



St. John's United Church, 75 Alma Street, Moncton, NB E1C 4Y3  
T: 858-8289 E: [sjuc@nb.aibn.com](mailto:sjuc@nb.aibn.com) W: [www.StJohnsMoncton.ca](http://www.StJohnsMoncton.ca)  
F: St. John's United Church, United Church of Canada

## A PASTORAL LETTER TO THE CONGREGATION

May 13, 2021

As I was driving to the church office this morning past the Moncton Coliseum I saw a parking lot filled with cars and people walking around dressed in white, with some wearing colourful clothing. It was the Moncton Muslim Association celebrating Eid, which is a religious holiday celebrated by Muslims worldwide that marks the end of the month-long dawn-to-sunset fasting of Ramadan.

Across the street, at the entrance to Millennium Blvd, the RCMP had two police cruisers parked, blocking the road. They were holding what appeared to be machine guns. I wondered what was going on, as I drove by; however, the contrasting images stayed with me: one of celebration, one of emergency. (Shortly after the coliseum parking lot was cleared out due to the whole area being locked down, including homes, businesses, and schools.)



**No suspect arrested after gunshots in Moncton prompt area lockdown**

As this situation unfolds, we have learned that there is an active shooter present in the Centennial Park area of our city. As I continued to drive downtown ambulances and emergency vehicles sped past me as I pulled over several times. When I arrived at the church, I learned that a helicopter was now circling the area.

As my son's school is in lockdown, I sit here and think anxious thoughts for the many people who are affected by another person's actions. As if the world wasn't tilted enough with COVID we are still reminded that there are things beyond our control, as we remain faithful to God and to each other. It also gives us an opportunity to pray for and thank God for our First Responders, such as EMTs, the Fire Department, and the RCMP.

It was surreal watching the media at the intersection filming not only the police presence but the Eid celebrations as well. One on the left, one on the right.

I used to love visiting different people who would tell me stories of what Moncton was like years ago. The city has changed so much in my time here that even I have a hard time keeping up with what is new, what was torn down, and what is on the horizon as the downtown revitalization continues with the building of apartments and the ever-constant change of coffee shops and restaurants. Even the traffic feels heavier lately no matter what time of day it is.

One of the things I have appreciated about our congregation is our long history with the downtown core. Those who have much and those who have little have called this church home. When I spoke with the Mayor a few months ago she said she'd heard about our major church repair work and I told her we also saw it as an investment in the downtown.

With big progress in our city also come big issues, such as increased traffic of street people who seek resources to live. Yesterday a number of people were gathered in the church entrance sheltered from the rain as they ate their lunch. I told them they were welcome to eat there, but we would really appreciate if they wouldn't leave any garbage as we were trying to be good neighbours to the homes and businesses around us. They said "no problem" and they did indeed clean up.

As we move further through this pandemic and hopefully closer to the end game I think that's a question we will need to ask ourselves: how are we going to be a good neighbour to the new residents of the downtown, to the street people, and to those who think the church is no longer needed, as our society becomes more and more secular and less and less spiritual? What will our mission be in a post-pandemic world? I invite you to pray about that.

*The Rev. Aaron Billard*  
Minister

### **MEMORIALS**

*A donation has been made to St. John's United Church in memory of:*

**William "Bill" O'Brien** (husband of Gail O'Brien,  
and father of Sarah and Jeremy)  
by Shelly Steeves and Bonnie Steeves

### **Announcements:**

**DEDICATE THE PASTORAL LETTER** in memory of a loved one(s). The cost is \$50.00. Upcoming dates available: Sept. 5 and Nov. 14.

The **Pastoral Care & Membership Committee** is seeking names of those who will be **GRADUATING** from universities, colleges and local high schools this academic year. The Committee wishes to recognize these graduates. Please submit names to Roberta Bunker (382-6270), Lois Weatherby (856-8899) or the church office. Thank you.

**THE "BAKELESS BAKE SALE"** has become an annual event of the St. John's UCW. This is a very popular and highly successful project. Our little rhyme explains how it works, and 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 or drop off in the mail slot.

**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.

**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)



**In-person Worship – May 16, 2021**

Registration is now open closes on Saturday, May 15<sup>th</sup> at 5:00 p.m.

Here is the link to register to attend:

<https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/may-16th-seventh-sunday-of-easter-tickets-153983606111>

(The link changes every week.)

**In-person Worship – May 23, 2021**

Registration opens Sunday, May 16<sup>th</sup> at 12:00 p.m. and closes on Saturday, May 22<sup>nd</sup> at 5:00 p.m.

Here is the link to register to attend:

<https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/may-23rd-pentecost-sunday-tickets-153310783681>

(The link changes every week.)

Have you watched our **online Worship**? If not, join us every week online 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/UCNHB60aiQtwsf7-vCfXGHBw>

**CHURCH MINISTRY PERSONNEL AND STAFF**



Rev. Aaron Billard, *Minister*  
email: [sjucrev@gmail.com](mailto:sjucrev@gmail.com)



Karen Geldart, *Office Administrator*  
email: [sjuc@nb.aibn.com](mailto:sjuc@nb.aibn.com)



Rev. Dr. Douglas MacEachern  
*Minister Emeritus*  
email: [dougjune@nb.sympatico.ca](mailto:dougjune@nb.sympatico.ca)



Mike Day, *Music Director*



Pat Arsenault, *Custodian*



Bruce Lawson,  
*Property Manager*