



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)  
FB: St. John's United Church, United Church of Canada  
Building Hours: Weekdays, 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.  
Office Hours: Tuesday, Wednesday & Friday, 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

## PASTORAL LETTER

May 26, 2023

Just after our dog Halo had her spay surgery, the veterinarian asked to speak with my wife Lori-Ann. They were observing Halo after the surgery and they noticed she was running into walls. They tested her eyes and it appeared that she no longer had any vision. It turns out that this is a rare side effect of one of the medications they use, Trazodone. We ended up doing genetic testing to see what else might affect her but it came back negative. Halo learned to adjust to her new reality faster than we did as the vet reminded us that dogs use their sense of smell and hearing as much as they use their eyes. Her eyes worked fine but this blindness was neurological.

So we lived with that and lived into that, as well as adoring this little puppy that we fell in love with. As she grew, we noticed hints that she had perhaps a peripheral vision consisting of light and dark. The vet said that it wasn't likely but we sent videos anyway. One day we were in a field and Halo was running and fell. She injured her knee. The wisdom at the time was to keep her from running and give her glucosamine as well as a few other things, one of which is made at Ford's Apothecary: green lipped muscles from New Zealand that are turned into powder.

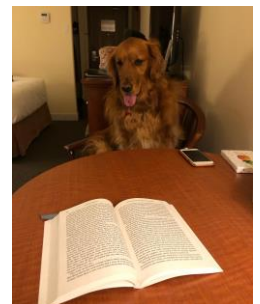


One day when we were taking Halo for a walk at the park, she jumped out of the car before we could help her down and tore a tendon in her back knee. All of this is complicated but after a consult with our veterinarian, and a consult with the person whom he recommended, Dr. Prowse said that due to bilateral patellar luxation and torn left cranial cruciate ligament, the possibility of a catastrophic complication, that could result in the loss of her leg, he did not recommend the surgery.

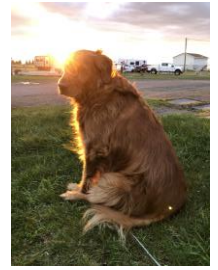
He is referring us for another consult to Halifax and UPEI, where there is a possibility for femur rotation with the TPLO surgery. She may just have to live this way which is heart breaking too.

It's strange how pets not only become part of your family, they become part of our lives. At coffee hour on Sunday, a number of people came up to me very concerned for her and I was touched by that. One woman said, "I was hoping you would say something in church!" All creatures great and small being lived out here at St. John's!

Because we had booked a hotel in Amherst, it was too late to cancel it (we had to be near the clinic in order to be there in case they needed us). We haven't been in a hotel in eons. So, we made the most of a bad situation and my wife took the kids to the pool while Halo and I stayed in the room and read a book. (She's a great reading companion: she's quiet and just asks for belly rubs when she flips over onto her back.) I had started reading *Down and Out in Paris and London* by George Orwell (who wrote 1984) which was in the cheap section at Chapters.



When we arrived home on Saturday morning, I snuck away to finish my Sunday sermon while Lori-Ann spun around the house like a tornado packing up things to take to Grand Barachois where we are slowly getting ready for our camping time. (It's best to hide when she's in hurricane mode.) A few hours later she had the car packed and ready and I drove them out, since I needed the car for Sunday. After we unloaded everything, I drove back to Moncton where I finished the sermon and headed over to a friend's backyard fire for a little while.



Sunday morning I found everyone to be in good spirits as we welcomed Branden back. He's been so busy with his training and it was nice to catch up with him on life in Alberta. When I was at the back of the sanctuary after church, a little girl named Penny came up to me and asked me a serious question: "Why didn't you have children's time today?" I smiled and said to her that because I wasn't wearing a mask, and because I'd had a cold last week, I wasn't sure about being so close and talking to all the kids. She thought about it for a second and said, "Ok." Her parents were in stitches! I told her how nice it was to see her family taking the offering up and how it may not seem like a big thing but it really is. Then she looked at me and said, "Thank you for letting us welcome people. It was a lot of fun!" I'm telling you, that conversation was church for me. Kathy Seymour posted on Facebook this morning, "Sometimes you need to talk to a six year old in order to understand life again" and I believe that too.

At coffee hour I sat with Craig and Audrey Gaddess who told me all about their busy weekend attending events due to the visit of Princess Anne to Moncton in celebration of the 8<sup>th</sup> Canadian Hussars. Craig is military and showed me lots of photos where you could really see how exciting it was to be in the presence of a member of the Royal Family. Plus, it was a night out for them!



On Wednesday afternoon I drove to a graveyard in Scotch Settlement with a funeral home director, Mike Read, and Fr. Phil Mulligan from Riverview. If you ever need a good laugh, I highly recommend a road trip with a minister, a priest and an undertaker. When we arrived in that beautiful place, the sun was shining and there was a small crowd of people as we gathered to say good bye to Evelyn Kenney. She had died in mid-December and I had been there that night at the hospital reading Psalms to her.

One day, not too, too long ago, I was visiting a member of our church in hospital and as I was leaving I heard someone yelling, "Aaron, is that you?" I looked behind the curtain and it was Evelyn's husband, Cecil. He was Roman Catholic but he always brought Evelyn to St. John's and sat with her. He also set up the computer so she could watch church services from home. I replied, "Hey, Cecil! I didn't recognize you!" He had lost so much weight due to his illness. We had a grand chat and he still had that same lively spirit. I was contacted shortly after to say that he had died so I put them in touch with a priest.

