



A Synod-wide initiative by the Session of Zion Presbyterian Church, Charlottetown, PEI
March 2020

INTRODUCTION

“Hear the Good News” is a project initiated and published by the Session of Zion Presbyterian Church with a goal in mind of sharing the best ideas our Synod member churches have to offer. By ‘Good News’, we mean special services, fellowship events, fundraising projects and such that have worked well for any of these congregations. We felt that every congregation had at least one unique and successful event that was worthy of sharing with our brothers and sisters within the Atlantic Synod.

We were inspired to create this project as a result of the overwhelming response we received from congregations across the country when our Memorial Angel Service (*page 10*), was featured in the *Presbyterian Connection* newspaper. Thanks to that sharing of a single idea, many congregations in the PCC have adopted this service with great success.

We are delighted to report that we have now completed the collection, formatting, printing and sharing of all this valuable information to every Presbyterian Church in the Atlantic Synod. Through this publication we believe that things which have worked in one part of our Synod can now be adapted and tried elsewhere with shared success. We are hopeful that other Synods and perhaps the national church itself may seize the opportunity to do likewise and gain the mutual benefits that can be earned through congregational sharing.

The dissemination of great ideas is a wonderful way for us all to enhance our Ministry, our Outreach and even our fundraising & fellowship efforts. We thank those Ministers, Clerks and volunteers who took time from their busy schedules to share one or two events that have been special for their congregation.

It is our prayer that the sharing of these great ideas will help strengthen us as a denomination as we learn from the success of others.

John Barrett
Clerk of Session
Zion Presbyterian Church

john@veseys.com
902-626-5095

Luke 6:38 (NIV) Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.”

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This Table of Contents is simply a guide. Many of these articles cross over several of the categories listed above and as such, we encourage you to read all the submissions contained in this publication.

Congregation: St. Mark's Presbyterian Church
Contact: Rev. Paula Hamilton
Email: stmarkspres@eastlink.ca
Phone: 902-892-5255
Event: Service of Hope
Description: Advent "Memorial" Service

In 1998, a representative of the Canadian Cancer Society approached St. Mark's and asked if we would consider hosting a "Blue Christmas" service for those who had lost loved ones to cancer during the year. The service was held and was well-received. What became immediately clear was that such a service was needed for more than just families who had lost loved ones to cancer.

The next year, the ministers wrote liturgy for a "Service of Hope" which St. Mark's has hosted every December. The service is not just for those who have lost loved ones, it is also for those who are away from family and friends at Christmas, for those who are suffering from chronic pain or illness, for those who find the Christmas season stressful, for those feeling overwhelmed – for any and all who need hope!

The Service of Hope features readings, reflections, carols, and other special music -- all chosen to remind us of the hope and peace that is ours through our faith in Jesus Christ. Throughout the service, we light a special Wreath of Hope with each candle representing the various needs that people bring. Then, near the end of the service, the congregation is invited to come forward to light candles in memory of loved ones. At the end of the service, after the candle lighting has taken place, the lights are all turned out and a final carol is sung by candlelight. Many people stay well after the service has ended to enjoy the candlelight and the peaceful atmosphere that has been created. Feedback to the service is always positive and people often comment that they find it helpful to have a service acknowledge that Christmas, while a joyful celebration, is not always a happy time for everyone.

If you would like more information about the service, please contact Rev. Paula Hamilton at stmarkspres@eastlink.ca

Congregation: St. Andrews Presbyterian Church, Montague
Contact: Susan MacLeod/Tanya Flynn
Email: standrewschurchmontague@gmail.com
Phone: 902-361-3139
Event: Memorial Christmas Tree
Description: Memorial Christmas Tree Lighting and Prayer/Song service

Our Memorial Christmas Tree Lighting is usually scheduled on the first Sunday of Advent. When we started the event, it was as an additional fundraiser, but we soon realized how heartwarming it was to remember family members and friends who have passed on. An evergreen tree is set up in our front lawn of our church. A few weeks prior to the service, we invite people within our congregation and others who may be interested, to sponsor a light on the Christmas tree in memory of a loved one. As the forms with names are received by the organizers, a paper angel is marked with the person's name and hung on a tree inside the sanctuary.

On the night of the Memorial Christmas tree lighting, we gather outside on the church lawn by the tree no matter the weather. Our minister leads us in a short service of prayer and song. The tree is lit and remains lit for the duration of the Christmas season.

After the service outside and the tree is lit, people are invited inside for a service of carols and Christmas readings. Once inside they can view the tree with the angel memorials and look for their loved one's name. The names of the people being remembered are read aloud.

We have found that it is a wonderful way to start the Advent season. The Christmas tree glowing outside our church building with the memorial lights means we can remember our loved ones each time we see the tree during the Christmas season.

Congregation: St. Giles, North Sydney
Contact: Rev. Ritchie Robinson
Email: revritchie@eastlink.ca
Phone: 902-794-1886
Event: Memorial Carol Sing
Description: Fundraiser held during Advent in memory of deceased members and friends of St. Giles Church.

Several years ago, here at St. Giles Church in North Sydney, the choir began sponsoring a Memorial Hymn Sing as a fundraiser for the church. It was usually held in the spring, often on a Sunday in May or June. About a month in advance, members and adherents, both resident and non-resident, were contacted and asked to choose from a selection of hymns a suitable one to honour a deceased family member or friend. Those who attend services on a regular basis were given a form in their Sunday bulletin as an insert with a list of hymn selections from which to choose. Included in this was a space for the donor's name as well as that of the individual being honoured and the amount of the donation being contributed. People had the option of choosing more than one hymn for their family member or friend. This form was mailed to non-residents with a stamped return envelope included in the mailing. Those contacted were asked to return their forms by a certain date to be included in the bulletin for the day.

A week or so prior to the service the information was collected, and the bulletin typed and then proofread. During the hymn sing the names of those in whose memory the hymns were sung, were read prior to the singing of each hymn. Interspersed with the hymn selections were readings from scripture. These were read by members of the choir. The choir might also offer a couple of anthems as well. In recent years we changed the format from a Memorial Hymn Sing in the spring to a Memorial Carol Sing in December. This is held a Sunday or two prior to Christmas when we sing familiar carols in keeping with the season. The readings reflect the familiar scriptures of Advent and Christmas. Christmas carols seem to appeal to a wider audience. There has been greater interest since the change and at Christmas of 2019 we had the largest response to date. We were pleasantly surprised by how much revenue this raised for our congregation. It has certainly been a successful venture and one that we hope to continue.

Congregation: Hopewell Pastoral Charge: First Church, Hopewell, Middle River Church,
Rocklin, St. Andrew's Church, Gairloch

Contact: Rev. Bonnie Langille

Email: bonniejcrockett@gmail.com

Phone: 902-396-6266 (cell)

Event: Food Christmas Tree

Description: An Advent Project

This year a member of our congregations came back from a church service that she had attended with an Advent challenge. The churches are always looking for ways to provide items for our Food Bank and this seemed to be a fun way to collect them. I brought the idea to the churches and they were excited to participate. We were going to make a food Christmas Tree throughout the Advent season. The first week we were to bring a large can of juice to make the base. Each following week we brought in a smaller size can until the last week which were small cans like tomato paste. We saw the trees grow. The food was then to be donated to the local Food Bank. We decided that since the Food Bank received more food during the Christmas season, that we would deliver these items in January. A good way to start 2020.

Advent 1- 1.36 litre – juice

Advent 2, - 796ml or 28oz- soup, stewed tomatoes

Advent 3, -540 ml. or 19 oz - chunky soup, beans, kidney beans

Advent 4, - 284 ml. or 10oz - soup, canned vegetables

Congregation: Zion Presbyterian Church
Contact: John Barrett
Email: john@veseys.com
Event: Memorial Angel Service
Description: An Advent Service of Remembrance



Twelve years ago, a group of interested members at Zion Church in Charlottetown approached the Session about a special evening service that they would like to develop. The name of the program was to be the Memorial Angel Service. During the time leading up to the service members of the congregation and the community are invited to submit names of friends and family who are no longer in our presence. While not mandatory, most people submitting names also feel moved to donate to the church Memorial Fund. On the evening of the service a very tall, undecorated, beautifully lit Christmas tree is placed at the front of the sanctuary. Immediately prior to the service those in attendance pick up the “angels” that have been prepared for them with the name of those being remembered written on the angel itself.

Throughout the course of the service, which consists of readings and special selections from the various church choirs, those in attendance are invited to come forward during the singing of each carol. For instance, during the singing of ‘Hark the Herald Angels Sing’, those remembering names starting with A through D are invited to come and place their angel on the tree. A program is produced that includes not only the order of service but all the names of those being remembered as well as those who are remembering them. Additionally, all deceased Elders of the congregation are remembered with angels that are placed by small (costumed) young angels from the congregation. By the conclusion of the service there are literally hundreds and hundreds of angels on the tree; a tree that serves as a wonderful memorial throughout the entire Advent Season.



Originally planned as a one-time event, the popularity of this moving and beautiful service has now continued for 12 years and while it was never the intent, the service has contributed substantial revenue for the Memorial Fund and some wonderful renovations to our church facility have taken place as a result.

Should any church wish more detailed information as to how they could hold their own ‘Memorial Angel Service’ (including order of service and a copy of the program), you are invited to contact the Clerk of Session who would be pleased to provide any additional information they require (John Barrett john@veseys.com)

Congregation: Bethel Presbyterian Church, Sydney
Contact: Charles Greaves, Clerk of Session
Email: charles.greaves@gmail.com
Phone: 902-564-9570
Event: Christmas Light-Up Hymn Sing

Bethel Church has four Sunday Evening Hymn Sings each year with the most well attended Hymn Sing being our Christmas Light-Up Service which is held on a Sunday early in December. The first Light-Up Service was held on December of 2014. Christmas arrangements and coloured Christmas lights are placed on the heating units on each side of the sanctuary. People are invited to donate to a Memorial tag and the twenty-five lights on each set have a memorial tag tied to them. The names of the those being remembered, and the names of the donors are marked on the tags. The service consists of Christmas Hymns sung by the Congregation, special musical pieces by the Senior Choir or Soloists and readings from Scripture with brief messages. As a list of all the names on the light sets are read, the set would be lighted.

Following the Light-Up Service, the congregation moves to the Church Hall for a time of fellowship, which in true Cape Breton style always includes a cup of tea (or coffee), sweets and lots of chatter as we get into the Christmas spirit, ready to celebrate the birth of our Saviour.

This annual event along with being an excellent fund raiser for the congregation, has proven to be a social highlight for the Congregation and guests as we move into the Christmas Season.

Our Fall Hymn Sing is a fund raiser for our local soup kitchen, Loaves and Fishes. The Congregation also supports this outreach through a monthly gift as well as all the offering received at the Hymn Sing. This event is well attended and supported by the community.

If you would like more detailed information, please contact the Clerk of Session (Charles Greaves charles.greaves@gmail.com).

Congregation: St James Presbyterian Church (Truro)
Contact: Joyce Woodbury or Linda Barron
Email: brwoodbury@tru.eastlink.ca or linda.barron@ns.sympatico.ca
Phone: 902 897 7257 or 902 890 3134
Event: Community dinner
Description: Third Thursday of the month serve a meal

Seventeen years ago, a group of youth from St. James Church in Truro approached the Session about holding a Christmas meal for those who might not otherwise have a Christmas dinner. This was in December 2003. This idea was the result of these youth and adults participating in a mission trip to inner city Hamilton. They wanted to do something in their own community of Truro. This event was so well received in the community that the youth and adults of the congregation continued to do a monthly meal on the third Thursday of the month. Another church in Truro has joined us to help with the organizing of meals.

The meals can be anything from soup and sandwiches, meatloaf or ham and scallop potatoes, Goulash or BBQ hamburgers and hotdogs with a variety of salads. The Christmas dinner is usually a roast pork dinner. A fruit basket is given as a gift to the people who join us for dinner. The majority of the meals are supplied by members of the two congregations. The numbers are around 50 most of the months with around 100 to 120 coming out in December. Before the meal is served our minister leads those in attendance with a short devotion and prayer. A great number of relationships have been developed as we serve and share in fellowship with each other.

This dinner has definitely involved the whole congregation. As it says in Scripture from Matthew 25:35, "For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink I was a stranger and you invited me in".

Should any church wish more information on how to start up such an event you are invited to contact either Joyce Woodbury or Linda Barron who would be more than willing to share what is involved.

Congregation: St. Columba Presbyterian Church (Mira Pastoral Charge)
Contact: Lydia E. MacKinnon
Email: skye@ns.sympatico.ca
Phone: 902-727-2625
Event: Christmas Hospital Project

Four years ago, the congregation wanted to add a new project to those we take on at Christmas, something special and hands-on. The Cape Breton Regional Hospital is the largest hospital in Cape Breton and about a 15-minute drive from the Church. There is a set charge for parking in the hospital parking lot no matter how long your vehicle is parked.

A suggestion was made that during Christmas week we would go to the hospital one evening and pay parking for as many cars as we could. We set up a jar for spare change in late November/ early December in our Church Hall where we meet every Sunday after service to have a cup of tea together. Arrangements were made with the Security people at the hospital. Two or three days before Christmas, we meet at the hall to put together small, clear baggies with five wrapped candies, a note and the money to pay for parking. This is what the note we used this past Christmas said:

May you and your loved ones experience the hope, joy, love and peace of Christmas throughout the Christmas season and into the New Year.

