

A LIGHT IN THE CITY



ST. JOHN'S CHURCH

MONCTON

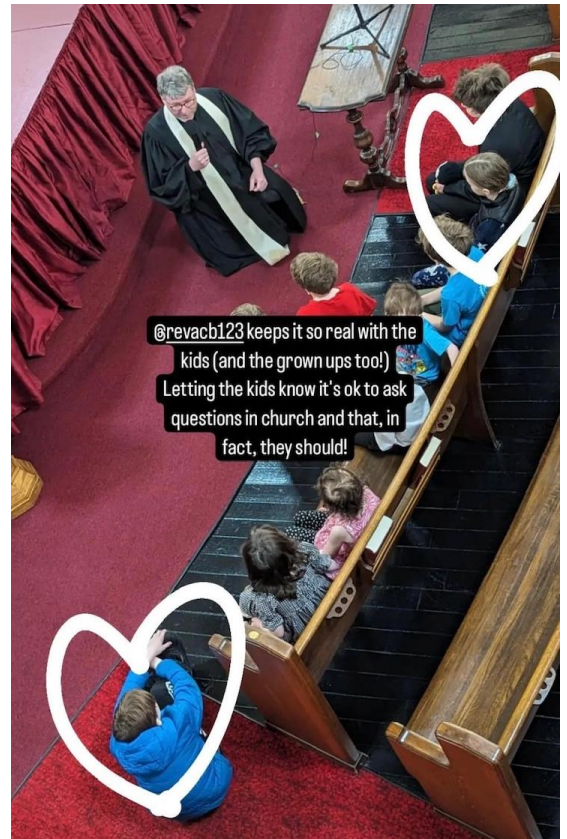
The United Church of Canada
75 Alma Street, Moncton, NB E1C 4Y3
506-858-8289 sjuc@nb.aibn.com www.stjohnsmoncton.ca
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/16465565858>
Office Hours: M-F, 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

PASTORAL LETTER

April 12, 2024

The Sunday after Easter is often called “low Sunday” because the main event was the week before and all of the Christmas and Easter crowd go back home. I’m not cynical about that; it’s just the way it is. I’m genuinely happy to see people in church, even if it is only twice a year. They don’t hide it and I don’t shame them for it. Some people just need those two times to get them through. One woman called the church this week and asked how many times we had communion a year. I told her four. She said she couldn’t get out to church anymore because God decided that her legs shouldn’t work and I said it had less to do with God and more to do with biology. Also, I gave her some good news: church is online now so you can go anytime!

But Sunday was warm and wonderful all the same. It was nice to see so many here. There’s something stirring here at St. John’s and though I’m not sure what it is exactly I’m not questioning it too much – just to say that I’m grateful that so many are so faithful to come to church. When I was talking to a woman after church on Sunday in the sanctuary she said, “I just need to be here.” The kids were lovely on Sunday. All ears. A young mother who sits in the balcony caught a moment during children’s time when I was telling the kids how important questions are and how we have to ask them in church.



On Monday morning I had a burial for a woman whose husband and son had died years before. I was asked to be there because I had buried her son who died too soon. They wanted to get her in the ground before the eclipse that afternoon. Before Easter of 2020, I had recorded my Easter Sunday sermon in the circle of trees at Fairhaven cemetery, which was just behind where we all stood. I think there’s something special about getting buried on the day of a celestial phenomenon. (I didn’t tell them I was nervous about lunar and solar rays mixing together and how that might affect cemeteries – haha!)

After we talked for a bit, I drove over to the school to get my son because school was getting out early due to the solar eclipse. As we walked home, he showed me the glasses he was given by the school. He took my phone and took a picture of the sun through the glasses to show me how they worked. "That's impressive, buddy!" I love my talks with Eli when I get to walk him home from school. They call him "Eli the Science Guy" in his classroom; a nickname he loves.



After I made him lunch, I drove to get Allie as her school was getting out later. She was in a great mood. Because they were getting out early, they still had all of their classes; they just made them shorter. Allie was all for that. When I took her home, I drove to see Vicki Meli. Vicki goes to our church and she had some extra glasses to give us since we couldn't find any. We had a great chat. They were going to go to the dunes in Bouctouche to watch the eclipse. We decided to stay in Moncton "as God intended" I was telling everyone.

Some people I have spoken with watched the eclipse from their back steps, as their neighbours did the same. Others drove out of the city a bit to get the full eclipse even though it was supposed to be about 98% totality in Moncton. A number of my friends watched it from cemeteries – I guess because they are open spaces that weren't filled with people (living at least) unlike Bore Park along the waterfront which was packed. A friend of mine who is a minister near Florenceville, the Rev. Susan Estabrooks, told me that because they were in a totality zone (and because astronaut Chris Hatfield was making an appearance) the population was expected to swell by fifteen thousand people. My former neighbour from Riverview posted on Facebook that he was traveling to Mexico to see the solar eclipse. I commented on his post that he was the opposite of a sun God worshiper to which he replied, "I'm a lunatic!"



