



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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NEWSLETTER – OCTOBER 2020

Well certainly this is a year for the history books!! Who would have guessed that we would see and experience so much change and tragedy in our province, our town and our church?? Since our last Newsletter, we have all had to adjust our everyday lives to accommodate life with COVID 19. A lot of work was and is still involved, to ensure we are following the Provincial protocols. We all have to do our part to eventually get past this. The following is an article by Sheila Dempster, setting out the details and processes followed by First Presbyterian to meet the requirements mandated at that time and to now:

CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC – 2020

In January of 2020, the World Health Organization published a package of documents covering topics related to the management of an outbreak of a new disease that was spreading rapidly. It was believed to have started in China late in 2019. In late February/early March there were rumblings that the virus was in Canada, starting in B.C. and spreading east. On March 15, Session decided to close the church and “see what happens”. The following day, there were 5 cases in Nova Scotia and over the months they slowly climbed and then levelled off. The government acted quickly and almost everything was closed. Essential services were the only thing that stayed open. The total confirmed cases for our province was 1,086 with 65 deaths. There were 160,000 cases Canada-wide, with 9,318 deaths.

From closure until the end of June, our services were offered via FaceBook by Rev. Andrew MacDonald. He also recorded a mid-week message which was forwarded to everyone with access to email. He continues to do that.

At the end of June, with new cases on the decline, the “COVID Reopening Committee” was formed, working to ensure all protocols would be in place so we could re-open by July 1. The following protocols were established:

- Doors would be braced open to avoid touching
- We must maintain a distance of 6’ apart as much as possible
- Masks would be mandatory
- Only one door would be open
- Attendance would be taken at the door (in the event contact tracing was necessary)
- The sanctuary would be filled back to front; exiting front to back
- Every second pew would be roped off, with seating in a zigzag pattern

- Ushers would lead people to a seat
- Hand sanitizer and offering baskets would be located at the door to avoid passing the collection plates
- No singing(humming encouraged!) or responsive readings allowed
- No bulletins; the Order of Service would be displayed on our overhead screen
- No coffee hour after church
- Church to be sanitized after every service
- Access to most areas of the church would be restricted to the public with only the sanctuary open and one restroom
- Hugs have been replaced with smiles and waves!

Some rules have been relaxed a bit from July to October.

As of October 4, 2020, the Emergency Health Act has again been extended by the NS Government for an additional two-week period at which time it will be reassessed. The story of our life since March 29, 2020!

At the time of this writing, we have no idea of the financial implications for individuals, businesses, tourism or churches. Mental health issues have not yet been calculated either.

BUT ... because the people of Nova Scotia did such a great job obeying the COVID rules, the number of cases remains very low in our province and the church is able to remain open for worship. On October 4th, we celebrated our first "COVID-ruled" sanctuary Communion in seven months!

We were able to rehire our organist and caretaker and welcome Jane Taylor, our new office admin. Even during the forced lockdown, the congregation remained faithful with their support to the church and to each other. We learned to do things differently and still stay safe. We are STILL learning!!

TRAGEDY AT PORTAPIQUE

We were all shocked, saddened and devastated by the mass murder that took place in April at Portapique, a small, rural village close to here, that sadly impacted a New Glasgow family. Dan, Susan and Josh Jenkins, lost their beloved daughter and sister Alanna, and brother/son-in-law Sean McLeod in this senseless tragedy. We collectively mourned and prayed for them and all the families who lost loved ones then and continue to keep them in our prayers.

FAMILIES AT FIRST PRESBYTERIAN

Since our last Newsletter, we have celebrated some special birthday and anniversaries and mourned the loss of friends and loved ones.

PRAYER REQUESTS:

We continue to send our love and prayers to our dear friend Berma Marshall, a long- time member of First Presbyterian and valued choir member. Berma is very sick but her spirits are good. She expects her radiation treatments to be finished on October 21. She has given her consent to let the congregation know that she is in hospital and undergoing a schedule of palliative radiation therapy for late stage metastatic breast cancer and has

asked that we keep her in our prayers. She is presently on the 5th floor of the Dickson Building and allowed 2 visitors/day. It is best to call ahead as she may have her visits already booked for that day. She can be reached in her room by calling the switchboard, 1-902-473-2700, ask to be connected with Berma Marshall. Her address for cards or mail is:

**Dickson Building QEII Health Sciences Centre,
Room 5A-634
1276 South Park St.
Halifax, NS B3H 2Y9**

God keep her and her doctors close at heart. Please send Berma lots of love and support from her family at First!

BIRTHDAYS:

We send our best wishes to everyone who celebrated a milestone birthday or anniversary these past few months!!

