



St. John's United Church, 75 Alma Street, Moncton, NB E1C 4Y3
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Office Hours: Wednesday, 10am–12pm

PASTORAL LETTER

June 17, 2022

I always like encountering people working outside of the church. One day, I saw a pest control van parked alongside the building with the employee leaning against it, having a smoke. He looked frustrated so I said to him, “They’re out smarting you, aren’t they?” He shook his head and said, “For the life of me, I can’t figure it out sometimes.”



It was hot and sunny when I arrived at the church this morning. I went to the back entrance of the building because of the brick work being done around the office entrance; the sidewalk is closed off too. A man was standing there when I turned the corner wearing a hard hat and vest. He was just staring at the bricks on the building. We spoke for a few minutes and he showed me some of the problem areas. He said, “This is what I would do if money wasn’t an issue but...” as he showed me the issue with the stairs.

I said that they really don’t build places like this anymore which is part of the reason why we are invested in doing what we can while we can. He lit up and said, “They really are interesting! Look at this, do you see those row of bricks? We are guessing that they are four bricks deep, two on the outside and two on the inside, locked with that brick turned in a different direction.” I stared for a moment and then I saw it: rows of bricks with a random brick locking in the four together. I’ve included a photo to show you what he showed me.



As I looked at the side of the building, and the people working on it, it caught my attention that this old church is receiving the tender loving care that it has shown to us. Whenever I hear about people downsizing, there is always the mention of memories in a place. It’s what makes churches sacred too: all of you. The history of the people at worship in this place goes back over 100 years in the current building, and long before that in the previous one lost to fire. But it was something to see on a beautiful, sunny day people restoring these hallowed walls.

Back to the interlocking bricks. There’s a metaphor there that isn’t lost on me. That we are a congregation of God’s people held together by Jesus Christ. We have had to do some repairs as a church, due to a few fractures. We have had to find ways to be cemented together when times have been hard. And we bear the weight of one another as we minister to each other as a church. Yet, we’re still standing.

The time has come for us to start thinking about ways of making this building greener and more sustainable with the rising costs of fuel. Every cost-cutting measure has been taken with regard to how we heat and light the church with thermostat controls, efficient bulbs, and turning off the heat to certain parts of the building when not in use. I don’t know what that looks like but with the change in demographics that has taken place since the 1950s (with smaller families and the church playing a less central role in society) we will have to find ways to use our church to bring in income with rentals.

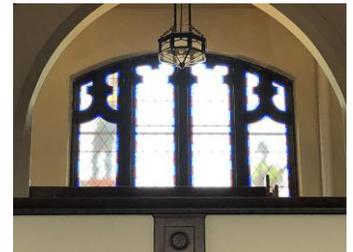


Another change to the building is the installation of an iron gate on one of the Victoria Street entrance. (The work isn't complete but it looks great!) As you may recall, I've spent more than a few moments talking about the amount of crime happening in that entrance with regard to drug use and vandalism. Every so, often I even find people up there slicing the plastic off of wires to get the copper. It has also been a place where many will congregate and sometimes people will start building a shelter and set fires, which has led to the fire department being called several times. All that to

say that we have exhausted all of our efforts to build relationships, ask politely, and do what we can to set boundaries around the building to keep it safe and to make it safe for people to be here.

I think it's a hopeful sign to the city of our commitment to be a downtown church with all of the issues facing the downtown core now which we are seeing highlighted in the Times and Transcript and on the televised news about concerned citizens. We have to continue to be a light to the city as we address food insecurity and make our downtown a bit safer and by being a good neighbour.

When I was in the sanctuary for a few moments I could hear the workers outside. I looked up, and I saw them through the stained-glass windows. A bit surreal seeing people that high up off of the ground through coloured glass. It gave me an image of downtown angels fluttering around with hard hats and emergency vests. I thought, "Well, those are the kinds of angels this church seems to need." Angels to care for us and to show us that we aren't alone and that sharing Good News is hard work.



Paul doesn't seem to have a lot to say about interlocking bricks in his letters but he does talk a lot about Jesus holding us together. In the book of Colossians he writes,

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers—all things have been created through him and for him. He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together. He is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that he might come to have first place in everything. For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell...

I pray this letter finds you well, and I thank God for each and every one of you. Happy Father's Day to those who observe it. For those for whom this is a hard or bittersweet time, may God be gentle with your hearts.