Merry Christmas! St. Columba Presbyterian Church, Marion Bridge

Before we put the baggies with the note, candy and parking fee under the windshield wipers of the vehicles parked in the hospital lot, we alert the Security people that we have arrived and will be in the lot. They always thank us for coming and brightening up the visitors' evening. For the last two years we have been blessed in that we have been able to pay the parking for every vehicle in the lot. As far as we know, there has been no theft; no one has tried to remove the baggies from someone else's car.

This little gesture has been well received. Phone calls and letters have been received at the Manse by folks who wanted to pass on that they were grateful, not only for the money, but mostly for the fact that others were thinking of them as they visited their loved ones at a time of the year when television and ads portray everyone as having only happy times. Someone who received the packet contacted Cape Breton's daily newspaper and the newspaper did an article on our little project. People have also posted on Facebook, with a photo of the package, that they were happy and surprised to receive it.

If you would like additional information, please email Lydia MacKinnon at: skye@ns.sympatico.ca.

Congregation: Union Presbyterian Church (Mira Pastoral Charge)
Contact: Lydia E. MacKinnon
Email: skye@ns.sympatico.ca
Phone: 902-727-2625
Event: Christmas Tree Light-Up and Carol Sing

On the Saturday evening before the first Sunday in Advent, our Women's Fellowship Group invites the public to an evening of music and fellowship. One of the women has been preparing the program for twenty years. She chooses a topic such as the origin of Christmas trees, for example, and researches it. She writes a script and has members of the group present it in between the singing together of well-loved Christmas carols. We invite a guest soloist and during the program, our Christmas tree is lit.

At the end of the program, everyone is invited to the hall for light refreshments. We do not charge for this event. It is a thank you to the community for supporting our breakfasts and suppers throughout the year. It has become a tradition for people to come year after year to the Light-Up and many say our presentation is the beginning of the Christmas season for them.

If you would like additional information, please email Lydia MacKinnon at: skye@ns.sympatico.ca.

Congregation: St. Andrews Presbyterian Church, Montague
Contact: Darren Dingwell, Otis Butler
Email: standrewschurchmontague@gmail.com
Phone: 902-361-3139
Event: Alpha Program/Community Meal
Description: Alpha Program in conjunction with the weekly free community meal

For a number of years our church family has had an Alpha course. Darren Dingwell felt the calling to do a community meal as a fellowship to our community of Montague and surrounding area. The last three years the Alpha program and the community meal have come together on Wednesday evening.

The Alpha course requires a meal beforehand and what better way to reach people than a free meal?

It is quite an undertaking to provide a free meal to the community every week. People are excited. It is a great way for the volunteers who wanted to give to their community weren't sure how to get involved. A crew of people come together to help Darren and his wife Norma prepare the meal, serve, wash dishes and clean up. Others contribute dessert!

After the meal, it is so convenient and a perfect opportunity to invite people to join in on the Alpha program.

It may not be possible for other church congregations to provide a full free meal to their community every week. Maybe a soup and sandwich monthly would be very much appreciated! Whatever the meal presented, it is a wonderful way to reach out and witness to a 'hungry' community.

Congregation: Salem Presbyterian Church, Greenhill, NS
Contact: Rev. Mary Anne Grant
Email: grantland@eastlink.ca
Phone: 902-843-1319
Event: Anniversary service
Description: Celebration Event

Salem Presbyterian Church, Greenhill, Pictou County, Nova Scotia, is rich in Presbyterian history. It celebrated its 170th Anniversary on November 17, 2019. Stated Supply minister, the Reverend Mary Anne D. Grant welcomed the Reverend Dr. J. Kenneth MacLeod as guest speaker.

To commemorate the occasion prior, a soup & dessert Luncheon, along with a “Silent Auction” was held Friday from 11 a.m.-1 p.m. Admission was \$8. Several different hot homemade soups and chilli were available for the hungry visitors. One could choose rolls, refreshments and a tasty dessert from pies, cakes, fruit dish, cheese cake, etc. Along with a door prize, tickets were sold (\$2. each or 3 for \$5.) for a basket filled with numerous preserves/jams/small items such as ornaments, hand lotion, napkins, etc. The silent auction consisted of items which included Christmas articles. Hardware, pictures, books, tools, dishes. Crafts, etc. These items were placed on wooden panels over the edges of the church pews. People could look at the items by walking in the aisles.

On a paper with pen placed by each item, a starting bid was marked. You printed your name/telephone number and your amount bid. Near the end of the Luncheon, an organizer noted the person who had the highest bid, to which he/she could purchase the item. The Anniversary weekend celebrations were locally advertised on radio station, Presbytery members list and church bulletins.

Here are some other events that other churches may have an interest in adopting:

- At Christmas time, a poem “First Christmas in Heaven” is read. Followed by candles lite (by relative/friend) with names read of loved ones who passed during the past year.
- Soup & Dessert Luncheon with “Silent Auction” on items; tickets sold on basket of preserves/jams; or tickets on a crafted item.
- Annual yard sale with hot chili/soup takeout
- Bowling in Jan.
- Annual variety show in April
- Historic Log Church Service in July, Loch Broom, Pictou County
- Corn boil in Sept.
- Annual pork dinner in Oct.
- Strawberry Festival after a July worship with neighboring UCC congregation across road invited
- Regular 2 pm(1/2 hr.) monthly seniors’ service at alternate Pictou nursing homes

Congregation: Zion Presbyterian Church
Contact: Rev. Douglas Rollwage
Email: revdoug@zionpres.org
Phone: 902-566-5363
Event: Maundy Thursday Service
Description: Maundy Thursday Communion

One of the most anticipated service of the year at Zion is our Maundy Thursday Candlelight Communion. It is held in the church hall rather than the sanctuary; we set up a series of tables in the round, accommodating approximately 120 people. Candles are placed on each table; the “head tables” from which the lessons will take place are decorated with palm branches from the previous Sunday’s service along with dinnerware representative of the ancient time.

The service takes the form of “lessons and carols,” but in this instance, the lessons are from the Last Supper passages in Luke, and a selection from the Farewell Discourse of Jesus from John 13-15. The “carols” are hymns appropriate to each passage. There is an introduction and prayer which varies from year to year, but the readings and hymns remain the same. Since we use a projection system for the hymns, the room can be in darkness save for the candles. The readings build up to the service of Communion. For this service, we use the form of liturgy found in the Didache, adding only the Words of Institution from our regular Communion services. Communion is done with large loaves of unleavened bread and cups of wine (juice is used for wine at Zion). The bread is passed whole from person to person, each of whom tears off a piece; the cup follows, and Communion proceeds, with all seated, by intinction. Following a final hymn, the service concludes in silence.

There are annual variations; some years, the “head table” is occupied only by one or two readers; other years, it includes the twelve disciples, who speak their own parts (with Judas leaving at one point in the service). Other years, there are 13 large candles on stands, which are lit several at a time during the singing of the hymns. These candles are then extinguished one at a time at the following morning’s Good Friday service – one after each Station of the Cross (the Good Friday service takes place in the sanctuary, with a modified Stations of the Cross, again in a “lessons and carols” format).

Those attending the service often comment that this is, for them, the most anticipated service of the year. Others agree, but view Maundy Thursday and Good Friday as a unit, leading up to our Celebration of the Resurrection on Easter Sunday. Our goal is that throughout Lent, and particularly during Holy Week, we are building a sense of drama and anticipation, greatly enriching our understanding and celebration of both the Passion and Resurrection of Jesus.

I would be happy to provide anyone with a full script of both Maundy Thursday Candlelight Communion and Good Friday Stations of the Cross upon request
revdoug@zionpres.org.

Congregation: St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, St. John's NL
Contact: Jenny Pallard
Email: jennpallard@gmail.com
Phone: 709 697-6183
Event: Palm Sunday Walk through Holy Week
Description: An intergenerational worship service for Holy Week

For many, many years the Sunday School at St. Andrew's set up various classrooms as scenes from Holy Week, beginning with Palm Sunday. This would involve some costumes and mini skits of drama acted out along the way. Things begin with Jesus entering on a donkey. There is a scene for washing his disciples' feet. The last supper. The trial and crucifixion. While not taking place on Easter, the conclusion is the resurrection, allowing the participants to experience the entire story.

A few years ago it was asked how this journey could be taken by the entire congregation. We couldn't all very well stand in each classroom. Our central pulpit does however divide the church neatly in two halves. Allowing a scene to be set alternately on each side, with narrators using the pulpit microphone. A key for us has been making this a truly multigenerational drama. Of the 120 people in church one year, over 70 were somehow involved in the performance. We don't simply hear, or even see the story of Holy week, but live it.

The script has been set so that only narrators have lines spoken from the microphones, as the characters act out the scene. Given that we don't rehearse, this can at times create interesting events for ad libbing, like when the buyers and sellers are at the temple, and Jesus misses his cue, so doesn't show up. And so there is some humour as the narrator mentions how this was a typical day at the temple, until the next day when Jesus – yes Jesus back there – showed up. Other scenes, like Jesus betrayal, or when the congregation forms the crowd, to shout crucify him, become quite moving.

This worship experience has become something many in the congregation now look forward to, to the point that the Palm Sunday service this takes place is now better attended than our Easter worship.

Should any church wish more detailed information as to how they could hold their own 'Walk through Holy Week' (including order of service and a copy of the program), you are invited to contact the Sunday School coordinator who would be pleased to provide any additional information they require (Jenny Pallard: jennpallard@gmail.com)

Congregation: St. Andrew's and First Presbyterian Churches, Pictou, NS
Contact: Rev. Shelly Chandler
Email: revshellychandler@gmail.com
Phone: 902-485-5924
Event: Maundy Thursday Joint Service
Description: Building Community through Communion

When I was called to this new 2-point charge in 2018, it was with the understanding that the churches wanted to do something new. With the Sessions' cooperation and blessing, we set out to draw the two communities closer together through joint worship services and times of fellowship. Worshiping together on Christmas Eve, Holy Week and Easter, and during the summer—alternating venues—has helped to build a sense of community between the sister congregations.

Our joint Maundy Thursday worship service last year is a standout worship and fellowship experience that moved many. Rather than gathering in a sanctuary, we gathered in one of the church halls over a potluck meal. The tables were set up in the shape of a horseshoe to re-create the idea of a shared supper. The configuration of the tables did not allow for friendship groups to gather around various tables, encouraging people to sit beside or across from, people they may not know well from their sister congregation. There was a sense of 'unknowing' amongst everyone as this was very new and drew 50 people to 'supper.'

Our service opened in the traditional way, with a call to worship, hymn, and prayers of adoration and confession. This was then followed by grace and enjoying the potluck supper. Following our meal, I delivered a short meditation followed by Communion by intinction. But this wasn't a usual intinction service. I started the elements at one end of the horseshoe (one set of elements for each side of the table) and the participants shared the elements to the person next to them. As the elements were passed around the table, from one person to the next, barriers between individuals were removed and an intimacy between the communicants was developed as they shared Christ's meal with one another. Many people came to me following this service and the weeks following, to share how moving an experience this service was. And, as we enter the Lenten season again, many have expressed a hope that we will do it again.

As we worship and break bread together, as we serve one another, we draw closer to one another as well as to Christ. It has been a joy to see how members of both congregations have grown to enjoy and appreciate our times of joint worship and fellowship as we build a new community in Christ.

I would be pleased to share more information and the order of service for this Maundy Thursday Communion service upon request. revshellychandler@gmail.com.

Congregation: Iona Presbyterian Church, Dartmouth NS
Contact: Irene C. Rose
Email: Ireneandtomrose@eastlink.ca
Phone: 902-829-2783
Event: Soup Sundays
Description: A fellowship event on several Sundays throughout the winter

Our Congregational Life committee is committed to strengthening the sense of community among members of the congregation through social and supportive activities.

Like many congregations we have members who live alone and find getting out in the evenings challenging so potluck suppers etc., are not the preferred option for congregational activities. Winters are especially daunting as it is dark early and just harder to get about. In an attempt to support and nourish members and support community, we launched Soup Sundays. For the past 10 years there have been at least 5 Soup Sundays through the winter months. The choice of when they are held depends on what else is going on in the congregation. The number of requests on volunteers is always a consideration. Our usual schedule is Oct, December (Anniversary Sunday) February (Annual Meeting) March (depending on Easter) April & May.

Soup Sundays are volunteer supported. After posting a date in the bulletin, a signup sheet is posted on the bulletin board looking for donations of soup. An average of 6 pots of soup are needed for 40 + diners. The pots arrive on Sunday morning and are kept warm during the service. Rolls and cookies usually accompany the soup and are also donated. Soup is served immediately after the service.

Soup is the catalyst for the fellowship that occurs. Many who stay are those identified above, living alone and isolated in winter months. Some make a special effort to be there on those specific Sundays. The chatter is energizing, and no one rushes away. The bonus to this program is that a free will offering is suggested and the funds are directed to specific projects each time. Examples include PWS&D relief campaigns, Canadian Food Grains Bank. Presbyterian Sharing and other campaigns. Offerings average \$100.00 +

There is also an outreach aspect to this activity. Remaining soup is offered for take home in recycled containers and also delivered to members who are house bound. These drop offs are a high point for many.

The popularity and support for Soup Sundays has remained strong for over 10 years.

Congregation: St Andrew's Presbyterian Church
Contact: Barbara Tower
Email: btower48@gmail.com
Phone: 902-929-2037
Event: Community Supper
Description: A Traditional Celtic Meal

Celtic Colours is a nine-day international music festival which draws people from all over the world. It takes place every October beginning on the Thanksgiving weekend. The festival is a unique celebration of Cape Breton Island's living traditional culture, including world class concerts, ceilidhs, milling frolics, dances, workshops, visual arts, community suppers and much more.