Wilfred Marshall – 105!!

Vivian Ingham

Donald Johnstone

Ralph Holmes

Hendrika vanVeld

Lorraine MacLean

Jean MacDonald

Muriel Skinner

Marion Johnstone

Vivian MacDonald

Dorothy Holmes

June Smith

Frances Kennedy

Vi Hatt

Eunice Wood

Clarice Campbell

Lillian Ross (next week!)

ANNIVERSARIES:

Hank & Hendrika van Vel – June 7 – 68 years

John & Laura Macumber – June 24 – 58 years

Donald & Marion Johnstone – Aug. 16 – 61 years

Keith & Shirley Cruickshank – Aug. 25 – 57 years

Larry & Robyn MacLeod – Aug. – 50 years

John & Brenda Zinck – Aug. – 50 years

Ralph & Dorothy Holmes – Oct. 1 – 67 years

DEATHS:

We express our love and sympathy to the families of the following congregants who died this year:

- John Wilkes – February 12, 2020
- Elizabeth Bernice “Betty” Fraser, February 17, 2020
- Harold Alexander – March 27, 2020
- Blanche Steeves – October 10, 2020

**In the future, we hope you will use this section of our Newsletter to share any special events in your life; i.e. weddings, births, deaths, news and events of our young people etc. If you have anything you would like to include, please submit your information to the office for the next issue.

FROM THE MINISTER’S DESK

Greetings to the congregation, adherents, and friends of First Presbyterian Church in New Glasgow. 2020 has certainly been a year for the history books. We as a church family have faced so many hardships and uncertainty, but through the grace of God we have been able to come together and are working to get through these obstacles. I'm extremely impressed and humbled by the work that we have been able to accomplish together. So many people have stepped forward and have gone above and beyond to get through this nightmare which is COVID-19. From Sheila trying to keep the communication open during the shutdown and training her replacement Jane. Sheila, your presence in the office will be missed, but we hope you will enjoy your retirement.

I'm so thankful for the Reopening/COVID committee. I'm not sure if the congregation realizes the amount of work and effort that this committee has put forward so that we could reopen our doors and be able to worship every Sunday safely! I would like to express my gratitude and thanks for a job well done.

Our worship has had to undergo changes in order to ensure the safety for those who want to participate. Social distancing in the church, the use of Facebook and YouTube to broadcast the Sunday services, as well as my Midweek Messages.

I would like to also offer my thanks to our Organist and Choir Director Lloyd MacLean for finding different ways to include music in our worship. From offering recorded music during the shutdown to strengthen my online services, to playing every Sunday, and also arranging for guest soloists. There is just something special when music is included in worship and we thank Lloyd for his dedication and his gifts and Ministry of Music.

While we are starting to have some normalcy returned to our lives, we still have a long way to go. We have to keep working together to remain safe and healthy. I would remind you to keep your friends and family in your prayers and offer assistance to those who are vulnerable or unable to safely perform routine errands. Offer to do grocery runs, or other essential tasks, drives to appointments, but most importantly just reach out and make contact with them. Isolation and loneliness are horrible experiences, and we don't really know what others are going through. A phone call or a conversation could mean the world to someone.

I look forward to the time when we can get back to a more positive routine, free from worry, and when it's safe again, I look forward to seeing you all in person face to face.

But until that time, please remember to be good to one another, care for one another, comfort one another, and always remember to love one another.

Take Care and God Bless.

Rev. Andrew

PRESENT TEAMS/MEMBERS

There is a crucial need for new team members as all existing members' terms are set to expire February 5, 2021!! The Clerk of Session encourages team members to consider re-offering for perhaps an additional one year term or perhaps offer your gifts on a different team! We all have gifts to offer, the love of God to share and are called to put our faith into action! Becoming part of a team is a great way to get people involved, get to know each other, generate new ideas and **grow the ministry at First!** EXCITING!!! Speak to any team chair or elder if you're interested in joining or changing to a particular team.

