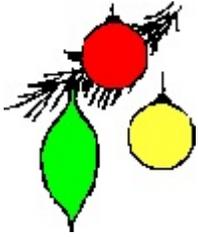


FROM REV. KELLY'S DESK



It's a funny thing. The way we get all tangled up at this time of year thinking we need to put on the "Perfect Christmas". And so we make our lists, and check them twice. We brave the frantic pace of the mall and we sweat over wrapping parcels, and tying perfect bows (Oh, who am I kidding – I get Loraine and Sheila to do them). We clean obsessively, even parts of our houses that no one will ever see, and we cook until our freezers and pantries are ready to burst, and we fret that still we have not done enough. Or, perhaps more to the point, have not done it perfectly.

Well, stop.

"We can't!" you say, "it's Christmas!"



Which is precisely why I say stop, because it is Christmas.

It is when we gather around the old, old story, a story that begins "And it came to pass in those days that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus..."

It is a story that still feeds us and mends us and makes us whole. But what we need to remember is that it is a story of utter imperfection.



It begins with a young woman who is "great with child", and her fiancé. At such an improbable time they set off on a long and arduous road trip. Finally arriving in Bethlehem, they are jostled through the crowded streets – and no one will take them in. They end up being shown to a stable, no doubt sharing space with a donkey, a cow, the odd chicken. And it is there, amid the manure and straw, in this perfectly impossible place, that God comes. In the midst of the noise and smell and mess and loneliness, Emmanuel – God-with-us, comes.

It is a story we know but one that needs constant re-telling.

As the angels proclaimed that holy night, I say to you here and now: Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy! It is in the imperfection of our world and ourselves that God chooses to come. Merry Christmas!

With great love,

Rev. Kelly Burke

"HERE WE COME A-CAROLING..."



On Thursday, December 20th please come and join in the fun for all ages! Every voice counts as we make a joyful noise together. We will meet at the church at 6:30 pm and then car pool – because it's more fun in a carload! Together we will make our way around the local area, stopping at pre-arranged homes to gather on their doorstep and sing favourite carols ... maybe 8 -10 homes in all. We'll end up at Rev. Kelly's for hot chocolate and goodies afterwards. It will definitely get you in the Christmas Spirit – we promise!

CALENDARS FOR INMATES AT SPRINGHILL INSTITUTION



These calendars are an important point of contact for UCC Chaplain Lloyd Bruce with inmates, especially those who are arriving in the reception area. If you would like to help, drop a 2013 calendar off to the church office, and we will forward them on.

CHRISTMAS CARDS FOR INMATES

There is prison and then there is the hole – segregation: 23 hours a day in a 6'X9' cell. Isolated, bombarded by the noise of an institutional machine, alone with your thoughts and feelings at Christmas time. It is into this place that the Divine longs to be born. If you would like to share the message of hope with an individual in prison, write a Christmas message on a Christmas Card – offer a word of hope and encouragement and sign it with your first name only, place the card in an unsealed envelope and mail the unsealed cards to the address below. Names of individuals will be written on the Christmas cards and handed out to the men on Christmas Eve.

Send to: Chaplain Lloyd Bruce, PO Box 2140, Springhill, NS B0M 1X0.

(Please note: If it is easier, you may also leave your unsealed card at the church office and we will be happy to forward them on.)



“Too often we underestimate the power of a touch, a smile, a kind word, a listening ear, an honest compliment, or the smallest act of caring, all of which have the potential to turn a life around.” (Dr. Leo Buscaglia; 1924-1998)

FROM THE CHOIR LOFT



As you are busily preparing your hearts and homes for the season, so too is the NMUC choir. NMUC and Gagetown/Grand Lake combined choirs had a final practice on Saturday, Dec.1st preparing for their musical performance at St. Paul's Carol Fest on Dec. 5th at 7:30 pm. Plan to attend this important fund raiser for our local food bank and homeless shelter.

On Sunday evening Dec. 2nd the NMUC choir will journey to Cambridge Narrows to sing with Rev. Jane Johnson's choir in support of their library fund raiser.

We are grateful to Dorothy Webster who will be hosting our Christmas Party on Dec.6th.

The choir wishes to extend to you a Happy and Healthy Christmas filled with the Peace and Joy of the season and every Blessing for the New Year.



INTRODUCING SHEILA POWER

Sheila Rebecca (Yeo) Power was born in Summerside, PEI, the daughter of Edith (Sinclair) and Winston Yeo. Sheila, her older brother Jeffrey, and her two younger brothers, Philip and Tyler, grew up on a farm in Belmont where Sheila loved to horseback ride.

She remembers going to Sunday school and church each week. Rev. Bill McDougall was their minister for many years and she recalls him being an important part of their close church family. Sheila's Dad was the Sunday School superintendent. Before the children went to their classes, he told them Bible stories, making them laugh with his antics and different voices and expressions. Sheila was always very proud of him.