St Andrew's Presbyterian Church, North River Bridge, has participated in this festival by hosting a community supper on Thanksgiving Monday. This past year we presented a traditional maragh supper as our congregation is made up largely of descendants of immigrants from the highlands and islands of Scotland. As maragh is not exactly well known outside of outside of highland Scottish communities, we did not know what the response might be. For those of you who are not familiar with this "gourmet" dish, it is sheep intestines stuffed with a mixture of suet, oatmeal, onions, salt and pepper. It is simmered very slowly for a couple of hours, then sliced and fried, usually served with potatoes and turnips. (It is also popular for breakfast with biscuits and molasses.) Today of course, we use synthetic casings but some of us are old enough to remember cleaning the real thing in a cold brook with our mothers and grandmothers.

The women had a maragh-making day in May as a trial run, intending to freeze them until October. Eventually word got out that there was maragh-making going on at the church and the phone started ringing, with calls from other communities and even "away" folks requesting that some be frozen for their next trip home. They were all sold within a few days. So, we repeated the exercise in the fall, the supper was a success and we sold every maragh that was left over. We were a bit apprehensive that visitors may not be willing to try an unusual ethnic dish but travellers are increasingly looking for authentic cultural experiences and want to meet and interact with local residents. St Andrew's is also well known for its' dessert table - a large variety of beautiful desserts and usually enough for a second trip to the table.

As you can imagine, the days of maragh-making in the church hall were a great time with lots of fun and laughter. Unexpectedly, this proved to be a successful fund raiser and at the same time was an opportunity to introduce some of the younger members of church and community to the "art" of making maragh and keeping alive the rich traditions and culture of our Gaelic ancestors.

Congregation: St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Sydney Mines, NS
Contact: Rev. Marion Barclay MacKay
Email: barclaymackay@eastlink.ca
Phone: 902-241-2310
Event: Intersections...Tea and Conversation
Description: Informal Fellowship Event

“Intersections...Tea and Conversation” is a one-time fellowship and conversation event that happens six to eight times a year. Life and faith intersect in many different ways and what better way to appreciate this than over tea, coffee and light refreshments shared with others. St. Andrew's is an historic congregation in the community so needs to be intentional about creating opportunities for new-comers or for those experiencing changes in their lives to come together to talk about matters of faith and life that are important. This is why “Intersections” isn't a group, but a gathering of people who have insights and/or questions about significant issues in living the Christian faith that can encourage or challenge others.

For scheduling sake, “Intersections...Tea and Conversation” normally happens the first Wednesday of most months, excluding July, August and September. Usually one or two winter gatherings have to be cancelled due to inclement weather, but it is worth “trying” to gather anyways! Refreshments are simple...tea, coffee, water, cheese and crackers, fruit or a sweet or two...focus on “simple”! Volunteers provide these refreshments, usually recruited from those in attendance at the preceding gathering. Each gathering is about 1 ½ hours in length and is facilitated by the minister. Opening prayer and grace is shared, sometimes a kick-off scripture passage on the selected theme is read and briefly considered, discussion unfolds and the gathering is closed with the Lord's Prayer. Some gatherings have a pre-determined theme or topic; some are “No Theme” and the focus emerges from those gathered. Topics have included: Journeying with Jesus...what does this mean for us today?; Favourite hymns or songs that speak to our spirit; The purpose and meaning of Lent in our lives; Renewal; Healing; Biblical heroes; Anger; Why do bad things happen to good people; What is faith; The Seven Deadly Sins; Favourite Bible verses; Something I've always wondered about the Bible is...; Prayer; Miracles; How do we reach out to others; Names or Titles of God that inspire or challenge us. For the last few years the December gathering is a carol sing-along, a seasonal story that is shared by the minister and shortbread refreshments. Does the gathering always stay on topic...No! Is there laughter...Absolutely! Do folks go away encouraged and inspired...Yes!

Congregation: Bethel (Scotsburn & Burns Memorial (West Branch))
Contact: Glen Matheson
Email: Glen.matheson@bellaliant.net
Phone: 902-396-7732
Event: Fellowship
Description: As We Gather...

Bethel (Scotsburn) and Burns Memorial (West Branch) are two rural churches in Pictou Presbytery with an average attendance of 75 and 15 respectively. I have been with them just over a year, half-time, and we've begun to use our sanctuaries differently.

Like most congregations, conducting worship is difficult when attendance is low due to storms, etc. In older congregations this is especially difficult as some have their favorite pew to sit in, leaving the congregation very scattered on days with low attendance. On such Sundays we move everyone in the pews up into the choir loft with the choir. For those who never sit at the front it changes their perspective of the sanctuary, it gets them sitting with folks they may normally not sit with, and we have fun. Instead of weak singing, they are now a close-knit group around the organ and as the minister leading worship, they are 'up close' and enjoying worship.

The only other church in Scotsburn is a United Church, across the road. We worship together multiple times each year, using Bethel when a larger building is needed, we gather together after church for food multiple times each year and one service is an outdoor service on the manse lawn across from Bethel.

In West Branch, again there is a United Church across the road, but in this community, worship services are held every 2nd Sunday. Services are staggered so one week both congregations meet at the Presbyterian Church, and on alternate Sundays at the United.

Congregation: River John St George's Presbyterian Church
Contact: Earl Johnson
Email: r.rcampbell@ns.sympatica.ca
Phone: 902-351-3377
Event: Coffee Hour
Description: Social Hour at St George's Presbyterian church hall.

Coffee hour was originally started by one of our congregates approximately 20 years ago. She had a coffee shop across the road from St. George's Presbyterian church where people of our community gathered for fellowship and conversation. Several years later, several Mennonite members of our community hosted "Coffee Hour" at the same location until the coffee shop closed soon after. Another local coffee shop opened nearby for a short time where some of the regular patrons continued this. When there were no longer any coffee shops opened, Earl Johnson agreed to continue this tradition in our church hall. This was at least 15 years ago. Each Wednesday 10-11am Earl has coffee/tea brewed and sandwiches ready for anyone who wants to drop in for a hot drink, a snack and some conversation at St. George's Presbyterian church hall. There are always extra donations of sweets.

This is a great opportunity for people in the community and surrounding areas to meet their neighbours and make new friends where we share food, conversations and fellowship. Monetary donations are accepted at the door and gathered for local needs such as the local food bank, our fuel fund, River John Square Knitters (who knit, gather and send knit squares to Africa to be assembled into much needed blankets. Monetary donations are used to pay for postage and to buy yarn for the volunteer knitters) or other local needs that arise.

Congregation: St. James Presbyterian Church, Noel Road, NS
Contact: Nicki Cameron
Email: snickicameron@hotmail.com
Phone: 902-362-2770
Event: Tuesday Café
Description: Fellowship & Fundraising

Each Tuesday (9am-11am) volunteers take turns baking a couple of goodies (simple/easy recipes) and working at this event; and there's also bread/bagels available for toasting, if chosen. There's coffee/tea on hand, with bottomless refills. We find the most enjoyable part is the social contact made during these couple of hours, or so; small donations are given which help with costs.

It's become a popular time of the week for the folks who drop in regularly, and for those involved helping provide for this event.

We use our next-door neighbouring building - our Community Hall - for this event: it's accessible, convenient facilities, and shares space for some of St. James' social events.

Congregation: St. James Presbyterian Church
Contact: Rev. Peter MacDonald
Email: ptrmacdonald@gmail.com
Phone: 902-674-2469
Event: Weekly Coffee Break
Description: Outreach

Over 5 years ago, the St. James Ways and Means Committee was inspired to host a weekly community social time at the church hall, which is in the basement of St. James Church. They decided that a weekly coffee hour, or break, would be welcome. Homemade muffins and coffee or tea would be served. Two dollars would be charged, between three to four different muffins would be offered and refills would be free. This was not intended to serve as a fund raiser primarily, but it was hoped that the event would generate fellowship and make St. James a place where people in the community gathered, rather than those associated with the congregation.

On August 31st, 2014, this announcement appeared in the church bulletin *Starting Wednesday, September 14th there will be a weekly Community Coffee break at St. James church hall, 9-11 am. Cost is \$2 for a coffee or tea and a fresh homemade muffin. Everyone is welcome, bring a friend and meet your neighbors.*

It has been an enormous success. In planning, it had been expected to run for a couple of seasons, maybe a year, before interest and attendance would wane. This has not happened. It regularly brings between 30-50 people in. In the summer many cottage folks have made it a regular part of their life in Boularderie. During the winter, for some, it is a crucial way to be a part of the community.

As the Minister, I wanted to take part, and made the decision to take on two roles. One, I would bus the tables. The members of the Ways and Means Committee serve muffins, make the coffee and tea, and wash dishes. I thought it would be a small help for them to not have to worry about fetching cups and plates. Two, if anyone came and sat alone, I would sit with them and talk with them. After three months or so, I stopped doing that, because no one came and sat alone. If they came alone, they were asked join those gathered already at a table. I understand that other congregations have taken up this idea or a variation of it, and I strongly urge those who have not to consider doing so.

Congregation: Union Presbyterian Church (Mira Pastoral Charge)
Contact: Lydia E. MacKinnon
Email: skye@ns.sympatico.ca
Phone: 902-727-2625
Event: Quilt Show

Several of the women in our congregation are avid quilters. They produce stunning work. These women have invited fellow quilters to display their quilts and wall hangings in our sanctuary on a Saturday in the summer. Quilts are draped over the pews and hung on the walls. It is a lovely sight upon entering to see the various patterns and eye-catching colours. Some of the quilts are for sale (with the money going to the artist), but many are not. They are brought in by the makers for all to enjoy.

Those who attend seem to find this a calming and serene atmosphere in which to view the quilts. They slow down and soak in the atmosphere of the Church building which is 162 years old as they delight in the designs and colours before them.

There is a freewill donation to view the quilts. Most people end up going to the Church Hall right behind the Church where various people have crafts for sale. The Church receives 10% of each person's sales for providing the sales venue. Folks can also sit down and have cookies and tea or coffee for which there is a small charge. In the basement of the hall, the congregation has a Yard Sale while the Quilt Show is being offered.

The quilts and the items for the Yard Sale are set up the day before the show. Because quilts and quilted wall hangings are expensive items, two men from the congregation stay all night in the Church to ensure that all is well.

If you would like additional information, please email Lydia E. MacKinnon at: (skye@ns.sympatico.ca).

Congregation: Hartsville Presbyterian Church
Contact: Rev. Dawn Griffiths
Email: dawnbgriffiths@gmail.com
Phone: 902-367-1241
Event: Congregational Fun, Food & Worship for Epiphany (or other special days)
Description: Informal fellowship, learning and worship for all ages

Our first event was planned in response to declining numbers of children at Sunday morning worship due to conflicts with team sport schedules. Our first idea was to focus on young families, but we decided to open the event to include all ages. We found that Friday evenings are free for most in the congregation, and since Epiphany fell on a Friday that year we chose that date and theme for our first event. The times were chosen so young children could be home in bed at their regular bedtime.

5:00 pm. Gather in the church basement where stations are set up:

- a table with star shaped cookies (baked by a member); icing, food colouring, sprinkles, etc.
- a table with craft supplies to make and decorate stars, magi crowns, make a star mobile etc.
- a colouring table with supplies of crayons, markers etc. and appropriate pictures for Epiphany
- a 'bulletin' outlining the events of the evening, and including simple word puzzles, fun facts about Epiphany and illustrations.

5:45 pm. Pot-luck Supper

6:30 pm. Gather in Sanctuary for short, informal Worship.

-for Epiphany the first year the lights were turned out as we projected stars onto the ceiling and had blankets and pillows spread on the floor so the young people could lie down and watch the sky as the story of the magi was retold.

To my surprise, most of the congregation was flat on their backs on the floor, led by a couple of intrepid 80-somethings! Since we switched to monitors and power-point we project pictures of the heavens on the screens, but many people still want to lie on the floor.

6:50 Close with a Benediction and the singing of the refrain from 'We Three Kings'.

This basic format works well for Lent, Pentecost, Maundy Thursday themes. There are evenings we don't get any children, but the adults enjoy the crafts, cookie decorating, fellowship, food, learning, and worship.

Should any church wish more detailed information as to how they could hold their own 'Congregational Fun, Food and Worship' event you are invited to contact Dawn at dawnbgriffiths@gmail.com

Congregation: Zion Presbyterian Church
Contact: John Barrett
Email: john@veseys.com
Event: Canadian Food Grains Bank
Description: Ongoing multi-dimensional campaign

The Canadian Foodgrains Bank is a partnership of Canadian churches and church-based agencies working to end global hunger. <https://foodgrainsbank.ca>

For the past twelve years under the Direction of Lead Minister Rev. Douglas Rollwage, Zion Church has had a very active and influential role in supporting the mission of this important Christian food relief and outreach organization

Thanks to the matching programs available through our federal government, monies raised through a variety of means have increased many times over, therefore optimizing the initial revenue in order to provide as many meals as possible to individuals around the globe who are suffering from famine and poverty.

Ron MacMillan, Missions chair from Zion Presbyterian Church (left) with Abe Buttimer who co-leads the Rustico growing project in New Glasgow, P.E.I. and has been involved since the project started in 2002.



Through the generous donations of land use, machinery and crop inputs, we have been involved in the planting and harvest of various crops which, when sold, result in this income being tripled when donated to the CFB organization. In addition to the growing of crops, an established Christmas card program was established some years ago where members of the congregation can purchase cards that will provide the recipient the 'Good News' that through the purchase of this card they have fed an individual or a family for an entire year. This program has been so successful that it's currently being considered as a national program of the CFB organization

Our annual Chili, Chowder and Cows fundraising dinner has grown in popularity over the years and all proceeds from this time of fellowship and food has also grown into a major contributing source for our Foodgrains Bank contributions.