WORSHIP & MUSIC TEAM: 2018 - 2021

*Gary Ross
Brent MacQuarrie
Sharon Mason
Diane Bagnell
Don Haggart
Lloyd MacLean (or organist)
Ella Russell
Sara Fullerton
Andrew Alcorn

PASTORAL CARE TEAM 2018-2021

*Phoebe Fraser
Russell MacIntosh
Dave Johnstone
Don Johnstone
Jane McDow
Chet Fleming
Jackie Ross
Patrick Young
Jonathon MacIvor
Jennifer Thibau

FINANCE, MAINTENANCE AND STEWARDSHIP TEAM 2018- 2021

*Keith MacDonald
Kent Williams

Larry MacLeod
Keith Cruickshank
Gary Ross
Brenda Tutty
Howie Anderson
Fran Savage
Don Rowat
Murray Biggar
Edna Fraser
Don Haggart
Chet Fleming
Jonathon MacIvor
Ruth-Anne MacIntosh
Philip Blackwood
Shirley MacDonald

CONGREGATION LIFE AND CHRISTIAN EDUCATION TEAM – 2018-2021

*Joan MacIntosh
Mark Thibeau
Allison MacIvor
Jane Williams
Lynne Ann MacLellan
Roger MacDonald

MISSION, OUTREACH AND HOSPITALITY TEAM – 2018-2021

*Cathy Lewis
Clarice Campbell
Teela Billington
John Zinck
Keith Cruickshank
Jean McComb
Brenda Zinck
Shirley Cruickshank
Sheila Dempster
Marilyn Johnstone
Edna Fraser

FIRST-KIRK CO-ORDINATION TEAM – 2018- 2021

Clarice Campbell
Mark Thibeau
Sharon Mason

MESSAGE FROM SESSION

Session has deep concern for two segments of our family at First. One is the **“Childrens/Young Peoples Ministry”**, the other is our members who now reside in **Nursing Homes**.

With respect to the children and young people, it seems this ministry has suffered the most during this Pandemic. They have been unable to attend Sunday School since we closed in March. Rev. Andrew provides online worship and mid-week messages to the congregation but this is geared more to our adults. We have yet to come up with ideas on how we can support our young people. As public school re-opening appears to be going well in our area, we pray that new guidelines for churches will allow for the safe integration of children and youth back into the ministry at First. Anyone in the congregation who are teachers, currently or retired, or anyone knowledgeable with the school system COVID protocols and willing to work with us, is asked to PLEASE talk to us!! Our Congregational Life and Christian Education Team and Session would love to hear your suggestions. Please pray for our children’s ministry.

Regarding our seniors in nursing homes and other long term care facilities, who have been in “lockdown” for most of the time since March, we can do several things to show them they are not forgotten. Mail cards or notes, call and talk to them on the phone. If they would be interested in receiving the weekly announcements, please pass on their name and the name of the facility to the office, and we will send the announcements to the office of the facility, asking them to print it for that resident. Even though restrictions on visiting has been loosened, many do not have family close by who can come to see them. Most facilities will arrange appointments, again, following all Department of Health protocols and procedures. Even though they can receive visitors, many have no one to come see them. Some of these folks are the loneliest, most isolated and often abandoned of our society. Keep them in your prayers and reach out when you can, it means the world to them.

TEAM REPORTS

MUSIC & WORSHIP:

A note from the Organist...

Greetings, and thank you for your patience as we work our way along during these days of the pandemic. COVID19 protocols have meant that we have many different guidelines to follow, and those regarding congregational and choir singing are still changing as the overall situation changes.

At this time, we are practicing social distancing and wearing masks, making it difficult (and unsafe) for singing and responsive readings. If you are wearing a mask, you are invited to hum along with the organ or piano, and we are investigating special “singers” masks which may make it possible for some members of the choir to lead in song. That is a work in progress.

I will be playing on the Yamaha GC-1 Grand this Sunday, and hope you enjoy the sound of “my baby”! The introduction of this instrument to First Presbyterian will be helpful when anticipated work on the pipe organ takes

place (future) and for hosting sections of the New Glasgow Music Festival. The Heintzman upright piano has returned to the Ladies' Parlour.

A special word of thanks goes out to our guest soloists, who have been providing special music while we are not able to enjoy our regular choir. Thanks to the talented people connected to our congregation, we have enjoyed classical (Amanda MacIntosh), contemporary Christian (Janice Alcorn), country (Don Haggart), traditional hymns & Christian songs (Shaun McLean and Rev Andrew MacDonald).

This pandemic will not last forever, but until we get through it, please continue to hum along. Believe me, I will be excited and happy when the day come that I can encourage you to once again "Make a Joyful Noise"!

NOTE FROM SESSION: - We have entered into a 5 year agreement (Sept. 1/20 to Aug. 31, 2025) with Lloyd for the loan of his beautiful baby grand piano. There are basic costs/obligations associated with this loan; i.e. transportation, maintenance, tuning, insurance, etc. The costs have been broken down into a manageable monthly rate of \$47.35; such a minimal cost for this magnificent music ministry the congregation can support. Thank you, Lloyd!!

