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A PASTORAL LETTER TO THE CONGREGATION

November 19, 2021

A more personal note this week as I offer you something as a way of staying connected.

We have a lot of November babies in my family, including my daughter Allie Jane who will turn (shockingly) 15 next week. It's funny the things you do and don't remember when you look back. And yes, it does go by quickly.

It was the Saturday night before our church's amalgamation vote. The Rev. Dr. Jody Clarke was our guest preacher for that Sunday and I was up working on the service late Saturday night while a very-pregnant Lori-Ann was taking a bath to help with discomfort. She said, "Aaron, I think we have to go to the hospital..." to which I replied, "I just have to finish this and we can go." She said, "NOW." So we woke our neighbours up and gave them the keys to our place so they could take care of our iguana (I know) and drove to the Moncton Hospital where I did my best to comfort her and watched with awe how the staff took care of her. (I also remember that Lori-Ann proposed to the anesthesiologist.) Then around 8am Allie was born. Our family doctor delivered her. The Grammys arrived at the hospital along with my grandmother. I went to church and I remember opening the service not with my traditional, "In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ..." but instead with the words, "WOMEN ARE AMAZING."



The United Church Women held a shower for Lori-Ann that she has never forgotten about. She felt so loved and welcomed. I also remember for some reason late one night I was trying to rock Allie to sleep in the yellow rocking chair Lori-Ann's grandmother gave us. I need to be honest that it was usually only Lori-Ann who could settle Allie back to sleep but I tried to do my part. I would sing quietly to her.

As Allie grew up I couldn't help but notice how much she looked like me. Being adopted, I've always felt the (in the back of my mind) tension of not looking like anyone. When I looked at her all of that changed. Even now, though I find she looks more like her mother, everyone once in a while I see the resemblance. Growing up, Allie loved fashion, music, art, and her main love: reading. I remember the first time she picked up piano and without much help had the tune to a song she loved. I also remember when she brought a ukulele home from school and overnight learned how to pick out tunes. Now she's better at the piano than I ever was, and she's a virtuoso on the uke much to the delight of anyone who has visited us on a musical evening.

Allie is an old and sensitive soul. She gets upset when people disrespect others, she is uncomfortable at school because of the swearing and the vaping (high school was a crash course on reality) and she re-reads Anne of Green Gables so often that I had to ask why? She told me that it's because she feels

comfortable in that world, and she loves the characters (whom she quotes regularly.) Her Instagram account is all puppies, kitties, and pictures of rooms with books. She loves “wholesome memes.”

She also loves her little brother to the point that she mothers him, which he either loves or resists depending on the day. Sometimes Eli cries because he’s deeply moved by something (he’s normally not that way at all) and Allie will comfort and cuddle him. They also make funny videos together and play video games like Minecraft and Animal Crossing.

Allie and I like to “do the loop”. It’s a circle in our neighbourhood that we walk together and talk. I can’t go far lately so we do our best but we always have the best conversations. Allie is a church kid. She’s grown up with so many of you, and you’ve been like grandparents to her. She sees when I’m worn down, and she also knows how important church is to me because it’s important to her too. She still gets dressed up to go, she deeply misses Vacation Bible School and Christmas Pageants, and she has been like a big sister to so many of the little church kids.

I’ve been so proud of her as she has navigated these times. School has been a major stressor but she’s had a few heroes who teach at Harrison Trimble who have stepped up and inspired her. Her piano teacher, Doris Sabean, has been a blessing beyond words, and it’s given me the insight that families need other adults to inspire their kids and to help them grow. So I thank God for her teachers and for friends of ours who have become so important to her. And I thank God for so many of you and the role you have played in Allie’s life.

This is a function that the church can play well, and I’ve seen so many examples of it over the years of older members going to speak to and become friends with younger members to the point that a bond is formed and a reason to come back is created. I miss that so much.

As the minister of this congregation, I want to assure you that many of you have been a blessing to me over the years and I have valued your care and support. But, what has meant even more to me is that you’ve been so good to my kids. Church is a big part of their lives, and it’s because of the people. I’ve never forced my kids to go to church (Lord knows they have been there a lot) and sometimes when I can tell that they just need to stay home, they do. When the pandemic hit, Allie became our tech support and the only reason we had online services at all was because of her knowledge. She would sit with me for hours as we worked on the editing and uploading. (I need you all to know that.)

So this pastoral letter this week is from a dad who is thankful to God for the blessing that is Allie.

God bless you all in the coming week. I look forward to seeing some of you on Sunday in person as we return to the building, and some of you online for our anniversary service during which we will share in the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper to which you are always invited.