Since the adoption of this important program by our Missions Committee and congregation, Zion's contributions to the Canadian Foodgrains Bank have funded the equivalent of 1,400,000 meals to those in need across the globe.

Congregation: River John St George's Presbyterian Church
Contact: Regan & Robin Campbell
Email: r.rcampbell@ns.sympatica.ca
Phone: 902-351-3377
Event: Grocery Sunday
Description: Gather Groceries for Food Bank

Like too many communities, families are unable to afford nutritious food and depend on the kindness and generosity of others. Groceries have been gathered with love by community members more many years. For approximately the past 10 years, non-perishable donations are donated by parishioners and gathered from River John St George's Presbyterian, River John St. John's Anglican and River John Salem United churches and are brought to the Pictou West Food Bank by St. George's Regan & Robin Campbell in the name and with the love of Jesus Christ. This mission takes place on the last Sunday of each month except December when food donations are gathered the Sunday before Christmas.

Congregation: Hunter River Presbyterian Church
Contact: Rev. Thomas Kay
Email: rev.thomaskay@gmail.com
Phone: 902-394-2163
Event: Special Day Offering
Description: AMS fundraiser

Hunter River Presbyterian Church is located in the small village of Hunter River on Highway 2 in central Prince Edward Island.

As in many congregations, the AMS group at Hunter River Presbyterian Church has grown quite small, and no longer meets as regularly as it once did. The members, however, retain an active interest in mission both locally and globally.

Over the past few years a monthly 'Special Day Offering' has allowed the whole congregation to support and share in the group's work.

On the last Sunday of each month, a collection box (ours is a simple wooden box with a slot in the lid for donations) is placed at the front of the Sanctuary and at an appropriate time in the service those who have celebrated a special day in the previous month (Birthday, Anniversary, etc.) are invited to come forward and place an offering in the box (we usually do it either before or after the offering, but other places in the service also work).

Once the offerings have been deposited (or sometimes while they are being deposited) everyone sings a song. We use the following to the tune of 'Happy Birthday':

"Happy special day to you
May Jesus be true
May God's richest blessings
Abide upon you.

In reality almost everybody comes forward whether they've had a 'special day' or not, and a quite surprising amount of money is raised in the course of the year to be spent on mission locally and beyond. Children especially enjoy depositing the gifts for seniors who can't walk to the front.

Congregation: St. James Presbyterian, the “Kirk”
Contact: David Robinson
Email: cerobinson@eaastlink.ca
Phone: (902) 628-1041
Event: Renewing HOPE Capital Campaign
Description: Restoration and Improvement Capital Campaign

For a number of years, the Kirk has been studying options for the restoration and improvement of the Kirk, after years of deferred maintenance and in the face of significant needs for capital upgrading. Finally, on July 31, 2018, the Kirk Session unanimously decided to ask the congregation to approve a major capital campaign. This was followed by a special congregational meeting on September 23, 2018, at which it was unanimously decided to launch an ambitious \$1.0 million capital campaign.

Following this meeting a Capital Campaign Executive Committee was formed, chaired by David Hooley with Shauna Sullivan Curley serving as Vice Chair. They developed the Renewing HOPE capital campaign, which was launched on January 6, 2019. Its objective was to raise at least \$1.0 million over five years, to: repair the roof, make repairs to brick and stonework, improve site drainage, and repair and re-protect the church’s beautiful suite of stained-glass windows. A group of dedicated volunteer canvassers was trained by the Kirk’s campaign consultant, Campaign Coaches, and visits to congregational members started in earnest before the end of January.

The capital campaign was warmly embraced by all members of the congregation, and as the weeks passed, our campaign total of donations made and pledges received rose in a very promising fashion. On August 18, 2019, the Executive Committee was able to announce that the campaign had eclipsed the \$1.0 million mark, and the occasion was celebrated with a special cake at Fellowship Hour.

Work on the capital campaign has continued since August, with the total raised standing at almost \$1,090,000 at the beginning of February 2020. The Executive Committee continues to look at fundraising opportunities and hopes to secure additional financial capacity to refurbish the upstairs kitchen and provide a number of new accessible washrooms, including a gender-free washroom. These improvements would not only enhance the functionality of the Kirk’s spaces; it should also make Kirk spaces more attractive to potential renters.

In tandem with these events, the Kirk has undertaken a Congregational Renewal initiative. It received a \$5,000 grant from the national church to participate in the Presbyterian Church’s “New Beginnings” program, and hosted Rev. Mark Lewis on November 28, 2019 for the initial Congregational Assessment that launches the process. Work aimed at discerning future pathways for the congregation will continue during 2020.

These twin initiatives have put a new spring in the Kirk’s steps, and auger well for the forthcoming 200th anniversary of the Kirk’s founding in 1825, five years hence. Anybody seeking more information about the Kirk’s experience in running a capital campaign, or participating in the “New Beginnings” program, is welcome to contact the Action Clerk of Session, David Robinson, at cerobinson@eastlink.ca.

Congregation: St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, St. John's NL
Contact: Bruce Templeton
Email: brucetempleton@bellaliant.net
Phone: 709 753-0695
Event: Lobster Dinner
Description: Lobster Dinner Fundraiser

Over 40 years ago there was a plan to build a new church hall, and some men from the church sold lobster boiled on Coleman stoves behind the old hall one night to help raise funds. From these humble beginnings the annual lobster dinner was born, last year over 1,100 pounds of lobster were turned into near 500 meals, about 200 eat in and the rest take out.

The Lobster Dinner is no humble affair, wine is served, two lobster, 3 salads, and traditional Newfoundland Trifle for dessert. People come from far and wide to take part in this event in early June. The event has come to raise near, and recently exceeding, \$10,000 for the congregation, which is very helpful heading into the summer season when attendance and giving tends to dip.

That was the financial side of things, but the equally, if not greater, importance of the event is the way it draws so many with connections to the congregation together. I don't primarily mean those coming to eat either, I mean the very large crew of volunteers who make it happen. A wonderful feast happens, but the people putting it on have fun doing it. The social interactions between members who spend more time together over the course of 2-3 days than some do for the rest of the year, is an important bit of glue that helps keep us connected as a congregation. In the end, it is less about the lobster, than coming together to work as a body, and seeing something visible that we are able to accomplish as we do.

One key to making this happen are a few people who have been very passionate about the work, and who start making plans and recruiting volunteers, months ahead of time. Many of our processes are somewhat context specific at this point – including the names of suppliers. That said, Bruce Templeton, the clerk of Session and chief lobster chopper, would be happy to share some of his experiences from heading this committee.

Congregation: River John St George's Presbyterian Church
Contact: Robin Campbell
Email: r.rcampbell@ns.sympatica.ca
Phone: 902-351-3377
Event: Soup Luncheon
Description: Fellowship & Fundraising

Soup Luncheon at the St. George's Presbyterian church hall was started by Rev Jeanette Fliesher's husband Walter over 15 years ago. Robin assisted him 11 years ago and took on the responsibility 10 years ago. An average of 6 soup luncheons are held each year in the fall, winter and spring on the 4th Monday of the month hosted by several St George's men (Robin Campbell, Earl Johnson, Hugh Langille and Chuck Haliburton). They prepare 2 choices of soup served with coffee/tea and donated biscuits and sweets. The donated biscuits and sweets are organized by Marie Langille.

There are always extra volunteers to help in the kitchen. This is a wonderful opportunity for fellowship with people from all over Pictou County and surrounding communities with an average attendance of 73. The net proceeds in 2019 totalled \$1713.35 were disrupted as follows: \$1161.35 to St. George's General Fund, \$277 to purchase Bowls & mugs, \$100 to Pictou West Food Bank, \$100 to Can. Food Grains Bank and \$75 to River John Square Knitters who knit, gather and send knit squares to Africa to be assembled into much needed blankets. Monetary donations are used to pay for postage and to buy yarn for the volunteer knitters.

Congregation: Kensington Presbyterian Church
Contact: Rev Torrey Griffiths
Email: torreygriffiths@gmail.com
Phone: 902-856-2352
Event: Annual Hip of Beef Dinner
Description: Fellowship & Fundraising

Kensington Presbyterian Church has held a Hip of Beef Dinner for the last 14 years. We have the privilege of enjoying the services of a red seal chef in our congregation and he provides us with expertise, experience and equipment for any thing that happens in our kitchen. As well as annually adding to our treasury, the Hip of Beef Dinner brings together many regular congregants and many more adherents who we might not see in the pew for a Sunday service. The fellowship and sharing of the work is very enjoyable. The congregation has been putting on the dinner for so many years the planning is easy. Lots of folk know what their job is every year and just fall into place when the big day comes.

In the days before the dinner, we hold a “peeling party” to prepare the potatoes, turnip and carrots. More great fellowship over how to peel a turnip, clean the eyes from the spuds or what’s the best way to slice a carrot. Our chef then carries them off to his commercial kitchen to be cooked and returned hot before the actual dinner.

Our tables are set with lovely white cloths and our in-house “decorator” finds innovative centrepieces to grace the tables along with a tent card, which holds a short grace. As well as serving approximately 150 folks at the table, we also provide an equal or more number of take out dinners, some of which are delivered but most are picked up before the sit-down dinner begins. One of our congregants takes charge of the ticket sales and with great organization distributes the tickets and collects the proceeds with precision to make it easy to order supplies.

The dinner is served buffet style with servers in matching aprons, dishing out the food and our Chef in his white smock and high hat carving the big roasts. The ladies of the congregation are great cooks (aren’t most Presbyterian Ladies!) and they prepare all the delicious desserts that are set out on a side buffet. We try to include even some older members of the Sunday School with filling water and juice glasses and clearing tables. They feel very important to be included!

The Hip of Beef Dinner is annual event that many from our congregation and surrounding community look forward to every year. Everyone who partakes leaves with a full belly and a lovely feeling of having shared a meal with some old or new friends. The willing workers leave after a full day of satisfying labour and lots of great memories.

Congregation: Zion Presbyterian Church
Contact: John Barrett
Email: john@veseys.com
Event: Century Fund Campaign, Raise the Roof Campaign
Description: Fundraising

Construction of Zion Presbyterian Church in Charlottetown commenced in 1911 with the first services being held in the spring of 2013. Operating in a building of this size and age is always a challenge for those entrusted with the maintenance and upkeep of a century old structure.

Leading up to the buildings 100th anniversary (which would be celebrated in 2013), the Session made a pledge to have the building in top notch condition in time for the anniversary as this would be a wonderful gift for the generations to come. An extensive review of the building inside and out was conducted by the Building Committee and amongst other things, a new roof was on the list of things to do.

In total, between renovations and repairs, it was estimated that we would require approximately \$300,000 to complete the tasks at hand. To begin a capital campaign, we launched the Century Fund in 2010. Members of the congregation were asked to consider making a three-year pledge towards this goal and once pledged, they would be invoiced in each of the three subsequent years. While there was some concern that these pledges might impact regular weekly contributions, the end-result was extremely positive and in fact, weekly gifts actually grew during this three-year campaign.

A special 'Zion 100' pin was designed, produced and given to any individual making a pledge to the Century fund regardless of how small their pledge may have been. It was interesting to see how many contributors sported their tiny lapel pin during the duration of the campaign.



As with any Capital Campaign of this size, a large thermometer style chart was erected in the fellowship hall so that people could see the progress of contributions from week to week.

Since the goal of this campaign was set (and reached) at \$100,000, there was still a shortfall between money raised and expenses incurred. These costs were covered by an interest free loan from the national church and one year after our century celebration there appeared to be an appetite to pay off our loan as quickly as possible so we the created the "Raise the Roof" Campaign and conducted this program in a similar fashion to the Century Fund project. Again, a special pin was created for all contributors and were very pleased to see that following a second three-year pledge-based campaign that all our costs had been recovered.



Should any church wish more detailed information as to how they could conduct their own capital campaign, you are invited to contact the Clerk of Session who would be pleased to meet with you and provide any information required (John Barrett john@veseys.com).

Congregation: WellSpring Presbyterian Church
Contact: Anne Bruce
Email: donghwison@gmail.com
Phone: 902-361-2138
Event: Yard Sale
Description: Fundraising

We are the Fundraising Committee of WellSpring Presbyterian Church, 8921 Commercial Rd., Route 4, Peter's Rd, PE. Our goal each year is to raise \$10,000 towards the annual budget. Since moving to our new location three years ago, we have been able to raise more than \$14,000 annually, mainly due to a Yard Sale. We are fortunate to be in an area where they have a gigantic "70 Mile Yard Sale" the third weekend in September and we register our site. We only have it on the Saturday and have raised approximately \$5,000 in each of the last 3 years.

We start reminding people in the summer about the date. We gather 2 days before the event to price the things that members, family and friends bring to us. On the day of the sale we are on site by 7:00 am for an 8:00 am opening. Around 1 pm we start putting selected items on for half price and then around 3 we start selling these items for \$5 a bag. We pack up at 4:00 pm and sort things that we can keep, things that can go to the thrift store and things that need to go to the dump. We are ready to leave by 5 pm. Our workers are as young as 9 and up into the 80's and we spend the day socializing with all who show up.

As well as yard sale items, we have a bake table with goodies and jams and jellies and produce; a table with knitted items and one with plants; tea, coffee, water, individual cookies, cinnamon rolls and muffins; and hot dogs and pop.

Our location is a big plus, as we are on the main road and have a big parking lot. We also have a big hall and were able to have it inside when the weather didn't cooperate.