FAIR HEARTS & FIRST PRESBYTERIAN

AL QASS MATTE FAMILY
Rama, Zina, Anees, Rahma
Maryam, Aram



The AIQuassMatte Family

FAIR (Friends Assisting Iraqi Refugees) Hearts is a group of friends from various communities and faiths who have come together to privately sponsor an Iraqi refugee family of 6. Although affiliated with First Presbyterian Church and SAFE from Antigonish as our Settlement Agreement Holder, our group is nondenominational and welcomes volunteers from all faiths.

The AIQuassMatte family consists of the Dad, Mom and their 4 children ranging in age from 9 to 22. They have been living as refugees in Turkey for the past 6 years after being forced out of their home and country in 2014 by the invasion of ISIS. This family is somewhat unique as they are Christians and would have faced violence or possible death had they stayed in Iraq. They have been declared Refugees by the United Nations High Commission on Refugees and have been vetted by immigration.

The family will require financial assistance for their first year as we welcome them to Canada. We are currently in the process of fundraising and are seeking financial donations, i.e. cash, gift cards or merchandise to assist in this endeavor. Cheques can be made payable to "First Presbyterian Church" (please add "FAIR Hearts" in the memo section as First Church is the registered charity sponsor for the family). Receipts will be provided upon request for cash donations over \$20. We will include your name on a list of donors on our Facebook page (if you wish) to show thanks for your contribution.

As part of our ongoing fundraising efforts, we are asking all members and their families and friends to save their returnable bottles for FAIR Hearts. You can bring them to the bottle exchange and give Sandra the money or contact Sandra (902-331-1001) or Bernadette (902-759-3156) to arrange pick up. Accounts have been set up with both Golden Penney and Stewart's Bottle Exchange. If you bring your bottles to either exchange, tell them the money is for the "FAIR Hearts" account. Also, tell them who the contribution is from (individual or Team). Please share this information with your friends and family. Thank you for any contributions you make!!

FAIR Hearts group now holds their planning meetings at First Church, New Glasgow, on Thursday nights at 7:30 p.m. Anyone wishing to learn more about the refugee family or the process involved in bringing them to Canada, are more than welcome to COME, COME COME to our next meeting, Oct. 22nd, 7:30 p.m.!!

CHURCH DIRECTORY:

The photos for the new church directory have now been taken. Thank you to all who participated, we will let you know when the directories are available for distribution.

IF YOU CAN.....

As mentioned at the Annual Meeting, our current financial health is not great. If you are able to help, perhaps you would consider contributing any of the following items:

- paper for the office (white – 8 ½ X 11)
- salt and sand (winter)
- paper towels

- toilet tissue
- finely ground coffee
- clear and blue garbage/recycling bags
- liquid hand soap
- rubber gloves
- large bottle of vinegar
- Javex
- stamps for the office

Contributions of any of these items would help cut down on our operating costs. There are boxes at each entryway for your donations.

THANKSGIVING 2020:

There are renewed cautions and pleas from all provincial health and government officials to strictly observe COVID safety precautions during this Thanksgiving holiday as second wave COVID cases continue to rise rapidly in some provinces.

- Stay Safe
- Stay Home
- Stay Vigilant

In spite of the many trying events of this year, we still have much to be thankful for!! We thank God for all the blessings He has bestowed on us!

HAPPY COVID THANKSGIVING!!!



CHRISTMAS SERVICES

Session and the Worship & Music Team have yet to work out the when, what and how Christmas season will look this year. A COVID Christmas for sure! As long as we continue to follow the rules as set out by Dr. Strang and his team, everyone will stay healthy and hopefully we can celebrate the season together in one way or another!! We welcome any ideas or suggestions you might have!

Communion – All are works in progress, information to follow.

Christmas Eve –

Christmas Day -

Winter Cancellation Policy at First Presbyterian: Anytime there is a weather watch or warning, cancellation notices will be on the phone voice mail message, posted on ECFM 94.1 and posted on the church FaceBook page.

“FOOD FOR THOUGHT”

All that the friends of Christ did for him in his lifetime, we can do. Peter’s mother-in-law hastened to cook a meal for him, and if anything in the Gospels can be inferred, it surely is that she gave the very best she had, with no thought of extravagance. Matthew made a feast for him, inviting the whole town so that the house was in an uproar of enjoyment, and the straitlaced Pharisees – the good people – were scandalized.

REMEMBERING OUR CHURCH FAMILY IN PRAYER

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

For those experiencing homelessness, joblessness, loneliness,
For parents, children, grandparents and those in nursing homes,

For those who need healing and wholeness

Receive all these prayers, O God, in the tenderness of your mighty hand through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

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