

The St. David's Connection

Message from the Minister
Rev. David Sturtevant

Seasonal Newsletter – December, 2017
www.stdavids.nf.ca



Advent 2017

"Stranger in a Strange Land"



After Moses fled from Pharaoh into Midian as a young man, he married his wife Zepporah and they had a son, who he named "Foreigner" because, as Moses put it, "I have become a stranger (or foreigner) in a strange land" (Ex. 2:22). Much had changed for Moses, as he had gone from living in the household of Pharaoh to working as a shepherd in the wilderness of Midian. No wonder his new life felt strange!

Since coming here in the spring, Michelle and I have indeed felt some of that "strangeness". Like Moses, we are in a new place, like Moses, we are new parents to our wonderful son Oliver. The summer brought many new experiences: Capelin, whales, Jigg's dinner, pineapple crush, "yes b'y", and "what's after happening now?" What a strange new (found) land!

But for all that he had lost, Moses found something important in that wilderness: It was there that he encountered God in the burning bush. And along with the strangeness of our new lives, I have found God to be richly present here among the people of our St. David's family, and that is a fantastic blessing. I have been blessed by the kindness and thoughtfulness of this community, and I am constantly being surprised by new signs of faithfulness and love. As we begin this advent season, I am very excited to take part in the work of preparing and distributing over 40 Christmas hampers to those who need them most. Our Christmas Children's event has given parents a welcome break to do some shopping or just relax a little in this busy time, and our pageant will bring glory to God and smiles to our faces.

This season of Advent is a season of waiting, a season of anticipation. Some anticipations are good ones, like waiting for family to come home for the holidays. Some are uncertain, like waiting for test results, whether they be medical tests or exams and final grades. And sometimes, anticipation can be sad, or dark, or difficult. But no matter where we go, it is an encouragement that God can come to us in the most unexpected ways and at the most unexpected times and places. As we go through life, we often move on to "new lands", and to our surprise, we just may find God there, waiting for us.

May God bless you this Advent season and fill you with hope, with peace, with joy, and with love.

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Christmas Hampers- We hope to distribute 40 or more hampers this year! We need your support for this project. If you're interested in delivering hampers or packing hampers please contact Kathy McKay or the church office. The Hampers will be packed and delivered on December 16. Thanks for considering helping with this project.

PEWS NEWS



Church Hall Baby
shower for the
Sturtevant's!
And then
VOILA!



Don and Kath McKay are excited to have Kirsten coming home for Christmas this year. She will arrive in time to help distribute hampers!

HAPPY 75th
BIRTHDAY
DINI!



Our Jim Steele on hand at important symbolic event – reports VOCM news:

“The Royal Newfoundland Regiment now features the medals of two soldiers, father and son, who served in two world wars.

Often overshadowed by their World War One counterparts, today the Royal Newfoundland Regiment museum showcased the service, and the family of regimental soldiers from the Second World War both literally and figuratively.

The family of Gordon “Cam” Eaton donated his medals, including the prestigious Military Cross, to the collection today. Eaton served as Captain with the 166 NL Field Regiment, and his medals will now reside next to those of his father, who served with the RNR during the Great War. His son Fraser Eaton says while the family was happy to donate the medals it was never their decision alone, as Cam himself had requested it before he passed away, and they were waiting for a place like the Regiment museum to open so that they could fulfill his wishes.”



Loarraine Nathanson has died in Toronto. Some old timers may remember the days when both Beth El Synagogue and St. David's Church were newly built and a sense of fellowship between the two houses of worship was created. The Nathanson's were pillars of Beth El Synagogue. The Nathanson family were owners of Macy's bookstore in Churchill Square and good friends of several members of St. David's. Thank you Elena for the report.

