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Office Hours: Wednesday, 10am–12pm

## PASTORAL LETTER

January 27, 2023

We have a strategy at our house: try to make a meal that lasts two days. First, it saves meal preparation time so we can do other things like laundry (and even more laundry!) and second it saves money.

Last weekend, Lori-Ann's aunt and uncle came by train from Halifax to Moncton bearing a treat: freshly-caught lobster! Her uncle's cousin is a lobster fisherman (his son is a fisherman too) so whenever we visit them we get treated to a big feed of lobster. That they carried it up on the train was especially wonderful. One of the things that we talked about are the old stories I used to hear of how people who didn't have much used to eat lobster all the time and kids would bring it to school for their lunches to the point of being sick of eating it.



How things have changed!

Lori-Ann and I went to get a few groceries yesterday (it's what constitutes date night these days) and we commented that it feels like we spend more money and come home with less food. There are certain things we just don't buy any more, while we keep an eye out on deals to put in the freezer. "That's a good price for pork chops!" She and I don't always agree on everything but we do agree on only buying chicken if it's below a certain price. Unfortunately, we can't do much about milk and how much of it we go through at home. (I don't think it's an option to have a cow in our backyard though I would be tempted to get chickens if it weren't for the additional rats that would come along.)

While we were leaving the store, I noticed a man carrying a large backpack, and inside the backpack was a cat. "She goes everywhere with us!" his wife said, in response to me asking if I could take a picture. That was one happy cat! (The container was well-ventilated too.)



Then we had to go to Walmart because we know we can get certain things cheaper there. As I was wandering up and down the aisles, I couldn't help but notice how different the food was compared to Sobeys. It's obvious that many cultures shop at Walmart because of the amount of Indian food products, Asian food, and Halal options. Even the chips are different flavours! To be honest, I'm a fan of any food in kebob form.



I found Lori-Ann again and we made our way home. We were talking about the cost of food still as she went over the receipt. She was telling me about seeing a news article about making a small, basic (nothing fancy) Shepherd's Pie (one of our favourites). To make one enough for four single servings now costs on average \$20 in Canada (ground beef and a few vegetables).

All of that to say that we are all feeling in the pinch as I hear more and more stories from people about the cost of living.



As we all know, it even costs money to die. Last week, I had the funeral for Lola McKinley and since I was early I took a walk around the funeral home. I noticed a room at the end of a hall and in it were the caskets that could be purchased, all organized according to price which ranged into the high thousands. As I was looking at them (and, to be honest, wondering if they were comfortable) I noticed the different decorations, the metal, the wood, and the designs. Then I noticed

another section where the 'other' caskets were. The ones that weren't ornate. The ones covered in cloth or not covered at all. As I looked at the one hanging on the wall I thought to myself, "That'll do the trick." I mean it's not hermetically sealed and I wouldn't need a concrete vault. But it looked about my size and I suspect it was just as comfortable! Oh well, Lori-Ann already told me that she's going to cremate me and tie my urn to a transfer truck since I always wanted to travel.



As we feel the stresses and strains of this time, I want to thank you for those who show generosity to the Karing Kitchen and to other organizations in our city and world who help meet the needs of people. One woman in our congregation was telling me about all of the breakfasts she and a group of volunteers make for kids at a local school. While it makes me sad that such a thing has to be done, it gives me hope that good people step up to meet the needs of our community in the different ways that they can. This is why I love that all of you in church then go about your ministry in the community and bring God's light and love with you.



I hope your week went as well as it could and that you are able to socialize a bit or do the things that we need to do to stay mentally and physically healthy during these dreary, slush-filled winter months because there is a cost to our mental and spiritual health too if we don't pay attention. The storms this past week can make us shack wacky. As I was driving Allie home last week, I found Eli lying in a snow bank by the side of the road near our house as the sidewalks weren't plowed and he walked all the way from school over his knees in snow! (That photo is how I found him!)

Before I left the church on Sunday, our Council Chair Roland Gallant approached me. I could see the wheels spinning in his head as he excitedly talked about planning a church supper in the spring, maybe even a roast beef supper like the men's group used to host. I told him that was a wonderful idea. He said he'd start asking around for help.

And maybe we can make enough food to make the meal last two days!

Have a great weekend, everyone.

*The Rev. Aaron Billard*  
Minister



*The Church extends its deepest sympathies and condolences to the family and friends of **Eugene “Jamie” W. Colpitts** who died on January 20, 2023.*

**MEMORIALS**

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

**Eugene “Jamie” Colpitts**

*by Art & Sonja Buck and St. John’s Senior Choir*

**Lola McKinley (mother of Avis Ells)**

*by Ron & Phyllis Perry*

**NOTICES, UPCOMING MEETINGS & EVENTS**

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

Jan. 29	Sun.	11:00 a.m.	<b>WORSHIP and Sunday School</b> – in-person and online - Music Director: Isaac Stepaniak - grocery Sunday (see note)
Jan. 31	Tues.	7:00 p.m.	<b>Church Council</b> (monthly-Owen Fraser Hall)
Feb. 1	Wed.	9am-1pm	<b>Church office open</b> (weekly)
Feb. 1	Wed.	2:00 p.m.	<b>UCW Executive</b> (Owen Fraser Hall)
Feb. 2	Thur.	7:00 p.m.	Pathfinders, Girl Guides of Canada (weekly-Social Hall)
Feb. 2	Thur.	7:00 p.m.	<b>Choir</b> (weekly-Choir Loft/Fellowship Room)
Feb. 3	Fri.	9am-1pm	<b>Church office open</b> (weekly)
Feb. 5	Sun.	11:00 a.m.	<b>WORSHIP and Sunday School</b> – in-person and online - Music Director: Isaac Stepaniak
Feb. 8	Wed.	11:00 a.m.	<b>Pastoral Care &amp; Membership Committee</b> (Owen Fraser Hall)
Feb. 12	Sun.	11:00 a.m.	<b>WORSHIP and Sunday School</b> – in-person and online - Music Director: Isaac Stepaniak
Feb. 12	Sun.	2:30 p.m.	<b>Worship at People’s Park Tower Chapel</b> , 960 St. George Blvd., Moncton, with the Rev. Aaron Billard. If you are a resident there, we ask you to help us spread the word to members of the congregation who live at Peoples Park Tower and Camden Park Terrace.
Feb. 16	Thurs.		<b>Deadline for submissions to the 2022 Annual Report</b> – email the Church Office

*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.*

**2022 TAX RECEIPTS** are ready for pick up at the front of the Sanctuary at Sunday morning Worship and on weekday mornings Monday-Friday at the church office. If you do not receive your receipt, please send us an email or give the office a call. Thank you to all who supported the work of St. John's United Church.

**GROCERIES FOR KARING KITCHEN** (Jan. 29; last Sunday of each month)

We are starting up grocery Sunday again! The Outreach Committee would like to bring your attention to the Karing Kitchen's need for these groceries: large ziploc bags, aluminum foil, pizza sauce and can vegetables.



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

**SCRIPTURE READERS NEEDED** - 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!

**DEDICATE THE BULLETIN/PASTORAL LETTER** in memory of a loved one(s). The cost is \$50.00. Upcoming dates available: Feb. 19, Mar. 19, Sept. 3, Sept. 10 and Dec. 10, 2023. If you dedicated the pastoral letter last year, you will be contacted before your date to see if you want to dedicate again.

**STEWARDSHIP SECOND**

It's not about how much you have – how much money, how much stuff – it is about how you use what you have to heal, feed, shelter, comfort, bless, and love.

**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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