Yard Sales aren't for everyone; but, for us, they are golden.

Congregation: First Presbyterian Church, Pictou, N.S.
Contact: Ann Marie Munro, former Sunday School Superintendent
Email: dam_munro@yahoo.ca
Phone: 902-485-6331
Event: Sunday school Mission Projects
Description: Raising funds for yearly Mission Projects

When you walk into our church hall you can't help but notice all the (Bristol board) balloons hanging on the wall. These are the success stories of our Sunday School Mission projects for the past 21 years. Each balloon has the name of the project, the year, and the amount raised. We have raised over \$31 000 since we began. Each of these projects have fueled the congregation's interest and awareness of mission work.

Most of the projects were chosen from the PWS&D catalogue. They were chosen with the children in mind, something they could relate to and sometimes it was something that was very much in the news at the time. It was an extra boost when we were able to choose a project that the Canadian Food Grain Bank would match.

There would be an education component to the project, where the children would learn about the country and the people we would be helping. We would do a presentation in church during the morning worship to keep the congregation informed as well. We also used a visual thermometer to keep everyone aware of our progress.

Fundraising took on a variety of activities. We had congregational soup luncheons, with a free will offering, gathered pledges for a walk/bike-a-thon along the Jitney Trail, bottle drives and penny parades. Our biggest hit was Mission Madness, a carnival for children, where they would buy tickets and go to different stations to play games and win prizes. We had a sign-up sheet for people to donate prizes and supplies. The congregation were great supporters. Some years, the children would also use their offering to symbolically buy items, such as school supplies, animals or food items needed for that year's mission project.

Some of our mission projects have included raising funds for school supplies, sending children to school, providing families with farm animals, helping farmers purchase supplies and drilling clean water wells. We also supported earthquake and tsunami relief efforts.

Congregation: St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church
Contact: Rev. Dr. Joon Ki Kim
Email: joonkikimfamily@gmail.com
Phone: 902-752-7316
Event: Concert for The Kirk
Description: Church Concert in support of organ restoration fund

Last year on February the 28th at 2pm, I had the pleasure of attending the Concert for The Kirk, an event in support of the organ restoration fund. The concert took place in the sanctuary, and celebrated music both old and new, mainly in the pop genre. The music itself was led by Ron MacDonald and his associates, and their talent and professionalism were felt through their passion for song and performance. This was an exceptionally planned event, as the Organ Restoration Committee were looking for creative ways to locally fundraise. Choir Director Sandra Johnson and other leaders took charge, and brought talented artists, efficient publicity and planning in order to create such a successful event. It was unconventional and untraditional, as it was led by jazzy piano accompaniment by Ron himself, and modern ballads and classic feel good songs from the 90s and back. This, however made it even more enjoyable and celebratory, as it brought the joy of nostalgic art and community into a holy space, becoming an inclusive and welcoming environment to invite non-church goers to experience something collaborative and beautiful, in a stain glassed, pew-filled sanctuary.

Each musical performance was vibrant, and engaging in its own unique way, but the true crowd pleaser was the rendition of "My Way" by the iconic Frank Sinatra sung by the Reverend of the congregation himself during the second half of the concert. It felt unexpected to hear and observe a pious figure sing a song lacking religious connotations and spiritual connection, but something greater was found through his singing instead. The audience began to feel his sincere vulnerability and soul through the piece and the stillness in the understanding that the Christian faith, Jesus Christ, spiritual connection and longing could be felt through living in a brave light, through breaking expectations and sharing a tender love was both powerful and overwhelming. Not only did it lead to a standing ovation in a church packed with people in awe, downstairs and upstairs a deafening applause heard with appreciation, but people were able to leave with a new understanding of the way and the life of ministry and music. A member of the Kirk, who has belonged to the congregation for many years said, "Every piece of music in the concert was a joyful song of praise offered to God."

For a mere \$15. per ticket, substantial revenue was generated and donated to the fund. The planning, preparation, scheduling, conflicts, and continuous effort was entirely for the love of the church, the willingness to invite newness into tradition, and to rebuild for the love of Christ. Beauty and happiness were felt through unique expression and the support of the community. The love from our small town created a memorable afternoon full of success through faith. We hope the church continues this mindset and energy into the years to come.

Congregation: Hardwood Lands Presbyterian Church (Nova Scotia)
Contact: Rev. Beth Mattinson
Email: elmsdale.hardwoodlands@gmail.com
Phone: 902-751-2150
Event: Campground Bake Sale
Description: Fundraising

The Hardwood Lands Church is a small rural congregation that does the usual fundraisers: a Valentine's Tea, a Spring Supper, and a Fall Supper. However, they do one more event that I never thought of, or had heard about, until I came in their midst. Twice a summer they hold a bake sale at one of the local campgrounds. The campground owner allows us to put up posters to advertise the bake sale, plus she makes numerous announcements over their PA system while we are there.

Bake goods are brought to the church building early in the morning. They are priced and loaded into vehicles for the trip to the campground. We set up our goods on tables provided in their recreation hall. It is surprising how quickly the campers come to buy our goods. How often can you have fresh, home made goods while camping? Within a couple of hours, we are usually sold out and on our way home.

I am sure there are other churches in close proximity to campgrounds – we pray that this might be an idea for others to try as well!

Congregation: Presbyterian Kirk, St George, NB
Contact: Rev Cheryl MacFadyen
Email: cmac1@nb.sympatico.ca
Phone: 506-466-6743
Event: Men's Morning Out
Description: Community oriented fellowship/outreach group

In the fall of 2003, under the leadership of Erik Kraglund, who was at that time a candidate for ministry, a group was started at the Kirk in St George called "Men's Morning Out." It is a ministry of friendship that reaches men in a welcoming way to come to the church hall, to enjoy refreshments, to chat and maybe play cards.

The men from the Kirk facilitate the meeting which happen each Tuesday from 8:30 to 12:00. One member ensures that the door is open early and gets the tea and coffee on. The snacks come from a variety of sources, sometimes there are leftovers from Sunday's fellowship time, and sometimes someone from the congregation sends in treats for the men. There is an informal atmosphere as some of the men stay for the whole morning, and some drop in for a shorter visit. They start by all sitting around the table until the time seems to be right for a game of cards, then the card players move to their own table while the rest continue to visit. Topics of conversation vary from a magazine article someone has brought in, to current events, to the happenings in their lives. This group offers support to its members in illness and offers a welcoming place to men who are looking for a safe place to stop by for coffee and conversation.

When there has been a male minister, he has attended the group faithfully. As a woman, I feel that my being there each week would interfere with the comradery. I know that there are times that women connect better with each other, and I am sure this is true for the men as well. Any time I stop in I am welcomed and easily fit into conversation. I find that when stopping by the Men's Morning Out that I have the opportunity to get to know the men in a genuine and informal setting. I also have the opportunity to chat with some who are adherents that would otherwise not be afforded.

Men's Moring Out gives those who are part of the community, in which the Kirk is located, to have a connection with the community of faith, so that when they need the prayers and caring of the congregation, they feel that there is a bond there for them. Those men of the Kirk who keep Men's Morning Out going are living what they believe and showing the face of Jesus in the form of friendship.

Congregation: St. James Presbyterian Church, Truro, NS
Contact: Kent MacLeod
Email: briteMACS@NS.Sympatico.ca
Phone: 902-890-8965
Event: St. James Laundry
Description: Free laundry services on a weekly basis

Approximately 6 years ago the Mission Committee of Session was looking for a project to help those in our community. Discussions with community members identified a need for laundry facilities for those living on low income. Many people either did not have access to a washer and dryer or could not afford to spend approximately \$10/load to use the local laundromat. St. James is fortunate to have a main church building and the Koinonia Centre. This building houses the church offices, library, as well as meeting and classroom space. Two classrooms were available for the laundry project.

The committee researched and visited another church in Saint John, NB who was operating a free laundry and learned some valuable information. In terms of financing the committee initially thought about fund raising. The committee was made aware of funding that was available through the PCC. An application was made to the Avondbloem Experimental Fund. There was great excitement when the application was approved and the money to purchase two washers and two dryers was received. The fund paid for the plumbing and electrical work that was required to renovate the classrooms into a laundry.

The money was also used for start-up supplies including clothes baskets, laundry detergent and a coffee maker plus supplies. The laundry opened May 2015. The laundry is open every Saturday morning from 8:30 until noon (or a little later depending on need). Two volunteers from the church are there each week. It is run on a first come first served basis with each person allowed to do one load. While waiting people can sit and chat and enjoy a cup of tea, coffee or hot chocolate. Volunteers bring muffins or other treats.

To pass the time there are reading materials, games and toys for children. A typical week sees 8 - 10 loads done but there are others who just drop in for a visit and a cup of coffee. I would be happy to chat with anyone looking for more details about this project.

Congregation: Zion Presbyterian Church
 Contact: John Barrett
 Email: john@veseys.com
 Event: Worship Platform Expansion
 Description: Maximizing your available space

If you wander into any new church these days, you'll likely notice that the Worship Platforms are much, much larger than in years gone by. As well, any of the elements found on the platform such as choir seats, pulpit, etc. are extremely portable so the space can be used for a wide range of purposes.

Prior to 2013, Zion's main Worship Platform was of a reasonable size and was much larger than it had originally been when the church opened in 1913. However, that current size was still a hindrance when it came to performing children's musicals or when outside groups would look at the space for a possible concert rental. As well, the choir seats were wooden pews that were screwed to the floor which meant it would take a tremendous amount of work to remove and store them for special events.



Session was provided a plan along with a budget and drawing of the proposed expansion along with a commitment from the Prince Edward Island Symphony that they would rent the Zion facility for two or three of their concerts each year if the proposed expansion were to take place. Once approved, there was a great deal of planning put in place to ensure that the work could be completed in under one week so that there was no interruption to Sunday services.

The Choir pews were replaced with proper choir chairs, the platform was extended by eight feet and re-carpeted with exactly the same colour as before. Today, we have perhaps the most versatile worship platform space in Charlottetown and while it's been a great benefit to our Music and Drama Ministries, we also now enjoy the revenue we have been able to generate from our many rentals throughout the year.



Congregation: First Presbyterian, Stellarton
Contact: Charles McPherson
Email: sfpc@bellalinat.com
Phone: 902-752-5935
Event: Numerous Events
Description: Each outlined below

Beadle Program

Since 1992 the Session made efforts to involve young people in Sunday worship. The young people were encouraged to serve as Beadles each Sunday morning. The office of the beadle is one that goes back to the Church of Scotland. The Sunday duty is to carry the Bible to the lectern and to read the lessons. Usually twice a year beadle Workshops were held on a Saturday where the young people learned the history of the beadle and were instructed by the Church school teachers and elders on how to carry the Bible into the Sanctuary, how to place it on the lectern and then coaching and instruction were offered for the reading of the scripture. This proved to be very successful as the young people were happy and eager to have such an important part in the worship of the church. The practice continues today although there are fewer young people who are trained as Beadles but none the less there is a good mix of young people and adults that carry in the Bible and read the lessons each Sunday.

Oscar the Can

About two years ago a member of the congregation mentioned this project that was successful in another congregation as a fun fund raiser. It started with 50 cans, which are a plain empty can with a slot in one end for money. The first year we started it in September and asked everyone to decorate their can. The cans were returned on Saturday for our Anniversary Congregational Banquet. A couple of people picked from people attending to be the judges. They were to pick Best Decorated, Heaviest and Most original. We had small prizes for them. It was a lot of fun and when the monies were all counted from each can we realized approximately \$1,900.00. Since it was so well received, we had another one with your cans to be decorated with a Valentine theme as February is the month of Love. It was very well received and again had prizes. This is a fun and easy fund raiser for the church.

Operation Christmas Cookie

The Town of Stellarton has a Tree Lighting Ceremony each year in the Town square which happens to be right beside our Church. As a nice gesture and a welcome to everyone who attends the Lighting the Outreach and Pastoral Committee of Session came up with Operation Christmas Cookie. We asked if anyone would like to make cookies for this and a group of volunteers came in and helped place a cookie in a baggie and we taped a message on the outside with "MERRY CHRISTMAS" from First Presbyterian Church, Stellarton on the

outside of the bag. The evening of the Lighting members volunteered to pass out a cookie to everyone who was at the Lighting. It was very well received by everyone attending.

Anniversary Potluck and Silent Auction

Each year on the weekend of the congregation's anniversary a potluck supper is held on the Saturday evening. People are encouraged to bring their favorite potluck dishes. Desserts and rolls are provided by the Christian Ladies Club and the AMS group. For many years a talent show was held following the dinner but in the last few years a silent auction has proven to be successful fundraiser as well as enhancing the fellowship at the event. For several weeks prior a call for donations for the auction is given in the bulletin and members of the Board of Managers canvass some of the local businesses for items for the auction. The items vary from pieces of art to smaller items. Prior to the banquet, individuals have the opportunity to place their bids by writing them on the papers placed beside the items. Following dinner, the fun begins as the "auctioneers" (two members of the Board) take their place and announce the bidding of each item. Last year's silent auction around \$1,200.00. All in all, a fun evening and successful fund raiser.

The Mitten Tree

For a number of years on the second Sunday of advent the story of the Mitten Tree is read to the children prior to them going downstairs to Sunday school. For a number of Sundays prior to this people are asked to bring mittens, gloves, hats and scarves for that Sunday. Prior to the reading of the story the children go out into the congregation and gather the items from the people and the items are then placed on an artificial tree in the sanctuary. The popularity of the Mitten tree has grown so much over the past number of years that a second tree had to be set up. The items are then taken to the elementary schools, Salvation Army, the Food Bank and Pictou County Child Home Care.

