



# NEWS AT FIRST

NOVEMBER 2023

ISSUE #4

Welcome to our fourth issue of News At First. As usual there is lots of news to share. But first a huge thank you to Mercedes Blair Photography for the gorgeous photo of our church building on the cover. It is used with permission, and as you can tell from the propane tanks in the scene, it has been taken this fall.

This makes a great segue to ...

### **Update on the Heating System**

Submitted by Alison MacLean

Our dream of a warm sanctuary, cozy hall and meeting rooms for the winter of 2023/2024 has come true and indeed 'it is lovely'. Thanks again to Rob Dickson and Grant Campbell and the Property Committee for their efforts in steering the project through all its twists and turns and to Don Lamond for nursing the old system as it served out its last days. They have left us with a much greener and more efficient warmth.

Since our last article in June of this year, the two propane tanks have been properly repositioned and secured. The old oil tanks in the basement have been pumped dry of furnace oil and are ready to be removed. All 95 radiators have been installed in the Sanctuary and in the Hall! All that remains to be done now are cosmetic touch ups to the walls behind some of the radiators and the wrapping of some pipes in the Hall.

The new system has undergone a number of tests and is working efficiently. The project is now concluded! The other good news is that the project has come in very close to the original quote of just under \$550,000.

Remarkably \$196,000 has come from donations from members of the Congregation and from fundraising. Another \$44,000 has come from grant money (thanks to Carolyn Dalrymple.) The response to "Your Chance to Radiate", the campaign spearheaded by Grant Campbell and the Property Committee to help pay for the radiators, has yielded returns of over \$8,000 since it began in June of

2023. You may already have met “The Sooty Chimney Sweep’, who has been seen around the premises lately, hoping to convince others to contribute the cost of one radiator (\$1,200). Be courteous to him. He is nearing retirement and happy that we have no more ‘sooty chimneys’ to be cleaned. He is eager to help us out in our efforts to raise funds and to take the pressure off the Trustees in paying for the radiators. As before, you may leave your donation with Tracy in the office with specific directions that your money be put toward the radiator costs.

Once again, we extend thanks to Superior Propane and to Matthew Lavers of Portable Welders.

### **Message from Tracy Boutilier:**



I’m not sure what I was thinking when Valerie left. I was treating her leaving like she was going away on an extra-long vacation. On that last day, after the morning worship, she came for lunch, a chance to sit with the boys, mom, Stevie and I one more time before heading to Newfoundland. It was a time to relax after a stressful Spring, and busy last few days. We ate, laughed, told stories, heard about her new church and enjoyed our time together. When she really had to leave to catch the ferry, everyone got a hug and a ‘see you again’. I walked her to the door, got one last hug and then she was gone.

It hit me in mid-September, that she really was not coming back. I sent her a text saying, “it’s sinking in ... you are not on vacation and are not coming back.” She answered with “I keep thinking, I should check this with Tracy... but you are not here.” While this change makes me a little sad, I can’t help but be happy for her. She is home where her heart is, and she is happy, and I will see her again – Stevie and I are planning a visit next summer.

Change is never easy, but it is a part of life. It just seems that lately there is so much change. Most of it good, some not so good. Some of it is temporary and some is permanent. Life is all about change, from something as simple as changing out the bird feeders on the deck to a bigger change like a new job and moving to another province. It also means we have Cath with us as we work towards discerning our future and the ministry team needed for the years

ahead. Everything happens for a reason, and I truly believe it is usually for the better.

The same can be said for our feathered and furry friends in the yard. Everything from the weather, to removing the feeders, to a fallen tree in the yard is change for them. We had a large branch fall last year with Fiona, not to the ground as it got stuck in the trunk. The squirrels and birds loved it! The squirrels raced along the branch between the trees, the birds would sit on it overlooking the yard. Well, this Fall that branch fell further and we could now reach it to remove it. Now the squirrel sits on the wood pile and voices his displeasure because his path from the back pine trees up to the deck is gone! For days he sat out there squawking at us. As for the birds? I don't think they even noticed! There are plenty of other branches they can perch on, and the view is the same. The same change means different things for different folks.