News and Announcements

A Note from Sarah King:

L'Arche Avalon is part of an international community of homes for persons with disabilities and they are working towards opening one of these homes here in the St. John's region soon. At a L'Arche home the Assistants who work in the home also live in the home making it a more family like setting and encourages building of relationships with those being supported. There is a need for skills in many areas as well as donations of time and money to further this dream. for more information about our monthly activities and gatherings

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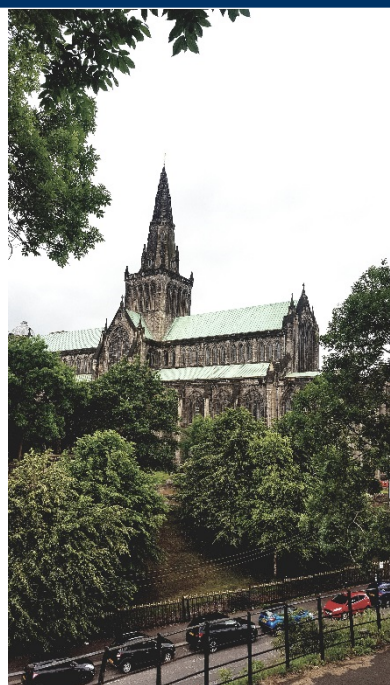
Feel free to contact for more information: Sarah King <sarah_mcmeekin@hotmail.com>



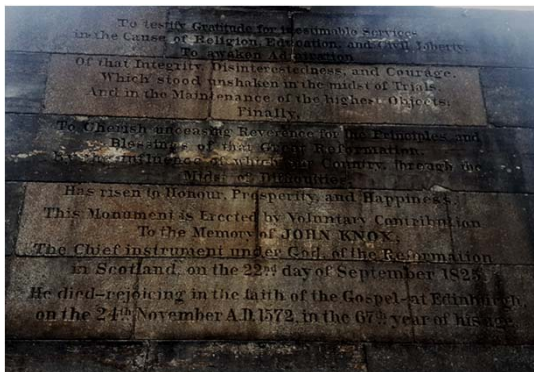
A ceremony of remembrance and dedication for Angus Bruneau took place at Memorial University, Faculty of Engineering Oct 11th. The main lecture theatre was renovated by Fortis Inc. and rededicated to Angus.

Want to know the 242 year history of our Congregation ?

Go to YouTube and search for "Dissenters Way"



Steve Bruneau walked the Fife coastal path (Scotland) this summer 150 km or so. On the last day of the trip he visited the cathedral in Glasgow otherwise known as the High Kirk of Glasgow and then ascended the necropolis to Knox's monument.



All fun and Games at the Theme Tea this year!



The Board of Managers

Anne Calver reporting. . .



This year has been a somewhat quiet one for the Board. While there are several major projects to be undertaken, most are in the planning stage or are undergoing revisions. Therefore the Board has been doing minor housekeeping work while plans for the major projects are developed

One of the major projects in the planning stage is one to improve accessibility to the hall's exterior entrance called the: **East Entry Ramp Project**. We have approached the federal government for funding, our application has been acknowledged by the government and we are now waiting for a decision whether we qualify for the funds. This is a \$50,000 project including a concrete curb running along the front of the hall. The grant would cover 60% of the work. Work on this project will start after the winter, probably in a May 2018 timeframe. Steve Bruneau developed a series of diagrams for this project and if you ask any member of the Board or check in with the office, you may take a look at these plans. Another major project is an upgrade to the church's sound systems. This one being called the **Audio Visual Equipment for the Sanctuary** project. Brian Way has been involved in this project and currently we are waiting for further information for the size and placement of the new equipment. The third major project is the **Sign Project**. The church's current sign is showing its age, is sometimes buried in snow for several months and thus cannot easily be changed. A conceptual design was prepared and quotes are coming in. The **Hall Stained Glass Windows** project is also underway. Session has asked the designer for concepts on individual rather than connected windows, allowing window installation individually. The concept designs have been approved by Session and the next step is a Session report to the congregation with information on costs.

The Board has welcomed two new members, Sandra Perry was welcomed to her first meeting in October and Allison Crawford was welcomed at the November meeting. We are sad to be saying goodbye to Chite Rutihinda whose last Board meeting was in November. Chite will be moving to the mainland to further her career but expects to still see us as her sister is attending MUN and she will be back for frequent visits.

Remember those housekeeping projects? The Board received WA funding to repaint the floor in sanctuary. We have asked three contractors for quotes, one quote is in and we are waiting on the others. Meanwhile the hot water heater in the hall was replaced early in the fall before we had any major water damage. There was a flickering light problem only when we had high winds from the southwest. Steve Bruneau and Anne Calver walked around the church and had "ah ha" moments. Light and Power was called in and replaced the line from the pole to the tower. Problem solved. (No Church ghosts as it turn out!).