When she was of school age, there would sometimes be huge winter snowstorms causing school to be cancelled for days at a time. The snow banks would be as high as the telephone wires. She loved staying home on those "storm days".

Sheila's dad was her high school math teacher which at times was somewhat embarrassing for a teenage girl. After graduating from Three Oakes Senior High, she attended University of Prince Edward Island, graduating with a Bachelor of Science, with a major in mathematics and minors in psychology and science. Then she attended University Of Maine at Fort Kent where she received her Bachelor of Education. She married her high school sweetheart, Richard Thomas Power. He had joined the military in 1989 and was at the time in the air force, stationed in Cold Lake, Alberta. They moved into their first house, a PMQ on the base. At that time, there weren't many amenities in Cold Lake so once a month they would drive three hours to Edmonton, and stay at a hotel for the weekend, and shop for their groceries and whatever else was needed. While in Cold Lake, Sheila taught at Athabasca University, teaching high school physics to adult students who were upgrading their studies. She also taught grade 10 math and science at the local high school.

After two years, Tom was transferred to Greenwood, Nova Scotia. They bought their first home in nearby Kingston. During this time, Sheila worked in mental health, helping clients with mental illnesses, teaching them life skills, and assisting with their transition to life in the community. In 1998 their first blessing was born, Broderick Thomas Power. Their second blessing, Brooke-Lyn Elizabeth, was born in 2002 during a huge snowstorm. Tom was away on a Search-and-Rescue mission in Quebec so Sheila's neighbour drove her to the local hospital in his four-wheel drive truck – the usual 20 minute drive took one-very-long-hour! Brooke-Lyn was born 50 minutes later!

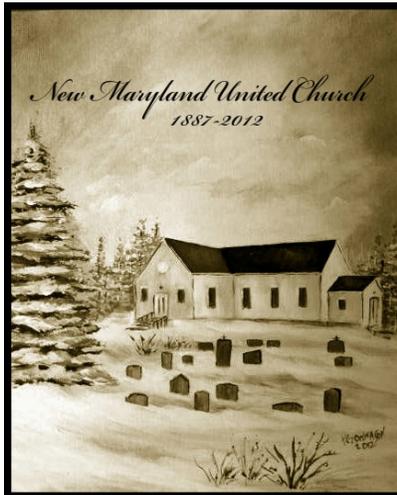
Sheila thought she would never again live in Alberta but in 2004 they were moving back there again, this time to Morinville, located about 30 minutes north of Edmonton. Tom had re-mustered to become a Flight Engineer.

During their four years in Alberta, Sheila taught grade 12 physics and grade 10 math in Redwater as well as math and science at an alternative learning school for at-risk students, work she found challenging but rewarding.

In 2008, they were on the move again, this time happily returning to the Maritimes. Tom had been posted to Gagetown and they moved to Hanwell to live in the Starlite subdivision. While on their house hunting trip, Sheila was disappointed because the churches she had looked at in Fredericton were too big for this country girl. While simply driving around and without even programming her search, her GPS miraculously led her, through God's divine intervention, to drive by a quaint country church, New Maryland United, and the rest, as they say, is history!

Sheila is currently happily employed at Fredericton High School, teaching mathematics to grade 10 and 12 students. And she finds herself busy at our church where she is currently a member of the CD committee, helping to organize Sunday School where she also teaches some of the classes. She helps to organize lay readers for Minutes for Mission, and is a faithful member of the UCW. NMUC is fortunate to have such a dedicated worker as Sheila in their midst. We wish her continued success in her educational career and many years of happiness ahead with her family and friends.

NMUC 125TH ANNIVERSARY SERVICE



On Sunday, November 25th the congregation and friends of New Maryland United Church celebrated its 125th anniversary. Upon arriving at the service, folks were delighted to see in the parking lot a horse-drawn carriage! Loaned for the occasion by the Price family, it provided a perfect background for photos taken later in the morning. To further set the 19th century scene, a number of antique household items were on display in the sanctuary. The special anniversary bulletin was designed by our artist-in-residence Pam Gonnason. The service, led by Rev. Kelly Burke, began with the processional hymn “The Church’s One Foundation” and continued with glimpses of the past and hope for the future evident in the Scriptures, music and prayers. Hebrews 12: 1-2 was read from the original Bible presented to the church in 1888 by David Sinclair, one of the early members of the ‘New Maryland Kirk’. A certificate of congratulations from the Province of New Brunswick was presented to the church in honour of the special day. The Children’s Story took the form of a photo display portraying life in 1887 and the early construction of our little country church. An interesting and thought-provoking meditation was presented by the guest speaker, Dr. Bill Randall. The choir sang the anthem “Blessed Are Those Who Are Called to the Table”. Communion was served from the first communion table purchased in 1889. Following the service a reception and time of fellowship was held, a highlight being the cutting and serving of the anniversary cake. Appreciation is extended to each and everyone who helped to make the anniversary such a special occasion as we remembered the enthusiasm of the few families who had dreamed a dream 125 years ago.