The Rev. Aaron Billard
Minister



*The pastoral letter is dedicated in Loving Memory of
John Wadman, who passed away Nov. 21, 2017
by Evie, Susan, Joan & Gary and Family*

*The Church extends its deepest sympathies and condolences to the family and friends of **Laura DeWare** (wife of Kenneth DeWare) who died on November 14, 2021.*

MEMORIALS

*A donation has been made to St. John's United Church in memory of:
Leslie Parrott (husband of Eleanor Parrott)
 by Art & Sonja Buck*

NOTICES, UPCOMING MEETINGS & EVENTS

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

Nov. 21	Sun.	10:00 a.m.	Virtual Sunday School (Zoom)	
Nov. 21	Sun.	11:00 a.m.	WORSHIP – in-person and online - Reign of Christ Sunday - SJUC Anniversary Sunday - Communion (Note: Presentation of Bibles to Sunday School 9 year olds will take place on December 24, 4:00 p.m.) - Transgender Day of Remembrance	 
Nov. 23	Tues.	7:00 p.m.	Church Council (teleconference meeting)	
Nov. 28	Sun.	10:00 a.m.	Virtual Sunday School (Zoom)	
Nov. 28	Sun.	11:00 a.m.	WORSHIP – in-person and online - 1 st Sunday of Advent	
Nov. 28	Sun.	12:00 p.m.	SJUC 2019 & 2020 Annual Meetings (Sanctuary following Worship)	
Nov. 30	Tues.	7:00 p.m.	Worship & Music Committee (Zoom meeting)	
Dec. 1	Wed.	7:00 p.m.	Advent Bible Study (Zoom) - see details below	
Dec. 5	Sun.	10:00 a.m.	Virtual Sunday School (Zoom)	
Dec. 5	Sun.	11:00 a.m.	WORSHIP – in-person and online - 2 nd Sunday of Advent	
Dec. 13	Mon.		Deadline to order Christmas Memorial Flowers - see details below	

ANNIVERSARY SPECIAL OFFERING ENVELOPES are located at the Church main entrance. If you use SJUC box offering envelopes, an Anniversary envelope is in your box. If you use PAR, your Anniversary envelope is in your packet of envelopes. The Church thanks you for your support.

2022 CHURCH OFFERING ENVELOPES

We are in the process of preparing box offering envelopes for those who presently use them. Please advise the church office at sjuc@nb.aibn.com or 858-8289, for any of the below scenarios:

- you presently use box offering envelopes but would like to give in another way (i.e. PAR, e-transfer)
- you use your box offering envelopes very infrequently and would like to give in another way
- you would like to start using box offering envelopes

You may donate to the church by using PAR (pre-authorized remittance – form available on our website), e-transfer, box offering envelopes, Canada Helps or cash/cheque identified with giver's name/address (for income tax purposes).

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



ADVENT BIBLE STUDY

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. Each week a Zoom link will be sent out to you as well as the lectionary readings for that Sunday.

Schedule: December 1, December 8, December 15 and December 22.

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.

STEWARDSHIP SECOND

God is the beginning and the end of all that we have, are, and do. Knowing that, how do you respond?

ATTENTION YOUTH 15-19!!!

General Council 44 is coming up, and with that, comes the opportunity for youth between the ages of 15-19 to participate in **Youth Forum!** Along with that, **Home Group Leaders are needed!** Each region will get to have 4 participants (the other 1 from each region is your commissioner...please speak to me if you have questions about who that person is from your region) to the event that takes place throughout the year, starting in the winter of 2022. As you'll see, it is also an opportunity for employment! Share both of these links far and wide.

Please email or phone Catherine Stuart, Regional Minister for Children, Youth and Young Adults, for further information, cstuart@united-church.ca 1-800-268-3781 ext 6158

[Youth Forum Delegate](#)

[Home Group Leader](#)

IT'S YOUR CALL

It's Your Call is a podcast from the Office of Vocation of the United Church of Canada hosted by Andrew Richardson and Karen Medland. Ever wondered about a call to ministry? Or wanted to hear the stories of those who have answered a call? Then join us here and learn more about how you might answer a call from God to ministry in the United Church of Canada.

<https://open.spotify.com/show/6VwiRjP03j4SxJaEZgvPSg> (also available on Apple podcast)

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

Please bring a mask and proof of vaccination & Government ID.

<https://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/corporate/promo/covid-19/nb-vaccine/Proof-of-Vaccination.html>

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/UCNHB60ajQtwsf7-vCfXGHBw>

CHURCH MINISTRY PERSONNEL AND STAFF



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Bruce Lawson,
Property Manager



Christmas Memorial Flowers

MEMORIAL DEDICATION FORM

Poinsettia plants will be placed in the Sanctuary during Advent. If you wish help us with our plant order, you may make a memorial in memory of a loved one; below are ways to reach us:

- complete this form with payment and place in the offering box
- complete this form with payment and drop off in the mail slot on the Victoria St. church entrance
- complete this form with payment and mail to the church at 75 Alma St., Moncton, NB E1C 4Y3
- complete this form or provide the same details in an email to the office at sjuc@nb.aibn.com and pay by either an e-transfer, mail a cheque or drop off a cheque/cash in the church mail slot on the Victoria St. door

The cost is \$15.00 each. The deadline to have your memorial form/payment to the Church Office is Monday, **December 13.**

All memorials will be listed in the pastoral letter on December 17.

(We will bring in only a few plants needed for the Sanctuary, and the extra proceeds go to the Chancel Fund to help cover costs associated with the Sanctuary.)

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Quantity: _____

In Memory of: _____

From: _____