Congregation: St. James Presbyterian, the “Kirk”
Contact: David Robinson
Email: cerobinson@eastlink.ca
Phone: (902) 628-1041
Event: Nakhleh refugee family sponsorship
Description: Ecumenical sponsorship of a Syrian refugee family

During the winter of 2019, the Kirk was approached by the Brother’s Keeper Refugee Committee, comprising a number of Island churches led by Central Christian Church, to assist in the resettlement and sponsorship of a refugee family from Syria. The family selected was the Nakhleh family comprising George (36), Daisy (33), Mark (5) and Lulu (3). They belonged to the persecuted Christian minority in Syria. Both adults were pharmacists in Damascus, where their pharmacy was raided and trashed by ISIS rebels, and their home was bombed into a shell. They were applying for sponsorship from their temporary domicile in Lebanon.

The Kirk gladly agreed to assist in this most worthy enterprise. Between January and the end of February 2019, members of the Kirk donated most of the furnishings needed for the Nakhleh children’s bedroom, their new kitchen and bathroom, and a toonie drive raised the funds needed for two good car seats for the children. Kirk members helped to hunt for a suitable apartment for the family and helped move the donated furnishings into place in time for the family’s joyful arrival in Charlottetown on February 28, 2019. Brother’s Keeper funded the family’s monthly stipend, furnished the rest of the apartment, and facilitated connections to English language training.

While the Nakhleh family regularly worships at Central Christian, where there is an Arabic community, they have shared a number of special worship occasions with the Kirk’s membership. They receive regular visits from members of the Kirk’s Mission and Outreach committee and were hosted to a day at “Anne of Green Gables – the Musical” over the summer. When autumn arrived, the family was outfitted with all of the outdoor clothing needed for a Canadian winter, thanks to Kirk donors. The family received a number of Kirk gifts for Christmas, including a new computer, which George and Daisy will use to help study for pharmacy re-accreditation procedures in Canada.

During December and January, the Kirk led efforts to bring together a coalition of willing donors to put in place the funds needed for George to study for pharmacy re-accreditation, pay for the necessary examinations and related travel, and purchase texts and examination preparatory courses. This effort successfully raised the \$17,000 required for these initiatives. Thanks to these efforts, George will be able to pursue his dream of once again practising as a pharmacist.

It has been a joy to see this displaced family putting down roots and developing renewed confidence in a new, and safe, Canadian home. We can strongly recommend the efforts required to sponsor a refugee family and encourage others to discover this fulfilling Mission activity for themselves.

Anybody seeking information about the Kirk’s involvement in the sponsorship and continuing support of the Nakhleh family are invited to contact the Action Clerk of Session, David Robinson, at cerobinson@eastlink.ca.

Congregation: St. Andrews Presbyterian Church
Contact: Rev. Martin Kreplin
Email: martin@kreplin.ca
Phone: 506-382-7234
Event: Multicultural Outreach
Description: Recognition through Ministry of our cultural landscape

St. Andrew's Moncton thought of itself as a Scottish heritage congregation, which was only partly accurate in the late 1990's. It did have a Scottish history and roots and some of Scottish descent within. Reality was, the majority were many different nationalities! They needed to be legitimized among us to prepare our hearts for others of vastly different cultures arriving in Moncton. International days, with booths displaying cultural artifacts, language and food were held and barriers started to break down.

For decades there was a Bible Study group praying specifically for Christians and the Church in China. Eventually the first Chinese immigrants came among us. That group tended to the practical needs, life skills and spiritual needs of Chinese coming among us resulting in some whole families coming to Christ and being baptized. It became an International Bible Study group many of whom were curious about our Canadian culture and Christianity.

Placing the resources we have been entrusted with at God's disposal, St. Andrew's Moncton came to help birth a Chinese church and a French speaking church of folks from the Congo, both of whom have now evolved into independent congregations. Currently another church from the Congo, a Korean School run by one of our long term members, and a school helping new immigrants attain the GED equivalency with some assistance in ESL, are all using the facilities.

It remains a work under long term development. We are working at being more intentional about our outreach to international students attending regional Universities and Colleges. This is taking place by being present upon arrival at the airport, hosting welcome receptions within a short time after arrival providing practical gift bags and information. Material and practical needs, like furniture and transportation are being met as we are able. Special outings in summer and winter have been held, introducing folks to the wonders of the province of New Brunswick. Indoor soccer has been introduced among our internationals which can become quite competitive given the different countries represented! Volleyball is about to be introduced among some Brazilians among us. Full integration through leadership engagement has begun.

In Jesus' parable of the sheep and goats (Matthew 25), the question is asked, "When did we see you a stranger and invite you in...?" We are blessed to be a blessing, and we are being blessed by being a blessing to others who come among us.

Congregation: Zion Presbyterian Church
Contact: John Barrett
Email: john@veseys.com
Event: Fill the Loft Sunday
Description: Music

The Zion congregation is truly blessed to have a creative and talented Music Director. She is constantly coming forward with great worship enhancement ideas and together with the Lead Minister, they work extremely well in making every minute of Sunday worship meaningful, enjoyable and cohesive in its theme from beginning to end.

Our Music Ministry is led by four choirs: **Sanctuary** – Senior Choir, **Marcato** – Men’s Choir, **Legato** – Ladies Choir and **Cantabile** – Youth Choir. The Sanctuary Choir leads service at least 3 of the 4 Sundays each month and is sometimes enhanced or replaced by any of the other choral groups.

On any given Sunday, the Sanctuary Choir typically consists of approximately 35 members. As there are 52 chairs in our Choir Loft, the Music Director creates special Sunday services throughout the year known as “Fill the Loft Sunday”. The first of these events was held in 2018 when the Session & Board of Trustees were recruited to make up the choir one Sunday. They were kind enough to attend a rehearsal in the week leading up to the service and again, early morning on the Sunday they were signing. This sent a great message to the entire congregation of the support shown to the Zion Music Ministry by these two important groups within the church. It also gave these individuals the opportunity to



see what was involved in a regular weekly rehearsal and for one week at least, have a seat with a unique view as they looked out at the Zion congregation.

Considered a huge success, our Music Director followed up some months later with a “Fill the Loft Men’s Sunday” and “Fill the Loft Ladies Sunday”. Both these events were well subscribed and very popular for both the participants and the congregation alike.

We’d like to encourage other churches within our Synod to consider this idea as church choirs can always use a few more numbers and, it gives these one-time participants a window into the all-important Music Ministry.

Congregation: St. John's New London Presbyterian Church
Contact: Reverend Torrey Griffiths
Email: torreygriffiths@gmail.com
Phone: 902-856-2352
Event: St. John's New London PE, Presbyterian Church Choir
Description: A Country Church Choir

The organist/choir director for our church is Linda Paynter. Linda has been leading the choir for over 22 years. The Choir consists of 13 member, 3 men and 10 women. We all love to sing, and we sing from our hearts. Anyone who likes to sing is welcome to join the choir. Choir practice is every second Sunday morning before the 11:00 service. We have fun as a group. When choir members get together a lot of teasing and laughter takes place. We also help each other, encourage one another, and watch out for each other. We are sort of a family. Choir members also enjoy getting together outside the church setting, bringing their spouses along. We love singing older hymns and songs. We enjoy learning new contemporary ones as well. We tend to like the "livelier" songs and ones with good rhythm. We try to provide meaningful and uplifting music for our congregation every week (and hear lots of lovely comments). A few years ago, major renovations were done to the front of the church and video monitors were installed. With these updates our church has become a good facility to stage events. As a result, our choir has done several song services as fundraisers. Some of these song services included other musical groups or individuals as guests. The song services have proven to be an inexpensive, easy, and fun way to earn money for the church. The choir participated in a Remembrance Day/veteran themed concert held by the church this past November. We've also taken our voices on the road! A couple of years ago we were asked to do a song service in another church as a fundraiser. This song service was a wonderful success for their church. This year we have been invited to provide special music at the 175th Anniversary of Hartsville in July.

Our choir also loves to sing and entertain the residents at the local Community Care (nursing home) facility. We visit and mingle with them afterward. They are happy to see and hear us. It is very satisfying for us to brighten their day. Occasionally, we are invited to sing at Community Care facilities in Kensington. During the Christmas season, our choir members spend an evening Christmas caroling at the homes of the shut-ins in our rural community. The choir participates in the Kensington & Area Christian Council Christmas Carol service held each year in early December. We alternate with choirs in our area from all denominations to sing at the Sunday service at the annual Harvest Festival held in Kensington by of the Kensington & Area Christian Council.

Our choir combines with the joint church in Kensington for special services and funerals. The two churches alternate to host the joint candlelight service on Christmas Eve each year. The choir from the host church sings on this special evening. Recently the two churches have created a Joint Music Committee. The joint choirs have recently obtained access to the Christian Copywriters Licencing International (CCLI) website which has allowed more access to a wide variety of songs and music!

Congregation: St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Sydney Mines NS
Contact: Lillian Gillan (Worship Committee Member)
Email: nail@ns.sympatico.ca
Phone: 902-736-3225
Event: Sundaes on Sunday
Description: Summer Outdoor Hymn Sing

A sunny, summer Sunday evening allowed congregants, friends, and folks from the neighbourhood to gather on the church lawn for an informal hymn-sing followed by a "sundae bar". The event was designed for people of all ages and near-by parking allowed some people to enjoy the event while remaining in their cars. Congregants were primed to bring along lawn chairs or blankets and a contribution of a favourite topping for the 'sundae bar'. Favourite hymn selections were asked from the congregation a week ahead of time...a great way to involve folks and help promote the event. The program of favourite hymns was prepared by the minister, a scripture reading was added, and an experienced storyteller agreed to share the story "The Second Mile" by Truman Douglass as an alternative to a brief meditation. The church organist brought along his portable keyboard, and with the aid of a long extension cord, facilitated the leading of the hymn singing. The hymns, scripture, story and blessing unfolded in about 45 minutes...a suitable length for singing voices and the inter-generational gathering. The program was then followed by bowls of ice-cream and favourite toppings...that even got delivered to those sharing the event in their vehicles.

Logistics for the event were handled by the members of the Worship Committee. This included publicity...announcements sent out to other community churches and also placed in the local, free "community news" publications available weekly. Committee members also made sure there was plenty of ice-cream, ice-cream scoops and ice-cream "scoopers" recruited for the event, along with disposable bowls, napkins and spoons. A few jugs of cold water and glasses were also available on a "help yourself basis". Serving bowls and large spoons were available for the toppings that were provided. Logistics also included a "clean-up crew" to wash any dishes used and to put away equipment and supplies.

"Sundaes on Sunday" created a happy buzz...both before and after the gathering! It was a simple event to host and will be back at St. Andrew's in the summer by "popular demand"!

Congregation: St. Andrews Presbyterian Church
Contact: Rev. Martin Kreplin
Email: martin@kreplin.ca
Phone: 506-382-7234
Event: Children's Musical

One of the most remarkable events that have taken place in our congregation is the evolution of the children's annual Christmas musical where the participants range in age from 3 to Grade 8. Started 9 years ago, we had approximately 10 children participate with some readings between each song and costuming consisting mostly of matching t-shirts. Although it was modest in its infancy, the children loved it and their exuberance was infectious. Our musical director, being rather creative herself, began to search for programs that would further challenge them. Today, we have in the area of 37 children taking part! The acting roles and sets have grown and expanded, and every song is done with choreography and props and a lyric video on the screen.

There are now two plays each year, one at Christmas and one in the spring. We promote the play through FaceBook and on our church website. We have posters and playbills and postcards that folks can pass out to friends and neighbours and as a result, the church is full on performance day! As much as we are pleased to see this event attract new people, what really excites us is the change in the children. Not only are they enjoying the music and dance, they are learning more about what it means to live a life based on Christ – and it's fun! The growth we have seen occur in their level of confidence and knowledge of the scriptures is miraculous! This event has been a real blessing to this congregation and community.

(Some families did not consent to public photos, so we want to respect their decision, hence the smiley faces).



Congregation: St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Pictou, NS
Contact: Rev. Shelly Chandler
Email: revshellychandler@gmail.com
Phone: 902-485-5924
Event: Carols at the Kirk
Description: Ecumenical retelling of the Christmas story

One of the most anticipated events in the Town of Pictou, NS, is *Carols at the Kirk*. Held on the last Sunday evening in November, the five Town Churches of Pictou come together in the sanctuary of St. Andrew's for an ecumenical retelling of the Christmas story through scripture, choral selections, and the singing of traditional carols. Representatives from each Town Church—Anglican, Catholic, (two) Presbyterian, and United Churches—read scripture passages from the Christmas story, followed by the presentation of two well-prepared, sometimes, unique choral selections by their choir. Interspersed between the presentations is the congregational singing of traditional carols, allowing for the movement of the choirs to and from their seats. For the finale, the members of all five choirs congregate together at the front of the church to sing a couple of favourite carols, and the evening of song ends with everyone singing *Silent Night*. Following the service, everyone heads down to the hall, where ladies from all five churches have offered up goodies for the time of fellowship which follows. Through the years, we have also taken up a free-will offering which has gone to support local charities in our area.

The event began in 2008 and has grown each year. In 2019 there were more 300 people in attendance. Many people around Pictou anticipate the event and begin asking about the date in September! They tell me that this service kicks off the Advent and Christmas season for them. There are many who have told me that they don't attend any of the Town Churches, but they come out to hear *The Story* again and to be a part of this service. This evening is not a performance, it is truly an offering to God! I cannot express in words the power of the emotions that wash over you as we worship together as an entire community of Christ in our little Nova Scotia town.