Our Board would like to sincerely thank all those people who make this church what it is to so many people. I'm going to mention a few people now and if I don't get you here, there's always the Board's report for the Annual General Meeting! Andy Versteeg replaced a valve in the hall's heating system so our people and renters would be toasty warm. Steve Bruneau did his bit with a chain saw and cleared the forest out back. Sylvia and Dave Hudson manage the Sunday coffee hour and with a group of volunteers provide goodies for us all. Sandra Perry volunteered to step into the office while Monica is on sick leave, our thanks to Sandra and our best wishes to Monica. In July the Board sponsored a CPR / AED course facilitated by Shelley Bauer. The 2017 Moose Report: Albert shot this year's moose; Mary, Steve and Ian Bruneau picked up and installed the freezer for the moose; Halliday's cut and packaged the moose; Jessica Thorne picked up the moose from Halliday's and with David's help, filled the new freezer to the brim with moose meat. Needless to say, we have moose in our future!

The Board of Managers

(CONTINUED)



The Board was delighted to help with the Vacation Bible School, Diana Wamstecker with much help from all our volunteers put off a successful VBS. Diana planned the Christmas Saturday "Parents Day" and thanks to many volunteers the parents get a three hour break from hectic schedules. Diana sent the Board and Session a report on the VBS:

"I wanted to provide an update regarding the Vacation Bible School that was run on July 6 & 7, with a concluding church service on July 9, 2017. 30 children attended the program, and of those 21 (or 70%) of the participants were children from the community. 3 families from the community attended the closing church service. We planned supplies for 50 children. We were slightly over the \$700 budget (perhaps \$730?) and Steve Andrews could give a firmer accounting of monies. The program was run with a rotation of three groups through three stations (craft, activity, & Bible lesson), with opening and concluding songs and object lessons. There were 12 volunteers.

The anecdotal conversation that stands out for many of us was with a mother from the community who indicated that they do not believe in Christianity, but that they attended because the program was free, would be fun for their daughter, and would like her to be informed of all the religious choices available. After the two days of VBS the mother indicated that she would like to volunteer with our church should we put on further events, had signed her daughter up for another VBS in the city and was asking to for information about any other children's programs.

The verbal feedback from the congregation after the concluding church service appeared to be overwhelmingly positive."

Rentals continue to be a source of income and our facilities are used by many groups and provide us visibility throughout the community. We have both regular long term renters and single use renters. Some of the groups have been with us for many years and consider us as their home, for example the Newfoundland Horticultural Society has been at St. David's for over twenty years. We provide a bright clean safe location for many types of activities from dancing, to symphony music, to sleep-overs for the Guides and Cubs, to flower arranging, to Bible study groups, flea markets for several groups, and we cannot forget the pet pics with Santa! Our own groups use the building for knitting, quilting, Good Companions, choir, WA, AMS, Sunday School, teas and garage sales to name a few. We also have a commercial kitchen designation allowing people to use this facility in the preparation of food. The Auditor General's Department is working at the English School Board, we have again been able to rent out six parking spots weekdays with procedures in place should the church require all our parking capacity on any given day.

As we look towards the future, we are also gearing up for more projects. Some will be done by the Board and some will be undertaken by the WA. The WA are looking at the refurbishment of the crèche (possibly before Christmas), the Clouston Room, and upgrades for the new and old kitchens. A brighter future is in-store for those areas.

The Board of Managers would like to say a big thank you to everyone who help us out in so many ways. We are so very fortunate to have many people who care for this church and the work it does. This church has a congregation who care for it and about it and show that in many ways. Thank you all.

Soctober



AMS very pleased with the congregations participation in Soctober again this year! The congregation generously donated 247 pairs of socks for women, men and children. There were 28 face clothes donated and they will be given to Choices for Youth. Four people will have toasty warm feet with the slippers that were handknit and donated as well. Thanks for all who participated and helped to make others warm in the winter.

Kathy McKay



Note:
John the Baptist
was
depicted
sockless
in St.
John's!

What a mountain of knitting produced by the knitters from December until June!! This was a party at Bouwina's home to celebrate. The knitted goods are destined for Choices for Youth, with the baby pneumonia vests going to India and Africa. All the baby hats are distributed to new born babies.

*Report from Penny Gillies*

Thanks for the excellent music ministry Brian et al. It is a huge part of our lives here at St. David's!