I sat outside reading for a while before the event was to begin. Eli was drawing with chalk in the driveway in big letters reminding people walking by to wear their solar sunglasses. The dog kept rolling in the grass but we decided to put her in because we didn't want to risk whatever limited vision she has – a decision she did not



understand or appreciate. So, like all of you, we all stood where we were on this planet earth and with millions of other people: we looked up.

It was the most awe-inspiring thing I've ever seen. First, that scientists could predict the exact time and locations for how and when this would happen and, second, that it happened for the whole world to see. For a few moments the moon eclipsed the sun and very soon it went from beautiful



and warm to dark and cold. The Book of Joel says, "The sun and moon will be darkened, and the stars no longer shine..." Matthew's Gospel says, "Immediately after the distress of those days "the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from the sky, and the heavenly bodies will be shaken."

When I was at Ralph Smith's house on Thursday for a cup of coffee with Hugh Donald, Richard Blakney, Pat Gillespie, and Bill Peppard, Hugh wondered out loud if perhaps something like that happened during the crucifixion because the Gospels describe almost the exact same kind of day. Interesting thought!



On that Monday morning, as I was walking into church, I was joined by four other people coming into the building from the parking lot as they were getting ready to set up for the silent auction. One of them was John Wadman's daughter, Joan Tower. I said to her, "Joan! I was just talking about your father the other day! He told me once how I should feel

privileged to sit in the chair at his kitchen table because the famous artist Alex Colville had once sat in the exact same spot. A few days before I shared a photo on Facebook of a painting by Colville of a priest and a dog. The humour in the painting is that the dog is blocking the priest's face and it looks like the dog collar is his clerical collar – clerical collars are often called 'the old dog collar.' Church member Judith Brain remembered that dog from the painting as one that belonged to a friend of hers and she even remembered the dog's name: Rocky. I asked Joan about a few paintings in the Karing Kitchen, if her father had painted them. "Oh yes," she said. "Dad painted a lot." I'm including them here.



John also tied fly fishing flies. This week while I was out visiting, a woman gave me a few fishing flies for trout and salmon that her late husband had made. Her husband had been an avid fisherman and she knew my son loved to fish, too. As we sat and talked, I listened to old stories of Moncton near St. George and all of the families that used to live in that part of town. She told me about going on a bus trip to Scotland and Ireland with Dr. Archibald and his wife Margaret. "What was she like?" I asked. "She was wonderful! Not your typical minister's wife! I called her 'Beep! Beep!' because on the bus tour when they would stop and offer people to get off the bus to take photos she would always run up from the back with her camera and loudly say, "Beep! Beep!" to clear the way!" One of the ties she gave me was really special. It was hand-made by her husband's friend who even gave it a name: The Parson.



I hope you all know how much it means to me that you are part of this gathering called St. John's and that we share so much of this life together. Thanks for sharing so much of your lives with me.

The Rev. Aaron Billard, Minister



The bulletin and pastoral letter are dedicated in Loving Memory of

J. Grant MacMellon

by Lillian, Christine, Jennifer and Family

NOTICES, UPCOMING MEETINGS & EVENTS

Check our website at www.stjohnsmoncton.ca
for Sunday online Worship links, calendar, and more.

Apr. 14	Sun.	11:00 a.m.	WORSHIP and Sunday School - Council Investiture - No coffee & conversation
Apr. 14	Sun.	12:00 p.m.	Soup Luncheon (see note) (Owen Fraser Hall) 
Apr. 15-19		8:30-am	Greater Moncton Music Festival (day/evening-Sanctuary)
Apr. 16	Tues.	7:00 p.m.	Finance & Property Management Committee (monthly-Owen Fraser Hall)
Apr. 17	Wed.	7:00 p.m.	Choir – date change (weekly-Choir Loft/Fellowship Room)
Apr. 18	Thur.	7:00 p.m.	Pathfinders, Girl Guides of Canada (weekly-Social Hall)
Apr. 20	Sat.	10:00 a.m.	Rehearsal - Choeur Beausejour (Sanctuary)
Apr. 21	Sun.	11:00 a.m.	WORSHIP and Sunday School - Earth Sunday
Apr. 21	Sun.	3:00 p.m.	Concert – Choeur Beausejour (main floor & Sanctuary)
Apr. 22	Mon.		

Announcements from other United Churches, Fundy St. Lawrence Dawning Waters Region 14 and the community are shown on the TV in the Owen Fraser Hall and also located on the bulletin boards located at the Alma St. entrance and outside the Church Office.

SOBEYS & SUPERSTORE GIFT CARDS are sold each Sunday in the Sanctuary before and after Worship and at the Church Office M-F, 9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.