I would be happy to provide anyone with a copy of our order of service or provide any additional information for those who would like to start a similar ecumenical event.
revshellychandler@gmail.com

Congregation: Zion Presbyterian Church
Contact: John Barrett
Email: john@veseys.com
Event: The churches of Prince Street, Charlottetown
Description: Ecumenical services for Advent & Lent

As you travel across our country, you'll certainly notice that in many Canadian towns and cities, most of the downtown churches were constructed almost next door to each other; in many cases on the very same street, Truro being a perfect example.

Whether it be Kitchener, Charlottetown or St. John's, the relative proximity of these various facilities lends itself extremely well for an opportunity to share in our common bond of Christ.

In the case of our own location on Prince Street in Charlottetown, we are no more than two blocks away from Central Christian, First Baptist, the Salvation Army, St. Paul's Anglican and Trinity United. Having recognized this as an ecumenical opportunity, several years ago the Pastors of these congregations got together to formulate a plan whereby all these "Prince Street Churches" could participate together for worship and fellowship during the seasons of Advent and Lent. More recently, the Roman Catholic Basilica has also come on board and these services now include their facility and members.

For each season, a five to six-week series of services are planned and scheduled for Wednesdays at noon with each service taking place at a different church on Prince Street. A theme is chosen for the series so that one service leads into the next giving those in regular attendance a comprehensive worship experience over the course of the series. A rather unique aspect of the worship planning is that the person leading the service is not the Pastor from that particular church. This adds an interesting perspective to the overall event and makes for a unique experience for both the worship leaders and the attendees. Worship time ranges from 20 to 30 minutes followed by a meal for all those in attendance.

Fellowship is also an important component of these Advent and Lenten series and the sharing of lunch by this multi-denominational congregation leads to new friendships and creates a new bond between the families who previously worshiped in isolation of each other. As a result, we see more Prince Street Christians attending events throughout the year that may take place in these facilities outside of Sunday morning worship. As well, being located in the heart of downtown, these brief services and meal have attracted those working in the city core who may not necessarily be regular attendees at a Charlottetown Church.

It's Zion's prayer that other Presbyterian churches in our denomination might take the lead in creating their own series of worship and fellowship events with their neighbouring churches.

Congregation: Union Presbyterian Church, Thorburn, NS
Contact: Rev. Greg Dickson, Interim Moderator
Email: gdickson@bellaliant.net
Phone: 902-759-8221
Event: Congregational Visitation
Description: Intentional Membership Recovery

It is a pleasure to remind everyone how important it is to church member retention/recovery that we reach out to those who for many reasons do not attend Sunday worship too.

Union Presbyterian Church in Thorburn, NS has – over the past year and a bit – undertaken to visit every member and adherent family and everyone else who at some time in the past attended services there. And this is not only the Elders taking responsibility for a district comprising a few known folks, but small teams of Elders and regular congregants who go from home to home; to the hospital and the local seniors' homes together. Occasionally, the Minister is asked to take Communion to a shut-in.

Since the people of Union Church took this initiative, they have experienced a few other unexpected results too. First, some of the conversations included, "I am glad to know someone cares enough for me that they would come to my home and invite me to come back to church. I discovered they actually missed me as much as I missed them." Others added observations about years gone by and realized there was a renewed movement of the Spirit in Thorburn that includes the growth of a monthly Board of Managers Dinner from barely 8-10 growing to 50+. There have also been some new memberships and the Baptism of a young lady who will be working at Camp Geddie this summer and hopes to attend CY 2020 with other young people from across the country. Many hands are working together to make Union a warm and welcoming place.

As Presbyterians, we are sometimes frightened by the idea of evangelism. But by simply reaching out in obedience to God's invitation to repair and restore our personal relationships one-by-one through visitation, the people of Union Church are discovering the power of the Holy Spirit using in their words and actions in ways they could never have asked for or imagined.

It's a good thing for us as a community of faithful believers and for the God we serve.

Congregation: St. Andrews Dartmouth
Contact: Rev. Dr. P.A. (Sandy) McDonald
Email: pamcdonald@ns.sympatico.ca
Phone: 902-469-4480
Event: Thanksgiving Service
Description: Membership/Outreach

In October 2019 we had a special Community Harvest Thanksgiving Service
Invitations were distributed in the immediate neighbourhood of the church by parishioners

The order of service was made very user friendly.

The focus was on the care of creation and one another and the giving of thanks for the
gifts of God in creation and in one another.

A special "sprinter" 30 voice choir made up of persons in the congregation who like to
sing led the singing and sang a few songs .

Pizza was served to all after the service.

There will be a "repeat" on October 4 in 2020!

Congregation: St. Matthew's Presbyterian Church, Elmsdale, Nova Scotia
Contact: Rev. Beth Mattinson
Email: elmsdale.hardwoodlands@gmail.com
Phone: 902-751-2150
Event: Two events for the community
Description: Use of our Space

Our church building consists only of the sanctuary, so the congregation has been blessed to use community spaces for programs!

Every Wednesday morning (except for Summer and Christmas breaks), our congregation hosts a Knit and Crochet group for anyone in our community. We have been blessed by the East Hants Learning Association – they allow us to use one of their classrooms in a building which previously was a school. We have received donations of yarn, knitting needles, and crochet hooks that people can have so they can learn. If they already knit or crochet, they are invited to come and work on their projects and share their knowledge with others. Many of those who come, make items for local charities. Everyone is invited to come join in the conversation and fun!

The other event we would like to share is our Vacation Bible Camp. We know that many churches hold a VBC, however, without having spaces in our church building we've been blessed to be able to use the Enfield Fire Hall. For a week each summer we hold morning sessions in the fire hall and invite children from our surrounding communities. For a small congregation, we have an average attendance of 20-25 children!

We feel that by holding these events outside of our church building, we build relationships with people from the community who might not otherwise come to church. We would like to encourage others to think about using community spaces for outreach and education!

Congregation: St. Columba Presbyterian Church (Mira Pastoral Charge)
Contact: Lydia E. MacKinnon
Email: skye@ns.sympatico.ca
Phone: 902-727-2625
Event: Tea and Talk

Our congregation is situated about 15 minutes outside of Sydney in a semi-rural area. There is no place in the community to buy a cup of tea or coffee and a treat. We thought about that and the congregation met. As a result, St. Columba Hall has become the “Tim Horton’s” of Marion Bridge every second Tuesday morning from October to the end of May. We meet from 10 A.M. – Noon. People are free to drop in any time and there is no charge. We work on providing a place with a welcoming atmosphere for people to come, have a cup of tea and chat with their friends and neighbours. There are usually about an equal number of men and women attending.

We started with two people volunteering to bring something for the folks to nibble on. That didn’t last long because several more would also bring things such as oatcakes, cheese and crackers, fruit, biscuits, etc. “just in case”, so we no longer use a list and people now bring something when they can. We have never come close to running out and are able to send some home with those who live alone or are not able to bake.

When people come, we have the tea and coffee ready, along with the goodies laid out on a table with plates and serviettes. People help themselves and they are welcome to come back for second helpings. We usually have at least 10 people from the congregation who sit at the table and make sure those who come feel comfortable. We find that having a long table is best as people can move around and visit several others during the morning. There is always a great deal of conversation and laughter!

There is no charge; we consider it an outreach to the community. There’s a table by the hall entrance. As we were cleaning up the first day, someone noticed money in a basket that sits on the table. We have never sought money from anyone who comes and we don’t watch to see who might be donating money, but at the end of every Tea and Talk, there is always something in the basket. We buy the tea and coffee with it and have also been able to buy some things which were needed in the kitchen, but our main focus is the people who come having an enjoyable time.

Tea and Talk is a simple idea, but people in the community look forward to it and we have found it to be a good outreach tool.

If you would like additional information, please email Lydia MacKinnon at: skye@ns.sympatico.ca.

Congregation: First Presbyterian Church, Pictou, NS
Contact: Chris MacDonald
Email: g.cmacdonald@eastlink.ca
Phone: 902-485-4011
Event: First Church Soup Luncheon
Description: Free Community Soup Luncheons

First Church, Pictou, Nova Scotia, provides a free Soup Luncheon in the Church Hall every Thursday from November until April. These Free Soup Luncheons are open to everyone in the community. The idea of the Luncheon began as an outreach project to support those who might be struggling within our community during the winter, but now has become a weekly social gathering for all people of the community. We host everyone who happens through the doors: young families, seniors, couples, singles, and everyone in between. For example, members of a local community choir come in to enjoy lunch together after their weekly singing practice. We also deliver some meals to shut-ins as required. A free will offering basket is in place, but there is no expectation, as the aim is simply to share good food and companionship.

Volunteers prepare a generous pot of chili, along with a pot of hearty chicken soup every week to take the chill off the heart on a cold day. From time to time, there might be another dish like meat loaf, casserole, for example. Rolls, sandwiches, hot dogs and sweets are also provided to complete the meal. Once or twice a year we are able to provide a full turkey dinner with all the trimmings and apple crisp for dessert.

But the food is only one part of the project – the conversation, the story telling, the laughter, all add to the sociability and warmth of the meal and the gathering. We are very fortunate that our minister, the Rev. Shelly Chandler, is very out-going and sociable. She makes her way around to every table in the Hall to chat with, and check on, everyone in the room.

While this may seem like a small outreach project, the result is far-reaching. Many people who come in have become good friends. Several people, who do not attend church, have sought out our minister away from these luncheons when in need of pastoral care. We have become a more open and caring community. We tend to “look after” each other more carefully. The volunteers have all become good friends that have learned to work together seamlessly.

We are very fortunate that many local businesses and organizations within the town provide us with assistance in obtaining various and services. But the Soup Luncheon Project could not be operated without the generous and on-going support of the members of First Church Congregation. This Congregation is very active in support of outreach both at home and through Presbyterian Sharing and Presbyterian World Service and Development.

If you'd like more information about our luncheons please feel free to contact our Clerk of Session, Chris MacDonald. g.cmacdonald@eastlink.ca

Congregation: Calvin Presbyterian Church, Halifax
Contact: Rev. Michael Koslowski
Email: calvinhalifax@bellaliant.com
Phone: 902-455-7435
Event: 3D Worship
Description: An alternative Intergenerational Worship Service

Four years ago, recognizing the challenge facing many of our younger families due to conflicting Sunday morning activities and commitments, members of our church leadership met with parents and families to discuss options. Out of those discussions came a suggestion to hold an alternate worship service on the first Saturday evening of each month. Simply referred to as '3D Worship' it is an evening grounded in dinner, discussion, and discipleship.

The evening begins with dinner, which is simple, and intentional 'child-friendly'. Grace is said, and families share fellowship time at table with each other. Toward the end of dinner, a faith-based focus is introduced for the night. This may be a passage of scripture, a person from the bible, or an aspect of spiritual practice. It might be introduced through a reading, a retelling of scripture, or a movie clip, for example.

Afterward, we move into a time of discussion. Sometimes this will involve splitting up to engage in age-based activities through which to explore the night's focus. Children may engage in discussion through activities such as crafts and games, while parents spend time in bible study. Other times, families or dinner table groups, may remain together, to engage in intergenerational activities and learning together. This may involve crafts, music, activity centers, and even games designed to encourage parents in sharing their faith with their children.

This service, originally aimed at families, now includes a number of individuals and seniors – adding an even greater sense of family to our gatherings with 'grandparents' being present.

Some of those attending are those we might never see on a Sunday. Some who have been coming, now invite friends (and their friends' children) to come. For Calvin, this has a blessed experience of witnessing people not only growing closer to Christ in their faith, but of growing closer to each other in community.

Should any church wish more detailed information regarding this service, or how they might adapt such an idea for use within their own congregation, you are invited to contact the Minister who would be pleased to provide any additional information they require.

Congregation: Glasgow Road Presbyterian Church
Contact: Rev. Thomas Kay
Email: rev.thomaskay@gmail.com
Phone: 902-394-2163
Event: Remembrance Day Lunch
Description: Community Event

Glasgow Road Presbyterian Church is a rural congregation serving a farming community in north central Queens County in Prince Edward Island.

The local cenotaph is located in the nearby village of Wheatley River, and Remembrance Day services attracts a large audience from the surrounding rural communities.

Located just up the road from the Cenotaph, Glasgow Road Presbyterian Church hosts a special lunch each year following the service with hot soup and delicious desserts. A freewill offering basket is available, and proceeds go towards a mission project.

The lunch is always well appreciated and attended by a cross-section of people from the wider community and provides not only a warm meal after a cold morning, but also an opportunity to meet and greet neighbours who are not part of the church community.

For more information about either of these events, contact Rev. Thomas J. Kay (902 394 2163) who can put you in touch with the appropriate person(s) in each congregation.

Congregation: St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church
Contact: Shirley MacDonald
Email: shirleyw@ns.sympatico.ca
Phone: 902-929-2370
Event: Women's Breakfast
Description: An annual celebration of Friendship, Fellowship, Fun and Food

For the past 20 years the women of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, North River/North Shore Pastoral Charge, have hosted a breakfast for the women of the churches in the Cape Breton Presbytery. It is held in our church Hall on the last Saturday of April, the day before Mission Awareness Sunday.

