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Office Hours: Wednesday, 10am–12pm

## **PASTORAL LETTER**

December 2, 2022

A little while back, I went to see Marg Kerr. She lives on a beautiful side-street along the Shediac Road. It's a changing neighbourhood as younger families move in, along with neighbours for whom she is grateful. We talked about some of her travels, as she had worked for Air Canada. Two pictures on her wall caught my attention: one of Balmoral Castle and the other of the Houses of Parliament in London.



"They were my father's," Marg told me. "He bought those at Eatons." Whatever struck him about the paintings stuck me, too, apparently.



Marg's parents were William and Bernice Kerr. They donated land off of Birchmount Drive here in Moncton in a residential area for a community park. I'd often noticed it in my travels to and from Mountain Road and I had wondered what that land was for, as it's now a beautiful cluster of trees in the middle of a subdivision.

When I had told Marg where I lived (near Birchmount School) she made the connection, and I realized that church friends lived near there on Coventry Crescent, the Bill and Betty Peppard.

Last week, on Monday evening, I was texted by the Peppard's daughter-in-law Cathy to let me know Betty, was dying. We were celebrating my mother in law's 85th birthday with family when I saw the message come in. I was assured by Cathy that they didn't think death was imminent for Betty but they just wanted to make me aware. After we had finished blowing out the candles, I drove to Spencer's Nursing Home where it was quiet as I walked down the hallways after signing in.

I had been in to see Betty a few weeks before that but she was out visiting a friend. I was happy for her as I waited in the hallway near her room. A woman sitting across from me at that time said, "You're the minister at St. John's, aren't you?" I said yes I was. She said that they had attended there years ago but moved to Salisbury, well before my time. I asked her how she knew me then and she said, "I watch you online sometimes!"

But last Tuesday night was different as I walked into Betty's room. She was peaceful and aware but not able to talk. I tend to do ok in those situations because I like to assume that the person in front of me can understand me and knows I'm there. So I quietly spoke with her and held her hand. I read scripture ("Where can I flee from your presence?" – Psalm 139) and prayed. Her daughter-in-law texted me and asked if I could say Betty's grandchildren's names out loud, so I read each one: Brittany, Alex, Andrew, Sophie, Dylan, Bianca, Josh, and Jessica. Alex had phoned her recently from the Mississippi River and Andrew had been there to hold hands not long before. Sophie had been there too and Brittany had visited and wore her wedding dress for Betty. I love hearing stories of how grandkids are involved in their grandparent's lives, especially one who needs special care.



On my way out, I was walking down the hall when I heard, "Hi, Aaron!" It was someone I'd known for years, whose father sings in the choir. We had a really nice chance to catch up after everything and I was so happy to talk to her. I had barely recognized her in a uniform and mask but her eyes were better than mine!

I had remembered on my way home that after I had broken my shoulder a few years ago I was home recuperating. I heard the doorbell ring so I answered the door in my pajamas with my arm in a sling (and no small amount of pain killers) and there were Betty and Bill, arm and arm, out for a walk. Bill was so good to get her out and about. "We won't stay long, just wanted to see how you were!"

On Thursday morning I received word that Betty died at 6:40am. Her husband had been faithfully at her side throughout all of this, and she passed away quietly in the night.

When I drove to Bill's house, I passed the lot of trees, from which he lives just down the street. He told me that he and Betty were the first ones to move onto the street, just before Christmas of 1962. It was dark because all of the other houses were still being built, and the street was yet to be paved and muddy. Bill worked part time helping to build the houses in addition to his full-time job. He loved to dance with Betty in their kitchen; they always held hands.



As we sat in his living room, we all spoke so lovingly of Betty, who was a gift to know. Years ago I had been called to the hospital after she'd had a major stroke. I honestly didn't think she'd leave the hospital but she did, thanks in part to the excellent care she received from the doctors and nurses and no small amount of devotion from Bill, who has been an incredible support to her in recent years too. I still remember the Sunday when she had recovered enough to return to church. Betty had walked into the sanctuary looking fabulous in what I remember to be a beautiful coat with Bill by her side. I commented that, 'I'll take this miracle!' She was always so affectionate and kind, never with a complaint; just grateful to be among us. The last time they were all together was for Betty's birthday party.



I asked Bill about the park at the corner of the road. He had said when they moved there years ago the area had been a farm, and the farmhouse was still there when he had moved in, though it was dilapidated. The corner had always been a field that the kids played in, but it has grown in now. I asked Bill if he had known that Marg Kerr's father had donated the land and he said, "Yes, yes I did know that! Marg knew Betty well!" Betty had worked at a travel agency and she and Marg spoke on the phone nearly every day and met at social events.

I love the connections in church that line up sometimes. I love the ways we are connected, or not yet connected, as the congregation continues to find ways to get to know each other again. So much has changed, and continues to change, so I am grateful for you all in the ways we are present to one another. Advent brings with it a beautiful opportunity to reconnect with each other and with God.

I love this prayer so I'll close my letter to you with it.

We whose hearts are heavy  
seek the joy of your presence.