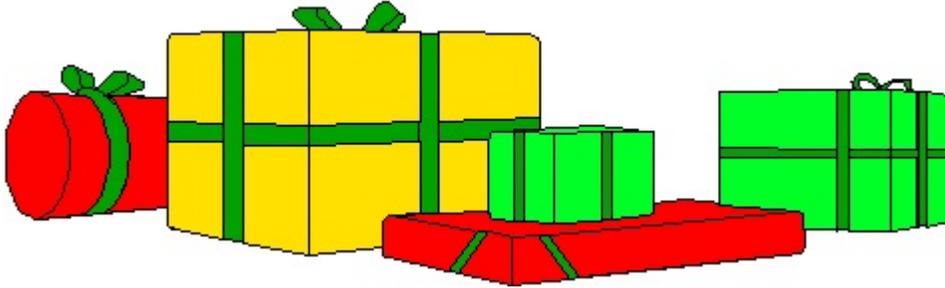
ANNIVERSARY SUNDAY PHOTOS



Click into our church website at www.newmarylanduc.ca to see the photos taken on Anniversary Sunday.

THE GREEN COMMITTEE

During the month of November, the Green Committee had posted in our church bulletins green tips that might have been seen in “church bulletins” of 1887. The following are excerpts from an article, “Rediscovering the joy of Christmas giving (1886)”:



As to Christmas giving

“I’m coming to dread the holidays” said one a day or two ago, who was, I know, the soul of generosity and dearly loves her friends.

“Why so?” I asked.

“It always seems to me that it should be the brightest, gayest time of the year, because it brings so many pleasant thoughts of those one cares for. Christmas present giving has come to be just as it is in the case of weddings. Now, to remember and be remembered by one’s friends by some pretty little gift, conceit or odd fancy is delightful, but the day of small things is passing and presents are growing more and more costly, so that the custom is becoming an absolute burden.”

“There is something wrong,” I answered, “and it is just here. We have, not any of us, independence enough to do just what we know we ought, but try to fulfill what we imagine are other people’s expectations. If each one would show our Christmas thought of those we love by some simple gifts, which, in the aggregate, would be no burden, there could be no dreading of the beautiful time by anybody. And then, if anyone did not feel able to afford even a little thing, there are always pleasant words and warm wishes to offer.”

It seems to me that there is something very beautiful in this custom of putting heart thoughts in some little gift, that all over the land each one is trying to give pleasure to others, to make life a little brighter by these tokens of friendly regard. Even if it has been done at a little self sacrifice, it is well, for the effort has driven self in the background and made the world a brighter place for somebody to live in.

There is one thing, however, to be kept in mind – and in the forgetfulness of this lies the trouble. It is not the value of what is given that is to be considered, it is the friendly thought that counts. Never, therefore, be betrayed into the folly of giving what you cannot afford, because you may think it is expected, or you imagine the recipients have so much that a simple thing will be uncared for.

Give, for it is a pleasant thing to do, but give justly. Lay aside what you can spend without embarrassment to yourself and then do the best you can with it. If you can spare no money and have no leisure to make pretty or inexpensive things, give pleasant words and wishes. Have faith enough in your friends to believe they will understand you. Peace and good will!! That is what the season means.

Wishing you Christmas Joy and blessings in the New Year! *Kelly, Ann, Bev and Marg*

2013 UNITED CHURCH CALENDARS



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

NMUC BUILDING COMMITTEE



The names of the members of the NMUC Building Committee were announced at the November 27th Official Board Meeting: Dorothy Webster, Allen Parlee, Jim Merrill, David Ward and Sheila Penney, with John St Pierre as a Resource Person. The committee will develop a new plan for the Accessibility Building Expansion as per the financial guidelines set by the Official Board at the September 25th meeting. The committee will report directly to the Official Board with progress reports. When a new plan is developed, the Committee will have a contractor draft a more detailed plan to be used to receive bids from interested contractors. The Committee will then recommend to the Official Board which contractor to hire. The Committee will have a contact person or persons to work with the contractor as required.

HATS OFF !