The Good Companions



Every Thursday afternoon a wonderful group of people descend upon St.David's for an afternoon of fun and fellowship. But really it all begins much earlier on Thursday morning as the helpers and some participants gather to put up the card tables and chairs in the Armour Room and lay out the big green carpet and the brown and black bowls ready for the carpet bowling in the church hall. Then of course there is activity in the kitchen too as the raisin bread is buttered, fresh milk placed in the fridge, with more treats and occasionally a cake for the monthly birthdays.....it's a hive of activity.



The Good Companions has been meeting weekly for several decades, attracting seniors from the community at large to enjoy an afternoon together. If you were to drop by any Thursday afternoon to share a cuppa you would be most welcome to throw a bowling bowl or try your hand at the card table. Laughter, sharing of stories, advice for the novice bridge player are just a few of the wonderful moments to be enjoyed. Very often too there special dinners provided where a meal is shared together before the cards and bowling begin so if you are twiddling your thumbs at home perhaps newly retired why not drop by to become a "Good Companion"



"Food for Thought"

The Food for Thought meeting on October 31, 2017, at the Rollmann house. Hans did a talk for the group about the 500th anniversary of Martin Luther's posting his "95 Theses" in Wittenberg...

Newcomers welcome:
Contact the church office for places and times of gathering.

Skills Canada FLL Saturday Competition

Report from Benjamin Versteeg

I spent all day Saturday, November 25th at the 15th annual Skills Canada Intermediate Challenge. This year, close to 400 junior high students from across Newfoundland and Labrador got together at Macdonald Drive to compete in 17 different trade, technology and employability competition areas. These range from public speaking, graphic design, coding, and workplace safety to wind turbine and robotics challenges. As part of a team from MDJH, I participated in the F.I.R.S.T. Lego League competition. For the competition, we had to design, build, and program a Lego robot to complete challenges on the map below. The robot starts in the quarter circle in the lower left-hand corner, which is called base. The robot can start from anywhere in base, which is useful as it lowers the number of risky turns the robot has to make. However, avoid touching the robot when it is outside of base as you get a 5 point penalty every time you do.

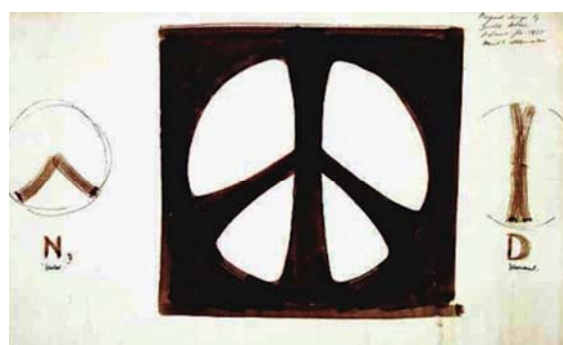
My team's robot (see the first picture on the next page for what it looked like with me standing next to it) was programmed without using any sensors. This resulted in some iffy behavior from the robot. It was great if it worked, but when it didn't, it was still a source of entertainment for my team.

At the competition, my team managed to finish in the top half, which was quite an achievement due to 2 things. The first thing was that there were 15 other teams trying for the top spot, so there was quite a bit of competition. The other reason was that we only got the brain for the robot two weeks before the competition, so there was quite the rush to complete the robot. In addition to the competitions, you also had to: give a presentation with something to do with water; describe how you designed your robot; participate in an activity designed to test how well you worked as a team. We won second place with the presentation, but that was the only award we won.

As much as I would have liked to make the podium in the overall competition, I am not sad that we didn't win first place. The reason for this is that the first place winners would be going to Detroit in 2018 to participate in the international competition, and I'm not really ready for that level of competition yet!

All in all, I quite enjoyed the competition and look forward to doing it again next year!





“War and Peace” - A London Experience by John Molgaard

Each year Elke and I visit our youngest daughter, Birte, and her family in Germany - in years when they don't come here. Travel that always includes stopovers in London with my brother, Harald. This year that was an occasion for me to accompany Harald and a friend of his to the *Imperial War Museum*, known as the IWM. Like most our age we were born into war. My parents were sent by church missions to war-afflicted China (attacked by Japan in 1931), where they met, married, and Harald and I were born. My father served in the British army in India and Elke's step father in the Nazi Germany forces. Of course, who hasn't been born and lived while there is war somewhere in the world, as we know, having helped refugees from so much of that?