We make 4% on every card sold. Your support is needed and appreciated.



SOUP LUNCHEON

The Choir is having Soup Luncheon on **Sunday, April 14**, 12-1pm following Worship.

Cost is \$10 per person and children under 12 eat free.

Choice of soup: chicken vegetable or a hearty vegetable (vegetarian option) served with crackers and choice of a biscuit or bread, squares for dessert and coffee or tea.



All proceeds will go to St. John's Organ Fund.

Additional donations to the fund are welcome and greatly appreciated.

GROCERIES FOR KARING KITCHEN

(Apr. 28 – last Sunday of the month)

The Outreach Committee would like to bring your attention to the Karing Kitchen's need for these groceries: cream of chicken soup, cream of celery soup, pepper, flakes of ham.

White baskets will be at the main entrance for your donations. Thank you.



MARCH GIVINGS			
Local Offering - Env	\$ 8,772.52	Local Offering - PAR	\$ 5,518.87
Mission & Service – Env * incl UCW M&S quarterly pymt	\$ 1,584.00	Mission & Service - PAR	\$ 760.46
Plate Loose	\$ 360.00	Memorial Donations	\$ 735.00
Bulletin Sponsorship	\$ 200.00	Grocery Card Revenue	\$ 46.00
Revenues Year-to-Date:	\$59,768.48	Expenses Year-to-Date:	\$76,743.20
Mission & Service Year-to-Date:	\$ 5,381.38	Mission & Service 2024 Budget	\$18,000.00
For more information on the Church Financials, please visit our Church website. Thank you for your generous and continued support !			

MISSION & SERVICE GIVINGS

As a follow-up to a question raised during last Sunday’s Annual Meeting, the diagram below provides information on the Mission & Service givings for the past 5 years.

M & S GIVINGS					
	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019
Envelopes*	\$12,328	\$14,272	\$ 9,098	\$17,181	\$19,270
PAR	\$ 9,228	\$ 8,764	\$ 8,447	Incl in above	Incl in above
Other * includes UCW givings	\$ 185	\$ 285	\$ 190	\$ 105	\$ 185
Total for year	\$21,741	\$23,321	\$17,735	\$17,286	\$19,455
For more information on the Church Financials, please visit our Church website. Thank you for your generous and continued support !					

SCHOLARSHIPS

The following scholarships are available to students who have been active, and are currently participating, within the congregational life of St. John’s United Church.



Applications are available on the church website and Facebook group, at the church office or by contacting the church office.

Applications are to be returned by **May 22**, 2024 to the church by: email, dropping the submission into the mail slot in the door or by bringing it along with you on Sunday morning.

Henrietta Potter Scholarship is available to students currently in high school and pursuing first-year studies at a post-secondary educational institution in the upcoming year.

Robb Scholarship is awarded to children to further his/her studies in music.

Charles E. Woodrow Memorial Music Scholarship is available to students currently in high school and pursuing first-year music studies at a post-secondary educational institution in the upcoming year.

THE "BAKELESS BAKE SALE" has become an annual event of the St. John's UCW. This is a very popular and highly successful project.



We appreciate any amount you may wish to donate. Please have all donations in by the end of June. Envelopes are located at the church entrance. If you use SJUC box offering envelopes, an envelope is in your box. If you use PAR, an envelope is in your PAR envelope packet. Place your donation in the offering box on a Sunday morning, mail, drop off in the mail slot or use e-transfer.

STEWARDSHIP SECOND – How can you bear witness to the resurrection with what you have?

ST. JOHN'S UNITED CHURCH CARES... To notify the Minister of personal concerns, anxieties, illnesses, hospitalizations or deaths, or to pass along a prayer request, contact Rev. Aaron Billard at 506-858-8289 or sjucrev@gmail.com

CHURCH MINISTRY PERSONNEL AND STAFF



Rev. Aaron Billard, *Minister*
sjucrev@gmail.com



Rev. Melvin G. Fawcett
Music Director
melvinfawcett7@gmail.com



Karen Geldart
Office Administrator
sjuc@nb.aibn.com



Pat Arsenault, *Custodian*



Rev. Dr. Douglas MacEachern
Minister Emeritus
douglasimaceachern@gmail.com

Church Council

Chair: Roland Gallant
Secretary: Karen Teed
Treasurer: Kimberley Buck de Jesus
Board of Trustees: Graham McCrea
Christian Development: Nancy Black; Sunday School: Sonja Webster
Finance & Property Management: Marlene Godfrey
Fundy-St. Lawrence Dawning Waters Region reps.: Rev. Aaron Billard,
Kimberley Buck de Jesus and Karen Geldart
Ministry & Personnel: Kimberley Buck de Jesus
Pastoral Care & Membership: Valerie Roy
UCW: Brenda McFarlane
Worship & Music: Sheri Brooks

EASTER SEASON