We are your people,  
walking in darkness,  
yet seeking the light.

To you we say,  
"Come, Lord Jesus."

-An Advent Prayer by Henri Nouwen

*The Rev. Aaron Billard*  
Minister



*The bulletin and pastoral letter are dedicated in Loving Memory of  
our loving brother, Gary Steeves  
by Bonnie Steeves and Shelly Steeves*

*The Church extends its deepest sympathies and condolences to the  
family and friends of **Betty Peppard** (wife of Bill Peppard)  
who died on December 1, 2022.*

**MEMORIALS**

*Donations have been made to St. John's United Church in memory of:*

**Mary (Lekas) Horsman** (sister of Diana Gillespie)  
*by sister Diana Gillespie, brother-in-law Pat, niece Tina Lewis & husband Barry  
and Carolyn Beers & Bob Smith*

**Nelson Price** (husband of Marlene Price)  
*by Jorge Lau*

**Harry Rasmussen** (husband of Etta Rasmussen)  
*by Audrey & George Horsman*



**VOLUNTEERS – A NOTE OF THANKS.**

A sincere thank-you from Roberta Bunker to these ladies for donating their time, talents and treasures toward the successful catering to the PROBUS Regional Meeting on Nov. 26/22. The proceeds have been given to the UCW and amounted to \$939.60.

- |                   |                  |                 |                   |
|-------------------|------------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| Carolyn Beers.    | Lori-Ann Billard | Shirley Brown   | Elaine Cooling    |
| Carol Davidson    | Grace Kell       | June MacEachern | Alberta MacLellan |
| Lillian MacMellon | Brenda McFarlane | Gail O'Brien    | Trudy Richards    |
| Lois Scott        | Kathryn Steeves  | Shelly Steeves  | Alison Stultz     |
| Lois Weatherby    |                  |                 |                   |

**LETTER TO MINISTER SHEPHARD**

Given the anticipated shortfall in shelter beds/overnight warming spaces, churches are sending letters to Minister Shephard. A form letter for you to sign and help in this outreach are located on the stage.

**SCRIPTURE READERS**

Now that many in the congregation have returned to in-person Worship, we would like to create a list of those who would like to offer to read scriptures on Sunday mornings. If this is something you would like to be part of, please contact Karen at the church office and add your name to our scripture reader list. This will help us to plan Worship and to have more people participate. Thank you so much for helping with this ministry!

## NOTICES, UPCOMING MEETINGS & EVENTS

Check our website at [www.stjohnsmoncton.ca](http://www.stjohnsmoncton.ca) for on-line Worship, calendar, and more.

|         |       |            |   |   |
|---------|-------|------------|---|---|
| Dec. 4  | Sun.  | 11:00 a.m. | <b>WORSHIP and <i>Sunday School</i></b><br>– in-person & online<br>- 2 <sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Advent - Peace   |    |
| Dec. 4  | Sun.  | 12:15 p.m. | <b>Worship &amp; Music Committee</b> (Norman Sinclair Room)   |   |
| Dec. 5  | Mon.  |            | <b>Deadline to submit Christmas Memorials</b><br>- form at church entrances   |    |
| Dec. 5  | Mon.  | 7:00 p.m.  | <b>Christian Development Committee</b> (Owen Fraser Hall)   |   |
| Dec. 7  | Wed.  | 9am-1pm    | <b>Church office open</b> (weekly)  |   |
| Dec. 7  | Wed.  | 7:00 p.m.  | <b>Advent Bible Study</b> (Zoom)<br>- see details below   |    |
| Dec. 8  | Thur. | 7:00 p.m.  | <b>Choir</b> (weekly-Choir Loft/Fellowship Room)  |   |
| Dec. 8  | Thur. | 7:00 p.m.  | Pathfinders, Girl Guides of Canada (weekly-Social Hall)   |   |
| Dec. 9  | Fri.  | 9am-1pm    | <b>Church office open</b> (weekly)  |   |
| Dec. 10 | Sat.  | 12:30 p.m. | Concert rehearsal – Choeurs des Aboiteaux (see bulletin board)  |   |
| Dec. 11 | Sun.  | 11:00 a.m. | <b>WORSHIP and <i>Sunday School</i></b><br>– in-person & online<br>- 3 <sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Advent - Joy   |    |
| Dec. 11 | Sun.  | 2:30 p.m.  | Concert – Choeurs des Aboiteaux (see bulletin board)  |   |
| Dec. 18 | Sun.  | 11:00 a.m. | <b>Children's Christmas Pageant</b><br>– in-person only & NOT online<br>- 4 <sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent – Love<br>- This family service is tailored towards children and young families. |   |
| Dec. 18 | Sun.  | 2:30 p.m.  | <b>CHRISTMAS CAROL SING ALONG</b><br>– in-person<br>- free-will offering  |    |
| Dec. 24 | Sat.  | 7:00 pm    | <b>Christmas Eve Worship</b><br>– in-person and online<br>- Traditional Christmas Eve service with lessons & carols and candle lighting.  |   |
| Dec. 25 | Sun.  |            | <b>NO WORSHIP</b> – no in-person and not online   |   |
| Dec. 31 |       |            | <b>Deadline for 2022 donations</b> - see details below  |   |
| Jan. 1  | Sun.  | 11:00 a.m. | <b>WORSHIP</b><br>– in-person and online<br>- Epiphany Sunday<br>- No Sunday School   |    |

Announcements from other United Churches, Fundy St. Lawrence Dawning Waters Region and the community are located on the bulletin boards located at the Alma St. entrance and outside the Church Office.