You may wonder why we would go to a place apparently glorifying war, as we, like so many others here, devote our time - in part - to victims of war? One is faced with huge WWI naval guns and shells at the approach to the London IWM, and just inside full scale war planes and vehicles face you on all sides. It is also a bit ironic that the IWM occupies the one-time site of “Bedlam” - *Bethlehem*, a “lunatic asylum,” as it was previously known. However, the IWM deals with all aspects of war, including victims, civilian and military. We were there to visit a special Anti-War Exhibition, focussing on the 20th century.

For me WWII childhood was exciting, including the Japanese bombing of our town in China, and the military environment there and later in India. It was only in the mid 1950's, while in my first job, in South Wales, that I joined the *Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament* (CND), and took part in Easter demonstrations, the marches between the nuclear weapons research site at Aldermaston and Trafalgar Square.

This special IWM exhibit was not only an opportunity for some nostalgia, it was also a reminder that peace/anti-war sentiment has a long history, not least before WWI in Europe. Sadly, most leaders of the strong Suffragette (women's rights) movement in the UK before WWI joined pro-war hysteria as that war started. On the other hand, Bertrand Russell, famous philosopher and pacifist (with qualifications), who was imprisoned briefly in both world wars, was still on hand in the 50's and 60's to inspire the anti-nuclear weapon movement. I should also mention Rev. John Collins, a chaplain in the RAF in WWII, later Canon at St. Paul's Cathedral and a founder of *War on Want*, and chair of CND, and Peggy Duff, widowed in WWII, who organized, as General Secretary of CND, all but the first Aldermaston March. Both Collins and Duff were, largely ignored at the IWM exhibit, which highlighted people and events more likely to be recognized now.

The origin of the now ubiquitous “Peace Symbol,” was of particular interest to me. It was designed by Gerald Holtom for the anti nuclear arms movement, which clearly was the beginning of current usage. Holtom has explained: “I drew myself: the representative of an individual in despair, with hands palm outstretched outwards and downwards in the manner of Goya's peasant before the firing squad.” He also said he combined the semaphore characters for N and D. There are other interpretations of its origin and use, ancient and modern, including the upside-down cross, supposedly used by Nero on the Apostle Peter. That was, of course, well before any form of Christianity endorsed war of any kind - another pertinent topic at Christmas!

Hello from Down Under! From the Munroe family

We've had an excellent year in Australia. We left St. John's at the end of January in the cold of winter and dove right into the heat of summer in Sydney. Our faces were bright red before we even made it through Customs. We took a bus to our new home in Canberra and promptly locked ourselves out of the house the next morning. It was a great way to meet our neighbours - in our pajamas, barefoot and asking to borrow a cell phone to call our landlords and get another key.

We are renting the house of a family who themselves are on sabbatical for a year in the States. They have children (3 girls!) around the same age as ours so they left toys, books and crafts for us to use. Such a blessing! The garden has fruit trees that bloom all year round (yes, they have "winter" gardens here that include growing broccoli) with beautiful flowers and yummy fruit. We have to compete with the birds to get the fruit (lemons, mandarin oranges, grapefruits, figs, dates, pomegranates and persimmons). There are a wide variety of brightly coloured birds that delight us when they fly by and wake us with raucous sounds at dawn. We have kangaroos on our street almost every evening. They come down from the nature reserve at dusk to munch on the grass along the sidewalks and in the parks. We are one block from the Mt. Ainslie Reserve which has a lovely walking track. We can always find kangaroos, birds and sometimes blue-tongued skinks (lizards) when we head out for an evening walk. Thankfully, no snakes or scorpions. Very neat ant hills though. In fact, the magpies will take an "ant bath" where they'll lay down stretched out on top of the ant hill while the ants eat the mites off their feathers.

We've had visitors over the past year - James' parents (Ken and Suzanne) came in April, Amy's parents (Bryon and Dianne) in September, and our friends the Headricks (Danielle and Jamie) in October. It was a lovely time since having guests forces one to go see all the sights that we would have otherwise missed.

We flew to New Zealand with James' parents for a two-week driving tour of the north island. It was incredible! We drove up and down and all around to see many interesting and beautiful things. We visited the Waitomo Caves and saw glowworms. We walked about the hobbit holes of Hobbiton and drank ginger beer. We smelled the sulphur of the hot springs in Rotorua. And basked on the beaches of the east coast. We pet a variety of farm animals, including the world's smallest bull, llamas, a tortoise and ostriches. We went to museums, exhibits, a circus and botanical gardens. And we caught up with family friends from Winnipeg that now live in Wellington, NZ.