How we deal with the change, whether it's good or bad, is different for everyone. Some folks sit and squawk, some don't seem to notice and take it in stride. Others it takes a while to feel the difference. Life would be pretty boring without change and maybe ... just maybe... what is on the other side is a good thing.

#### **Message from Chris Bowman:**



I want to take the opportunity to talk to you about past and upcoming concerts, and showcase our amazing youth.

This year's Summer Lunchtime Concert series has been considered by many to be the best one yet. We were able to offer ten concerts this summer, with several successful Rising Stars showcases, as well as several established artists. I was delighted to host several concerts, play for several of our rising stars, and perform my own piano duet concert. All told, we had around 700 in the audience, and brought in over \$3,700 in donations. Thanks to all the volunteers who helped make it happen, and all the performers who once again donated their talents and time.

I am so thrilled to report that our new youth choir initiative, Resonance, has started up this fall. Resonance is a social-justice based choir that was the



brainchild of last year's choral apprentices and their friends. We have over 20 youth taking part weekly, including all four of our choral apprentices (more about them elsewhere in this newsletter). I am acting as a musical mentor for this ensemble, which also has four amazing youth leaders. Resonance is a project-based choir, with a fall project happening now and a second project beginning this spring.

You will have had two chances to hear Resonance this fall. They provided musical leadership on Sunday, November 12 during our 10:30 service. And their first concert was Anniversary Sunday afternoon, November 19, at 3:00 p.m. Admission to their first concert was by donation to a non-profit chosen by the youth, and for this first project they have chosen First United as the recipient of their donations. Trust me when I tell you that these incredible youth are enriching my life and they will enrich yours when you hear them sing and hear their message!

Please take note of the upcoming concerts at First United this fall, including

- Sat., December 2, 7pm, our annual Candlelight Christmas Concert featuring our church choir and handbell ensemble
- Sat., December 9, 7pm, Handel's Messiah by Cantabile Singers
- Friday evening, December 15, Brigid Trio's popular Christmas concert (featuring Resonance)
- Sunday afternoon, December 17, Creative Voices concert

#### **Message from Rev. Cathie Crooks:**



***To Bless the Space Between Us***, written by the late Irish theologian and Celtic scholar John O'Donohue, is a book of blessings – blessings for everything from beginnings to endings, from thresholds to homecomings, from states of the heart to callings and vocations. The following excerpt is from his blessing ***For Work***:

May dawn find hope in your heart,  
approaching your new day with dreams,  
possibilities, and promises.

May evening find you gracious and fulfilled.

Four months into my fulltime appointment at First United, I am thrilled to report that John O'Donohue's words resonate with me, and I owe that reality to *you*, the

good folk of First United, and to your anticipatory enthusiasm to dig deep into the “dreams, possibilities, and promises” that stretch out before us.

A precursor to digging deep has been a tremendous show of commitment and hard work from our Council and each of its Committees and Groups. With the comprehensive review of two essential documents now completed, i.e., the Council Booklet (2018) which outlines the roles and responsibilities of our governance structure, and the Profile Report (2021) which offers recommendations across all areas of our congregation’s life and ministry, the Council is poised now to make revisions to the Council Booklet and to engage anew the recommendations that were made two years ago in the Profile Report.

To say that it has been heartening to watch Council and every Committee and Group carry out this work in record time (i.e., between our Council meeting on September 26<sup>th</sup> and our extra Council meeting on October 17<sup>th</sup>) is an understatement! It has been exciting to witness the dedication of our lay leadership as they’ve tended to these tasks, i.e., getting our house in order, so that we can free up energy, imagination, creativity, and curiosity to discern a life-giving way forward for First United in the coming weeks and months.