The family decided to bury them together in Scotch Settlement where they had made a home for years. As Phil and I led in the prayers (and swatted the flies), everyone was quick to laugh through the tears. Mike Reid had to dig the grave the night before because he couldn't find a grave digger so I helped him fill it in. As we were doing that, with dirt going over both urns and then a sod of grass on top, I couldn't help but remember seeing Evelyn and Cec sitting near the front in church and how, when I had met them (Evelyn left another church for St. John's because it felt like church to her here) I couldn't have imagined being the one to help fill in their grave – one grave for two people who loved each other more than anything. Also, a Catholic and a Protestant who didn't let religion get in the way back in a time when things like that divided people.




After the service was over, I started talking to someone who told me that he was a “spiritual deliverer” and when I asked what that meant he replied, “I deliver people from demons and evil spirits.” That caught my attention and I said, “Really!” So I hung around him for a little while and got the goods on that. Long story short: be careful of what music you listen to and how you self-medicate because there’s a demon knocking at your spiritual door trying to get in. Phil announced that there would be a reception and gave the civic address. Not everyone could hear him so someone asked, “Where??” and another person responded, “THE YELLOW HOUSE.” Everyone laughed and realized where to go! I love country people.

Thursday afternoon, I went to the City Club for Jean Dallaire’s “Celebration of Life”. They gave speeches and had drinks and I was able to say hi to Jean’s children and some of her grandchildren. We will bury her on Friday afternoon at Lakeside Cemetery on the Shediac Road, a cemetery that her husband used to hit golf balls into, apparently!

You know, sometimes you meet someone who has such a gentle and kind presence that they make an impression. When we met Dr. Prowse the veterinarian last Saturday, I was struck by his pastoral presence for pets and their people. He sat on the floor with our dog and he spoke about living with things sometimes, such as a disability. While playing with Halo’s ears he ministered to us in a gentle way. I’m one of those people who need things broken down and explained in simplest terms so he said with regard to the surgery (I think he said he’s been a vet for 46 years?) that because he couldn’t predict the outcome, he wouldn’t do the surgery. I appreciated his honesty. It got me to thinking sometimes that church is just the opposite: we go where angels fear to tread. But, here was Dr. Prowse sitting on the floor with his patient and wondering how we could make life better for her knowing we couldn’t fix it right now. I’ll be pondering that for a lifetime, of how abiding is just as important as doing.

It’s going to be a beautiful weekend so I hope you can get outdoors and breathe in some fresh air or perhaps get to garden or visit some flowers on your step or patio. We aren’t having the church service at the building on Alma Street this Sunday. Instead, we will be worshipping at the Mapleton Pavilion at Mapleton Park. Bring a chair, bring a lunch, and we’ll take care of the rest.

Your friend,  
*Aaron Billard*







*The bulletin and pastoral letter are dedicated in Loving Memory of*  
***George Ramsay***  
*by Adeline Ramsay & Family*

***MEMORIAL***

*A donation has been made to St. John’s United Church in memory of:*  
***the Rev. Ralph Johnston, who died on March 20, 2023***  
*Rev. Johnston was minister at St. John’s 1980-1983*  
*by Claire & David MacNevin*

## NOTICES, UPCOMING MEETINGS & EVENTS

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

May 28	Sun.	11:00 a.m.	<b>WORSHIP and Church Picnic</b> at <u>Mapleton Rotary Pavilion</u> , 600 Mapleton Rd., Moncton – in-person only; not online - Sunday School presentations - Honour graduates - Scholarship presentations - Music Director: Branden Olsen	
May 29	Mon.	9:30 a.m.	<b>Help pack up Indoor Yard Sale</b> (Social Hall)	
May 29	Mon.	2:00 p.m.	<b>UCW</b> (Fellowship Room)	
May 30	Tues.	7:00 p.m.	<b>Church Council</b> (monthly-Owen Fraser Hall)	
June 1	Thurs.	7:00 p.m.	<b>Choir</b> (weekly-Choir Loft/Fellowship Room)	
June 4	Sun.	11:00 a.m.	<b>WORSHIP and Sunday School</b> – in-person and online - Trinity Sunday and Union Sunday - Communion - Music Director: Branden Olsen	 
June 6	Tues.	2:00 p.m.	<b>Coffee &amp; Conversation</b> (see note)	
June 9	Fri.	10:30 a.m.	<b>Worship at Royal Court Chapel</b> , 6th Floor, Coverdale Rd., 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 there.	
June 11	Sun.	11:00 a.m.	<b>WORSHIP and Sunday School</b> – in-person and online - Sunday School closing - Music Director: Doris Sabean	

*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.*

### COFFEE & CONVERSATION

Looking to get out of the house for an hour or so? To catch up with old friends? Interested in making new ones? Please join us on **Tuesday, June 6 at 2:00 p.m.** for a cup of tea/coffee, a muffin and a bit of conversation. Why not bring along a friend! Everyone welcome.



At that time of day, limited parking will be available in the church parking lot, as well as on the side of the church building. Street meters are also available.

Hope to see you!

**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 entrances for your convenience. Deposit in the offering box on a Sunday morning or drop off in the mail slot located on the Victoria St. entrance door. Thank you for your continued support of UCW projects.

**STEWARDSHIP SECOND** – And here God does it again!! Fire and wind and the gift of the Holy Spirit upon us! What radical generosity is this?

**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**



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: [douglasimaceachern@gmail.com](mailto:douglasimaceachern@gmail.com)



Branden Olsen, *Music Director*  
email: [bwcolsen@mun.ca](mailto:bwcolsen@mun.ca)



Pat Arsenault, *Custodian*