Early in March, the Coordinator sends out an information sheet and letter to every Minister and AMS in the Presbytery. If any church does not have an AMS group the information is sent to a contact person in that church. The information includes the date and time of the Breakfast, the name of the Group presenting the program, the title of the Program, and the cost. The name, phone number and the email address of the Registrar are also included. Those planning to attend notify the Registrar so we know how many to expect. Tickets are not sold in advance; Individuals pay at the door. The cost has had to be increased over the years but is kept as low as possible. This event is not meant to be a fund raiser. Money is used to cover the expenses and any surplus is given to the AMS for current projects. Members of our congregation cook, serve and do the clean up after the meal. We have found this to be a good way to attract and use the skills of some in the community who rarely get involved in church services or functions. This is seen as something they enjoy and are happy to lend a helping hand to their friends and neighbours. It has proven, for some, to be a side door entry into church life!

Breakfast always includes bacon, eggs, toast, juice, and tea or coffee. A guest book and a prayer request book are circulated. Following the breakfast, the women meet in the sanctuary for a time of worship, entertainment and fellowship. A hymn sing begins the day and is followed by a program, prepared and presented by the women from one of the churches in the Presbytery. Programs vary every year. We have had- guest speakers, Bible Quiz competitions, skits, plays, stories, etc. Last year, an outreach portion was included in the program – seeds, garden implements, and gift cards were provided by groups and members to be given to a transition house project in the area, which has included growing vegetables as part of its therapy. The morning ends with a gathering prayer, which includes the prayer requests recorded in the prayer book, and a benediction. Before everyone departs, we try to identify the group or persons that will be presenting the program in the following year. A note is sent the following January to remind them of their commitment.

The fact that each and every year, 100 or more women make the trip, many of them with a 1.5 hour drive each way to attend, is a yearly affirmation of its success.

Congregation: Hopewell Pastoral Charge: First Church, Hopewell, Middle River Church, Rocklin, St. Andrew's Church, Gairloch

Contact: Rev. Bonnie Langille

Email: bonniejcrockett@gmail.com

Phone: 902-396-6266 (cell)

Event: "Mini" Retreats

Description: A Wednesday Gathering

The last two years we have had a mini retreat on a Wednesday from 11-2 in May. This has been for women and they have been advertised throughout the Presbytery. We have started with kits from Group but have changed them to suit our needs. The first year we set up for a SeaSide Escape (beach time in May is fun) and the next for Café Choclat (who doesn't like chocolate!) The decorations were generally found at the local Dollar Store, from the beach or things from home. We had a good crowd the first year and it grew for the second as we needed to add chairs!! Ladies came from the Pastoral Charge, but others came from other communities- some even brought company that was visiting from another province.

Throughout the retreat we visited a Biblical story (Abram, Sarai and Hagar) (Jesus' miracles).

We started with a circle which of course had lots of conversations, the meeting of new and old friends, and lots of laughter. We played games that go with our themes. One game we had last year was the identifying of thirty different slogans for chocolate bars- the prize was the bar. We made crafts (due to the expense we made up our own crafts as the kits tend to be expensive.) We listened to music or sang and had time for silent reflections and prayer.

The best part of the day was when we gathered together for potluck and sat to enjoy a meal together. Last year we even had a chocolate fondue! It was interesting to hear and see the conversations developing among the new and old friends.

I also took the retreat to another congregation for an evening get-together with a few men included. They enjoyed the chocolate and games as well. Many said they were looking forward to this year as we are setting our sights a bit higher as we go to a Cozy Mountain Lodge in May.



Congregation: St. David's, Toney River, Pictou County, NS
Contact: Darlene Henderson
Email: dm_henderson@hotmail.com
Phone: 902-485-1882
Event: Something Special
Description: Reaching Out to Women in the Community

Many years ago our new minister Rev. Murray Graham and his wife Phyllis arrived to our two point charge St. George's and St. David's on the Sunrise Trail, Pictou Co., N.S. After getting settled in, Phyllis started a Ladies Bible Study in both churches, the churches alternated weeks, we met every Tuesday morning at the manse, for nine months of the year right up to the time Phyllis and Murray retired.

As we studied, we grew in our faith together and were a source of support and encouragement for one another during the up and downs of everyday life. Then one day Phyllis said, "we all know women of all ages who are going through some type of hardships, discouragement, problems of everyday life and could use some source of encouragement and hope, lets create a special morning to reach out to women, everyone welcome from the community and surrounding areas".

Hence "Something Special", began, one was held in the Spring and one in the Fall and continued after the Graham's retired. The first Something Special was held in the Spring of 1991 and the purpose was to give hope, inspiration, a time to fellowship together and share God's love. Since 2010 there is just one hosted a year now, St. David's ladies' bible study still host the event every Fall in October. This year we will be hosting the 45th "Something Special".

Our program consists of, a main guest speaker, someone speaks on a specific health topic, special music (we ask someone to sing two inspirational songs) , a craft demonstration, Seeds of Hope Bookstore sets up a table and we have a refreshment time. There is usually a theme chosen by our main speaker. Our guest speakers have come from all walks of life and share how faith and hope are part of their life. Myrna our organist will pick out two congregational hymns.

Through the years, people have told us that they had positive experiences and heard what they needed at that time in their life. It has also allowed us to learn about different groups and organizations around us. Even speakers have left not only giving but also receiving. People from different Presbyteries look forward to this annual event. We are thankful and give God the Glory for each and every year.

Congregation: WellSpring & Belfast Presbyterian Churches
Contact: Cindy MacLeod or Amelia Campbell
Email: acwr2020@gmail.com
Phone: 902-838-4117
Event: Atlantic Women's Christian Retreat
Description: A Retreat for women to come together to share God's goodness & love.

In the Spring of 2010, a group of women from WellSpring went to a women's retreat in New Brunswick for some the first time in our lives. We were asked by the some of the organizing ladies there would we consider hosting a Women's Retreat in Eastern PEI the following year. Our first thought was no, we are just in the middle of looking for a new minister and we would be too busy. But the ladies asking us felt we should give it some serious thought and prayer. We all gather in one of our rooms and ask God's direction as what He would have us do. Well God not only answered our prayers, but He led us every step of the way. In May 2011 we had a sellout retreat and many lives were touched and saved that very weekend. The retreat also strengthened our own faith so we decided we would host the next one as well in 2012. Again challenging, encouraging and strengthening the faith of all who attended. The Retreats then went to Clyde River and Moncton for the next few years.

The Women's Retreat have run for nearly 30 years but the last one was in 2016. Last spring some ladies from both WellSpring and Belfast churches got together and felt God was wanting us to host another Retreat in Eastern PEI. Prayers, plans and fundraising began in the fall of 2019 to make things happen. We now have our dates booked for October 16 – 18, 2020 at Rodd's Brudenell Resort, our speaker is Aubrey Sampson from Chicago. We are still working on some details and are about ready to launch our website and get our brochures out to the different churches in Atlantic Canada.

Now, as we continue on our journey we pray and wait for the registrations to come in so that God can work the Holy Spirit into more lives as well as strengthen those of us who have already come to know Him. This is our journey to help spread God's Word one day at a time.

Please pray for us as a planning committee but also pray for the opportunity for all those that God wants there to be able to be there and remove all barriers so they can be touched by God.

Should any church wish more details or information be email us at acwr2020@gmail.com

Congregation: Summerside Presbyterian Church
Contact: Nancy Harvey
Email: nancyfrankharvey@gmail.com
Phone: 902-887-2956
Event: Sensory-Friendly Hallowe'en Event
Description: A sensory-friendly party for children with physical or mental barriers

Just before Halloween last fall while most families with kids were gearing up for the spookiest, most frightening and most treat-filled night of the year, members of Summerside Presbyterian Church had the opportunity to host a Halloween party with a difference.

We were reminded by our minister and his wife, whose children are on the autism spectrum, that traditional Halloween parties can be intimidating for those with special needs. Children facing mental or physical challenges may face accessibility issues, be afraid of the dark, of scary costumes, or of loud noises and may be unable to enjoy traditional treats. For these kids and their parents getting into the spirit of the season is a bit more complicated.

Recognizing a need in the community and capitalizing on the facts that our building is fully accessible and that the congregation is welcoming and open, Session brought the idea of planning and hosting an event that would provide safe, wholesome fun for kids of all ages to the congregation. The congregation came together in a show of support for the event. Members were very generous with both their time and donations of candy and decorations. We also received donations from groups that provide services for children with special needs, who heard about the event through social media or by word of mouth. We were overwhelmed by the support!

Kids and adults came dressed in elaborate costumes for the not-so-scary Halloween party. They participated in games, made crafts, had pictures taken at a photo booth and got lots and lots of treats! It was great for those who were not comfortable going trick-or-treating in dark and unfamiliar places.

For those who may wonder about the church hosting an event that celebrates a seasonal event with dark aspects, this sensory-friendly event focused on children having fun in a safe environment. It was all about games, stories, treats and having a good time!

Congregation: North Tryon Presbyterian Church (NTPC)
Contact: Doris Taylor
Email: drtaylor08@gmail.com
Phone: 902-569-5362
Event: Youth Ministry
Description: Weekly Youth Ministry (EPIC) focused on bible teaching, worship, fellowship, food and fun!

In 2014, the Congregation of NTPC found itself in need of a full time Minister and under the direction of Session, a search committee was established. In addition to the duties of seeking out an individual with specific traits necessary for effective ministry of our Congregation, the committee was tasked with paying particular attention to the interests expressed by any potential candidates for building on our existing children's ministry, which at that time consisted simply of Sunday School and Nursery during morning worship, with weekly attendance of approximately 14 children, including infants and toddlers on any given Sunday. At that time, no programming was in place for youth ministry. And so the search began, and in due time, a worthy candidate was found. Within 6 months of our new Pastor's arrival, EPIC (Everyone Perfect In Christ) was established and for the first few weeks, participants consisted of our own 2 or 3 teens and a few of their friends from school. With a leadership team of 3, which included our Pastor and 2 Sunday School teachers, EPIC soon grew to a group of approximately 15 youth, meeting each Sunday evening from 6 to 8 p.m. for games, worship and fellowship.

Over the past 5 years EPIC has recruited an additional 5 leaders, one an EPIC graduate herself and has become an outreach to youth not only in North Tryon, but to all surrounding communities. Today, EPIC consists of anywhere from 20 – 25 youth, with a separate meeting of 8 – 10 youth who gather each Sunday from 4 – 6 p.m. for Bible study, discussion and supper. The spiritual growth of the EPIC youth is evident in their commitment to the program, their willingness to participate in outreach ministry, and their participation in ministry to young children. Our EPIC youth have been instrumental in organizing and providing leadership at our Vacation Bible School, which has been offered for one week each summer for the past 5 years. Several of our EPIC youth have also held leadership roles for the past number of years at Camp Keir. EPIC youth have participated in a Sunday morning service quarterly for the past 5 years at NTPC, which has recently included bringing the morning message to the congregation, and each year 3 or 4 youth have given testimonies to the congregation of their faith in Jesus. Some of the EPIC youth have been invited to share with other congregations and positive reports have been received of the enthusiasm demonstrated in their delivery of the word of God and their love of Jesus. We were very pleased to learn recently that one of our EPIC graduates is this year's recipient of the Davida Stewart Award for Young Women in Presbyterian Church leadership.

A recent gathering of EPIC youth for their annual winter retreat saw 4 young people express their desire to commit their lives to Jesus. Some of these youth do not come from Christian homes, and if not for EPIC, would have no Godly influence in their lives. It is indeed the working of the Holy Spirit that has seen a very sparse children's ministry with limited resources grow to a dynamic, thriving outreach that has extended far beyond our little community of North Tryon. It is our belief that God has blessed the efforts of a small handful of volunteers who recognized a need for youth ministry, have dedicated their efforts and time to provide this ministry, and have been faithful in following Jesus' instruction regarding the value of investing in children, when He instructed, "Let the children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the Kingdom of Heaven belongs to such as these." Matthew 19:14

We, the Session of North Tryon Presbyterian Church, would be delighted to share any further information, if requested, to any individuals who may be interested in learning more about EPIC, our Good News Story.

Congregation: Bethel Riverview
Contact: Rev Charles Cook
Email: cscook@bethelpresbyterian.ca
Phone: 506-386-6254
Event: Youth Group
Description: Outreach

Bethel Riverview has been running a mid-week youth program for many years now and we have seen many ups and downs in terms of numbers attending. Lately we have been attempting to support the Christian student group at our local high school providing pizza from time to time.

This past fall we took a big step inviting a speaker from Ravi Zacharias Ministries to come and speak at a teen focussed event. Ravi Zacharias Ministries is an association of Christian apologists who present the good news of Jesus Christ and the evidence that exists for us to believe. We were very uncertain as to the turnout to expect and what the evening would be like as well as our efforts to have the speaker attend the high school group and a gathering at one of our local universities.

We were delighted to see over fifty teenagers at Bethel that evening, and I must say, the speaker gave a very thoughtful and deeply compelling message. There was nothing light and fluffy about it as he spoke about his work with some of our nation's most troubling situations leading to the good news of Jesus Christ. You could've heard a pin drop and afterwards we opened it up to questions about anything and everything pertaining to our lives as Christians in this world which lasted for another forty minutes. After this we went downstairs for food where such interaction continued. There was a sizeable gathering at the high school as well during the lunch hour meeting time for the ISCF. Many questions were asked, and much discussion had. Bethel provided much pizza for that event.

In retrospect this was perhaps the highlight of our entire year. We saw teenagers who will tell you they have been motivated to go deeper in their faith and to pursue the answers to the questions they have. We even received a call from a mother who lives an hour and a half away who wanted to thank us for hosting such an event. She heard the interview Bethel's minister did on the Christian radio station and brought her son. She says he was encouraged in his own faith and her only regret was that her other boy wasn't there as well. We adults were encouraged as well to think and seek the truth and to see that our faith can stand up to the questions of this present culture.