My prayer for each of you is that John O’Donohue’s blessing ***For Work*** resonates with you, too, as we worship and work together in the ministries to which we are being called!

Yours in gratitude and joy!  
Cathie

### **An Update from the Profile Team**

The Profile Team, appointed by Council at its September meeting, has been steadily at work updating the 2021 Community of Faith Profile. As you may recall the Community of Faith Profile is the congregation’s way of reaching out to the Region and to our nation-wide community to share the story of our “community of faith”. It tells others ‘Who we are’ and how we are ‘being a church’ in this world today. It is posted on our own website and eventually on Churchhub where it can be accessed by ministers across Canada seeking employment. As you know,

our Appointed Minister Rev. Cathie Crooks has been appointed for a year ending June 30, 2024.

The Profile Team is tasked with the writing of our Community of Faith Story, as well as the Job Description(s) for the recommended Ministry Position(s) as we move forward. To that end, we will be interviewing our Ministry Team, the Finance, M & P, Property, Christian Life and Growth Committees as well as the UCW. We will send a series of questions to other Committees for consideration and input. We will also invite members of the Congregation to meet informally in the Parlour to share with the Profile Team what they think is important as we move forward. All this will lead to a formal Congregational Meeting to consider the updated Community of Faith Profile and vote on the Recommended Job Description(s) for Ministry Position(s). If the Community of Faith Story and the Recommended Job Description(s) are approved by the Congregation, then a Search Committee is formed.

We would like to invite members of the congregation to one of the following 'Conversations with the Profile Team' immediately after church, in the Parlour, on November 26<sup>th</sup>, December 3<sup>rd</sup> or December 10<sup>th</sup>. Members of the Profile Team are Grant Langford, Kathy Mack, Alison MacLean, and Jud Pearson. The Regional Liaison supporting us all in this journey is Linda Atkinson from Milford Lantz United Church.

### Choral Apprentices

We are fortunate this year to have four Choral Apprentices, made possible thanks to the Ann MacIntosh Gourley Memorial Music Fund and the Moffatt Fund.



**Holden Hoover**, a vibrant 15-year-old, is passionately committed to music at Cobequid Educational Center in Truro, Nova Scotia. Since April 2022, he has been honing his vocal skills as a Choral Apprentice with the First United Church Choir while delighting in singing, performing, and playing the trumpet. A versatile musician, he appreciates all music genres and is excited to contribute to the upcoming Resonance Youth Choir at First United Church. Additional musical engagements see him

performing with the CEC Choir and Band, taking vocal lessons with Brenna Conrad, annually participating in the Truro Music Festival, and consistently undertaking the Royal Conservatory Vocal Exam. Also, he notably had a blast and gained substantial experience in CEC's 2022-2023 production of the musical 'Footloose.'



**Olivia Gouthro** is 15 years old and has been taking voice lessons with Brenna Conrad since the age of 8. She loves everything musical, including playing the piano, participating in her school and community musicals, and participating annually in the Truro Music Festival.



**Thomas McDowall** is a 17-year-old musician whose passions include voice, piano and percussion. He has been participating in the music festival for voice for four years and has been taking lessons under Ross Thompson for two years. He enjoys reading and writing and has a dog named Teddy.



**Lily Arthurs** is a grade 10 student at CEC. She participates in many different aspects of music. She takes voice lessons with Brenna Conrad, takes piano lessons, sings in the CEC and Resonance choirs, and plays the oboe in the CEC band. She performed in CEC's production of Footloose as well as Spotlight's production of Matilda Jr. Most recently she played a leading role as the Witch in Spotlight's Into the Woods Jr - this was role she particularly enjoyed! Outside of music, she also throws hammer and discus in track and field and enjoys



cooking, baking and seeing friends and family in her spare time. She is very excited to participate in the First United Church Choir as an Apprentice this year.