The Rev. Aaron Billard
Minister



The bulletin and pastoral letter are dedicated in Loving Memory of
Winston & Phyllis Dryden
by Marcy Dryden-West

MEMORIAL

A donation has been made to the Mission & Service Fund in memory of:
Margaret "Marg" MacEachern Fergus (sister of the Rev. Dr. Douglas MacEachern)
by Roberta Bunker and family

NOTICES, UPCOMING MEETINGS & EVENTS

Check our website at www.stjohnsmoncton.ca for on-line Worship, calendar, and more.

June 19	Sun.	11:00 a.m.	WORSHIP – in-person (mask required) & online
June 22	Wed.	9am-1pm	Church office open (weekly)
June 23	Thur.	6:30 p.m.	Choir
June 24	Fri.	9am-1pm	Church office open (weekly)
June 24	Fri.	10:30 a.m.	Worship at Royal Court Chapel , 6 th Floor, Riverview, 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 Royal Court.
June 26	Sun.	11:00 a.m.	WORSHIP – in-person (mask required) & online - Communion 
July 1	Fri.		Church office closed – Canada Day
July 2-31			St. John's UC closed for vacations; the church telephone and mail will be checked regularly
Aug. 1	Mon.		Church office closed – NB Day
Aug. 2	Tues.		St. John's UC re-opens with Office Admin. working from home
Aug. 3	Wed.	9am-1pm	Church office open (weekly)
Aug. 5	Fri.	9am-1pm	Church office open (weekly)
Aug. 7	Sun.	10:00 a.m.	WORSHIP – in-person (mask required) (<i>note time change</i>)

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 between 10:00: a.m.-12:00 p.m.



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

GRADUATES OF ST. JOHN'S

If you are or anyone in your family or anyone you know from the congregation is graduating from high school, vocational, school, college, university, or any other programs that should be recognized, please let Valerie or Aaron know so that we can acknowledge them in worship. Thank you!

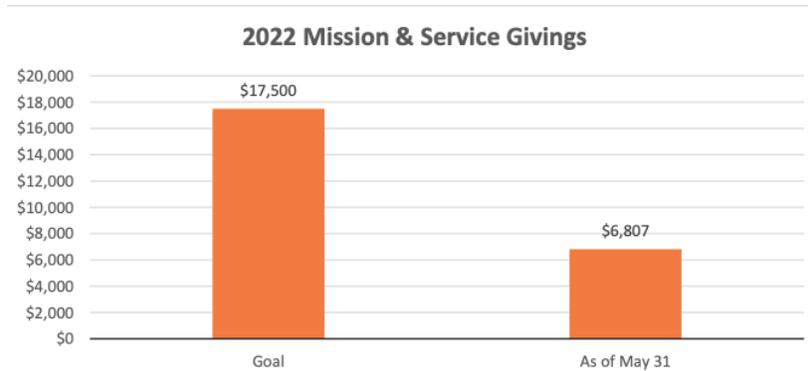
MAY FINANCIALS have now been posted to the church website. The financial report for the period ending May 2022 is as follows:

	2022	2021
Income	\$ 88,558.63	\$ 96,438.60
Expenses	\$159,969.61	\$111,961.75
Deficit	\$ 71,410.98	\$ 15,523.15

A difference of **\$ 55,887.83** over last year.

This difference is due primarily to four things:

- an increase in contract salaries over last year
- the near doubling of furnace fuel costs over last year
- the repair of the Primary Swell Division on the organ, and
- the YTD loss on investments



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 hope you will give it your support.

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.

DIME BLITZ - Don't spend a dime this summer - save them for the UCW summer fundraiser. Plastic pill bottles have been placed at the Church entrance for your convenience. Deposit in the offering box on a Sunday morning or drop off in the mail slot. Thank you for your continued support of UCW projects.

STEWARDSHIP SECOND

Inspire, invite, and thank. Good stewardship is all about relationships. You work with God to create, redeem, and sustain the world.

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



In-person Worship: Masks are required.

Join us every week for **online Worship** using one of the links below:

via our Church website - <http://www.stjohnsmoncton.ca>

via our Church Facebook page – <https://www.facebook.com/groups/16465565858>

via YouTube - <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCNHB60ajQtwsf7-vCfXGHBw>

CHURCH MINISTRY PERSONNEL AND STAFF



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Bruce Lawson,
Property Manager