In September we drove up the east coast of Australia with Amy's parents to Brisbane and then flew to Cairns. We snorkelled at the Great Barrier Reef, were toured through the rainforest at Kuranda, and enjoyed the hot beach weather. We visited with Corey Armstrong and his family in Brisbane (he came to St. David's in 2012. He just recently became a paramedic in Tasmania!). We held and pet a koala, fed the kangaroos and wallabies, had a picnic with a goanna, watched the platypus (did you know baby platypus are called "puggles?"), pet a python, ate delicious ice cream and were treated like family by our "Australian family." We learned that the Easter Bilby visits homes here with eggs and chocolates - not the bunny. We travelled back down to Canberra visiting some stunning beaches, swimming with dolphins, getting kisses from sea lions and exploring another set of caves in the Blue Mountains.

In October we hit the coast a bit further south with the Headricks. We built sandcastles, fed more kangaroos and pet a wombat. We also saw an echidna walking along on the side of the road. We ate pancakes loaded with ice cream, sprinkles and chocolate sauce, had some very delicious FreakShakes, toured around the Floriade festival (flowers and shows), shopped at the bus depot markets, toured the miniature gardens and bounced on trampolines.



In Canberra, we've also visited the War Memorial which is an incredible place that is very, very well done. It sits across from Parliamentary Hill which we also toured. We've been to the National Art Gallery, the Portrait Gallery and the Legislature (where Allison had a piece of artwork. She won in a provincial art competition of 1600 entries). We've learned how to throw boomerangs out at Tinbinbilla Nature Reserve, and heard some of the stories and dances of the Aboriginals. We listened to the didgeridoo (neat for a while but I couldn't take more than 15 minutes of the CD in the car), and learned the words for the Australian anthem.

Allison and Lucy have been in school from February until mid-December with two-week breaks between the four terms. They've complained that they never got their "summer break." True. But it has allowed them to make some good friends. Hannah has also had several play dates with friends from our church group. We attend Crossroads Christian Church which is an evangelical bible-based congregation with the stated purpose of sharing the gospel full of the grace and truth. We've enjoyed partaking in their ministries and have really felt that our church family spans the globe. So nice to pray and worship with people in a different country to the glory of God!

James has really enjoyed the time this year with his colleagues, research and university. It has been an excellent opportunity to forge new collaborations, think of new directions of focus and work with friendly, helpful and challenging people at a different university. I also have enjoyed the personal time to reflect on future paths as well as the family time we've spent together.

We'll be heading back to St. John's after Christmas, arriving on the 28th of December. Thank you for your thoughts, prayers and emails during our time away. It has been a blessed year - thanks for your support. If you're interested in our blog then check out: munroesinaustralia.blogspot.com.au. See you soon!

With much love,

Amy, James, Allison, Lucy and Hannah



Upcoming Events at St. David's Church

Christmas activities at St. David's

Dec 02 Kids Christmas Event

Dec 10th White Gift Sunday

Dec 12 AMS evening Advent service 7:30 pm

Dec 16th Hamper preparation and distribution,
Sunday School pageant rehearsal

Dec 17th Sunday School Pageant

Dec 24th 11 am Communion

Dec 24th 11:30 pm Midnight Candlelight Service



Reverse Advent- Again this year St. David's is doing "Reverse Advent." Instead of getting a daily treat from an advent calendar, you are encouraged to put something into a box to give to someone else. These boxes will be collected on 10 December and distributed with our hampers. The boxes can include non-perishable food, special Christmas treats, gifts or anything else that would make someone's Christmas special. Hope you have fun with this project.



All through the month of December, the PresbyCan *Daily* Devotional features wonderful Christmas devotionals. Join over 6,000 subscribers around the world and enjoy devotionals each day from the Presbyterian Church, delivered free by e-mail to your inbox. Subscribe at www.presbycan.ca/subscriptions.



The editorial committee wishes to thank all those who contributed items to this edition of our St. David's Connection newsletter. Please feel free to drop items or notes off any time to members of the newsletter committee listed, or, leave them in the church mailbox.

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We encourage you to view the Newsletter in colour on the St. David's website. www.stdavids.nf.ca

In addition, sermons and bulletins are posted regularly as are audio recordings of most services!