### Messiah presented at First United Church in Truro

On December 9 the Cantabile Singers of Truro will once again present an audience favourite, Handel's Messiah. What you may not know is that First United Church Senior Choir, as well as the Girls' Choir, presented the Easter section of Messiah in 1963. Under the music leadership of our own John McElhiney (behind the pulpit), this is believed to be the first performance of Messiah in this church.



With the help of John McElhiney and Barbara Shuh we have identified many of the singers. See if you can fill in some of the blanks.

First Row (L to R): Rev. Stanley MacQueen, \_\_, Geline Byers, Barbara Shuh, \_\_, Cheryl Joyce, \_\_, \_\_, \_\_, Barbara McKeen, Barbara Hare, Linda Bennett, Susan Totten, Glenda Little, Rev. Ian Lynk.

Second Row: Carolyn Pauley, Judy Elliott, Judy Taylor, Carol Guy, Kathryn MacDonald, Susan Shuh, Mary Shephard (soprano soloist), John McElhiney, Catherine Judah Daniel (alto soloist), Lorna MacPhee, Karen McCallum, Ruth Danson, \_ , \_ .

Third Row: \_ , \_ , Everyn Shuh, Florence MacDonald, Betty Latimer, Charlotte MacQuarrie, \_ , \_ , Eurella Wright, Kathy Creelman, Wilma Carruthers, Diana MacPhee, \_ , Jewel MacLean.

Back Row: John Coulter (tenor soloist), \_ , \_ , Peter Meerburg?, \_ , Ed Shuh, \_ , Malcolm MacQuarrie, \_ , Donnie Byers, \_ , Les Carruthers, \_ , Percy Kennedy (bass soloist).

(Thanks to John for providing the photo.)

And while we are mentioning Handell's Messiah, here's the information you need to plan your attendance at this year's performance:

Cantabile  
Cantabile Society Presents

HANDEL'S  
*MESSIAH*

SATURDAY  
DECEMBER 9TH  
7PM  
711 Prince Street  
First United Church  
Truro

Tickets \$25/\$5 students  
Ticketstripe.com/CantabileHandelsMessiah  
MacQuarries (Esplanade location)  
First United Church Office

First United Church's Annual  
*Candlelight  
Christmas Concert*  
First United Church Choir  
Handbell Ensemble and  
other musicians  
Saturday, December 3rd 7pm  
Admission by Donation

But first be certain to put First United's Candlelight Concert in your calendar. It's always the perfect way to start the Christmas Season.



# PHOTO GALLERY

## Truro's Pride Parade



## First United Church Summer Concert Series Rising Stars





Spotlight Theatre Camp Cameo







**Handbell Festival in Moncton, NB**

## Every Child Matters – Day of Truth and Reconciliation



### Update on Craft Supply and Fabric Sale

On October 14 an extra craft supply and fabric sale was held. This raised an amazing \$3145.35, in addition to the \$3445.45 raised in the spring. So, a whopping \$6580.80 made its way to help fund the new heating system.

In addition, donation boxes were put out, this time raising \$166.70 for Christmas Index.

Many thanks to all who contributed – donating materials, carrying goods up to the gym from storage and back down again, those who worked on sorting throughout the year, and special thanks to Twyla Wilband for her leadership.



Sarah MacLean Emery  
with our Sunday School

Mosaic Creations Art  
Project: "Tiny Pieces of  
God"



**Resonance – our new Social-Justice based Youth Choir affiliated with First United**



**First United Church's 263<sup>rd</sup> Anniversary Sunday  
With Rev. Catherine Stuart**



Ukulele Church



**Save the Date – Choirs for Comfort**

Saturday, February 10, 2024 at 3 p.m. at First United  
In support of the Colchester Food Bank

Your Communications Committee hopes you have enjoyed this edition of News At First. Please send suggestions and feedback to:

Alison MacLean

[twoals@eastlink.ca](mailto:twoals@eastlink.ca)

Carolyn Hunt

[carolynhunt7@gmail.com](mailto:carolynhunt7@gmail.com)

Pam Bowman

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