- ~ to those who contributed to the Thanksgiving display in the sanctuary
- ~ to those who bring non-perishable food items to our Fredericton Food Bank baskets each week
- ~ to those who donate gently used clothing through our Outreach Program to the less fortunate
- ~ to Peter Dickinson for serving as pulpit supply in the Minto United Church
- ~ to "the Daily Gleaner" for publishing the NMUC Anniversary article
- ~ to Brian Price, Freeman Hiscock and Jonathan Hayes for the horse-drawn carriage on Anniversary Sunday
- ~ to Brooke-Lyn Power for chairing the children's story on Anniversary Sunday
- ~ to those who helped set-up and clean-up and to those who provided food for the Anniversary dinner
- ~ to David and Sandra's daughter Emma on receiving the Queen Diamond Jubilee Medal
- ~ to David and Sandra's granddaughter Meghan who was accepted to the Sarah MacLaughlin School of Music

SUNDAY SCHOOL



Sunday school classes began in September. This year there are two age groups, a younger group for children in grades K to 4, and an older group for children in grades 5 and up. There are seven enthusiastic teachers who are doing a wonderful job teaching our children! They have access to an online Sunday School curriculum "The Whole People of God". Resources for all ages are available and it follows the United Church Lectionary. The program is easy to use and has extensive material which is age appropriate and fun for the children.



We continue to have our birthday bank to raise money for the Mission and Service fund. On the last Sunday of each month, people are invited to donate money to the birthday bank if they, or someone they care about, had a birthday during that month.

Our Annual Sunday School Christmas pageant will be presented on Sunday, December 16. We will soon be providing parts and beginning the practices. So if you know a child who would like to take part, please let Sheila Power know.



MEN'S CLUB

The Men's Club welcomes all men of the congregation to a time of fellowship on the first Tuesday of each month at 7 pm. Thanks to all those who helped with the Salmon Supper with a special thank-you to all the youth of the church for their assistance. The final profit for the event was \$2,682.92.



The December meeting will be held at Wetmores.
It is hoped that all NMUC men will attend ... please contact Jim or Dave.



REMEMBERING OUR ANGELS



The annual "Remembering Your Angels" campaign will soon begin. Anyone wishing to purchase a Christmas angel ornament for a donation of \$5.00 may place the angel on the Christmas tree in memory of, or thinking of, a loved one. It has been a great success the last few years. If you are interested in receiving an angel to remember that special someone, please see Sheila Power or Lorna Ball on or before December 16th.

SWEET SYMBOL

A significant symbol of Christmas in the simple candy cane.
Its shape is the crook of the shepherd, One of the first who came.
The lively peppermint flavour is the regal gift of spice
The white is Jesus' purity; the red is sacrifice.
The narrow stripes are friendship and the nearness of His love
Eternal sweet compassion, a gift from God above.





AN ARCHIVAL MOMENT



Rev. A. John Mowatt was the first minister of the New Maryland Kirk. He was born in Woodstock, NB on February 11, 1838 and when quite young moved with his parents to Harvey. He received his early education in the Fredericton schools, took the Arts Course at the Presbyterian College in Truro, and graduated in 1866 as a licensed preacher from the Theological Hall in Halifax. Upon graduating he accepted a call to Stellarton, NS, then in 1873 to Windsor, NS, and in 1880 to St. Paul's Presbyterian Church in Fredericton. It was during his ministry at St. Paul's when he encouraged his New Maryland congregants to realize their dream of building a church of their own. It was given the name the "Branch of St. Paul's" but came to be known as "The New Maryland Kirk". Rev. Mowatt officiated at the New Maryland services as well as those at St. Paul's. In 1891 he accepted a call to Erskine Church in Montreal. Twenty years later he died in the pulpit of that church at the age of 73 years.

DATES TO REMEMBER



Wednesday, Dec. 5, 7 pm - Carol Fest at St. Paul's United Church, Fredericton
 Sunday, Dec. 9, 11 am - Advent II Worship: White Gift and Mitten Tree
 Sunday, Dec. 16, 11 am - Advent III Worship: "The Story Behind Silent Night"
 Thursday, Dec. 20, 6:30 pm - Carolling (Meet at NMUC)
 Sunday, Dec. 23, 11 am - Advent IV Worship: Holy Communion
 Monday, Dec. 24, 7 pm - Christmas Eve Family Service
 10 pm - Service of Candlelight and Holy Communion

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



Expression of Gratitude: To My NMUC Friends: On behalf of my entire family, I would like to express our gratitude for the words and acts of kindness and sympathy at the passing of my step-father, Gerard (Gerry) Flynn in Newfoundland. Special thanks to Rev. Kelly, who dropped everything and was on my doorstep the moment she heard. Forever the New Maryland United story is linked with ours. *Rev., The Lainey and Flynn Families*

Letter of Thanks: Cecil and Carol want to thank all who came to their 60th Anniversary party at Oakland Lodge. Also thanks for the generous donations to the Fredericton Food Bank. Thank you to our family for making it such an enjoyable day for us. *Cecil and Carol Charters*

MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY 2013 TO ALL !

