Prosperous New Year".

CONGRATULATIONS!



To Doug and Anne Johnson on becoming the proud grandparents of Ryan Steven Douglas Johnson, a son born to parents Steven and Tammy Johnson.

FAMILIAR AND NEW FACES



Welcome to Cliff and Louise Hallingham visiting from Newfoundland and to Verna Brett who has moved from Newfoundland back to Fredericton!

LETTER TO THE EDITOR



Dear Editor: We wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. We will be away from the flock and not returning until January 10th. We will miss all the usual traditions at New Maryland United. Hope you all have a wonderful Christmas season.

David and Sandra

LOOKING AHEAD

Wed., Dec. 7th, 7:30 pm - Carol Festival at St. Paul's United Church, Fredericton

Sun., Dec. 11th, 11 am - Advent III - "The Huron Carol"

Wed., Dec. 14th, 6:30 pm - UCW Christmas Party

Sat., Dec. 17th, 6:30 pm - Choir Party

Sun., Dec. 18th, 11 am - Advent IV - Worship and Holy Communion

Tue., Dec. 20th, 6:30 pm - Carolling (Meet at NMUC)

Sat., Dec. 24th, 7 pm & 10 pm - Christmas Eve Services

Sun., Dec. 25th, 11 am - Christmas Day Worship