**SOBEYS & SUPERSTORE GIFT CARDS** are once again available and will be sold each Sunday in the Sanctuary before and after Worship and at the Church Office on Wednesdays and Fridays between 9:00: a.m.-1:00 p.m.



*We make 4% on every card sold. ~ Your support is needed & appreciated.*



Are you thinking of **donating** money to the **KARING KITCHEN**? Why not purchase a \$25, \$50 or \$100 Grocery Card either from the Church Office or after Worship during coffee hour. Your purchase will provide a 4% profit to our Grocery Card sales will provide the Karing Kitchen with much needed options for either Sobeys or Superstore groceries and will provide you with a year-end tax receipt for your donation. A win-win-win all around!!!



Each Wednesday evening during Advent, you are invited to a gathering on Zoom to share in the coming Sunday's readings as we prepare for the season of Christmas. Bring your questions and curiosity as we make this holy journey towards the light of Christmas while holding onto the message of Advent to wait and wonder.

Led by our Minister, each session will begin at 7:00 p.m. and will last approximately an hour. Register by emailing Rev. Billard at [sjucrev@gmail.com](mailto:sjucrev@gmail.com). Each week a Zoom link will be sent out to you as well as the lectionary readings for that Sunday.

Schedule: November 30, December 7, December 14 and December 21.

If you've never taken part in a Bible Study before, this is a great opportunity. If you have any questions, don't hesitate to ask. You don't have to take part in each session, just as you are able.

**2023 CHURCH OFFERING ENVELOPES & PAR PACKETS WITH SPECIAL OFFERING ENVELOPES** are now available for pick up. Please do not use your 2023 envelopes until the New Year. As a cost-saving measure, offering envelopes not used in 2022 were not renewed.

You may donate to the church in a variety of ways:

- PAR (pre-authorized remittance) – form available on our website – pamphlet located at church entrances and outside church office; PAR cards are available to put in the offering box on Sundays
- e-transfer (use [sjuc@nb.aibn.com](mailto:sjuc@nb.aibn.com) - no password needed) - link in our website
- box offering envelopes – contact the church office
- Canada Helps – online - link on our website
- cash or cheque - identified with giver's name/address (for income tax purposes).

Blank offering envelopes are located at both church entrances for donation purposes. Write your name/address to identify your donation in order for an official receipt to be prepared for income tax purposes.

If you have any questions, please contact the church office.



**GIFTS WITH VISION CATALOGUE** - New gifts, new hope. Giving a gift to a friend or loved one through Gifts with Vision can make a world of difference. The new Gifts with Vision giving catalogue is now online! Take a look! <https://www.giftswithvision.ca>  
Catalogues are also available at our two main entrances.

## DONATION – Cut-off Dates

As we approach the end of the year, we would like to remind you of the cut-off dates for making 2022 tax receiptable donations to the Church:

- cash / cheque donations – NOON December 30<sup>th</sup>
- e-transfers – to [sjuc@nb.aibn.com](mailto:sjuc@nb.aibn.com) - MIDNIGHT December 31<sup>st</sup>
- Canada Helps donations – December 31<sup>st</sup>

Given this has been such an odd year, if you are uncertain as to how much you have donated already to the Church, please email or telephone the Church office. Karen will provide your donation information to date. Keep in mind, records may be a week or so behind, and UCW donations are only posted on December 31<sup>st</sup>.

Official tax receipts will follow in mid-late February.

Once again, thank you for your generous givings this past year!

**CHURCH SNOW STORM POLICY** – In the event of a snow storm on a Sunday morning, the decision to cancel will be made by **9:00 a.m.** by the Minister, the Chair of Worship & Music, and the Council Chair.

Check the following places to see if the church is closed:

1. Church office telephone – listen to the message
2. Church Facebook group at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/16465565858>
3. Local radio stations
4. CBC storm centre at <http://www.cbc.ca/stormcentre/nb/cancellations-moncton.html> or search “Moncton Cancellations”



We will be supporting Crossroads for Women here in Moncton. Each Sunday you are invited to bring a personal care item to place in a white basket as you come into the church. We will be dropping off these items in support of the work of Crossroads, which is also supported by the St. John's UCW. Items needed: MOST needed is toilet paper, and after that things like toothpaste, shampoo, deodorant, and lotions (for dry months). Thank you in advance for your support of this important program.

## STEWARDSHIP SECOND

The path to peace has many routes. Giving generously is one of them.

**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 858-8289 or [sjucrev@gmail.com](mailto:sjucrev@gmail.com)

### CHURCH MINISTRY PERSONNEL AND STAFF



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