



NEWS AT FIRST
JUNE 2025, ISSUE #7

Celebrating 100 Years of Faith and Fellowship

Contributed by our Roving Reporter Honorah Sheppard

On June 1st, I had the privilege of attending a very special service at First United Church, celebrating the 100th anniversary of the United Church of Canada.

As I sat in the pew during the celebration, I listened.

I listened to the vibrant opening music—*Toccata on Ein Feste Burg*—played on the organ by Chris Bowman.

I listened to the acknowledgement of People and Place and the congregational response.

I listened to the gentle voice of Rev. Cath give her Call to the Church, her warm welcoming, Centering Prayer, and her heartfelt Reflection.

I listened to announcements.

I listened to all the people who contributed to the special service, offering a children's story time, reading from Sacred Story and Prayer of Dedication.

I listened to the choir sing and the congregation sing along. I listened to more music: piano, drums, and handbells.

I listened to the prayers for ourselves and for the world.

As I listened, I could hear the wonderful sound of small children in the background.

And as I listened, I noted I was not alone. There were people listening around me. People from our own First United and from Brunswick Street United Church, Community United Church, Hilden United Church, Old Barns United Church and St. Andrews United Church.

As a group, we were united.

We were all listening—to the music, the choir, the sacred stories.

We were together, not only celebrating 100 years of uniting as a church but as

people together listening and hearing and feeling the spirit of inclusion, love, faith, peace, compassion, respect, vision and hope.

As the service came to a close, we listened once more as a united community, this time to a joyful rendition of Joyful, Joyful with Chris on piano accompanied by the First United Church Handbell Ensemble. After the closing music Rev. Cath invited our surprise guest, Elva Archibald—100 years of age—to come to the front of the sanctuary to cut the 100th anniversary cake!



I sat and watched people leave, seeing so many smiling faces as they greeted old friends and neighbours, and as I looked around, I could see clearly that this congregation has not only endured but thrived across generations, thanks to the love and dedication of its members.

Following the service, I stayed for a piece of the lovely anniversary cake. As I mingled, I spoke to a parent of one of the small children, had a look at a beautiful framed rock picture made for Father's day by the children at Sunday School and I was introduced by Rev. Cath to our special guest Elva and her family. I marvelled as I could see the years unfolding, as one generation after another stepped in to carry on the mission of a heartfelt community.

Later that day, as I reflected on the celebration, I thought about the hymn that was joyfully sung by the choir, the congregation and accompanied with much enthusiasm by drums and piano. I remember smiling to myself as I saw people tapping their toes and swaying along to the music. And now as I write this, I smile at the memory.

And may you:

*Dance with the Spirit early in the morning,
Walk with the Spirit throughout the long day.
Work and hope for the new life a-bornin',
Listen to the Spirit to show you the way.*

Many blessings...

May you find the Spirit in your mornings and walk with the Spirit throughout your day!



Editor's Note: "The United Church was inaugurated on June 10, 1925 in Toronto, Ontario, when the Methodist Church, Canada, the Congregational Union of Canada, and 70 percent of The Presbyterian Church in Canada entered into a union. Also joining was the small General Council of Union Churches, centred largely in Western Canada. It was the first union of churches in the world to cross historical denominational lines and received international acclaim. Each of the founding churches had a long history in Canada prior to 1925. The movement for

church union began with the desire to coordinate ministry in the vast Canadian northwest and for collaboration in overseas missions. Congregations in Indigenous communities from each of the original denominations were an important factor in the effort toward church union.

The United Church continues to be a "uniting" church, and has been enriched by several additional unions since 1925. In 1930, the Synod of The Wesleyan Methodist Church of Bermuda became part of The United Church of Canada's Maritime Conference. The Evangelical United Brethren Church became part of The United Church of Canada in 1968. In addition, various individual congregations from other Christian communions have become part of the United Church over the years." [www.unitedchurch.ca]



Message from Tracy Boutillier, Office Administrator

As we prepare to celebrate the United Church's 100th Anniversary, I have been thinking back as to what the church has meant to me and have been asked to share a memory or two of the church and myself.

My earliest memory of this place would have to be Sunday School. My mother was the teacher, and we were painting some sort of ceramics for Mothers' Day. Those in my class are some of the friends I still have today ... Andrew

MacLaughlin, Tara Carter and Heather Henry.

I remember singing in the youth choir with Mary Shepherd, the long blue skirts with the white tops that reminded me of angel wings. One Christmas, we sang Joy to the World ... I remember the congregation applauded enthusiastically afterwards and how odd it felt because we didn't usually applaud in church.

Another memory that comes to mind are the many meals in the Hall... someone tapping me on the shoulder to draw my attention away so he could swipe the roll off my plate from the other side. (Rev. David MacNaughton).

Sunday School, CGIT, several summers at MacLennan Camp as a camper and a counsellor, helping Krista out in the nursery, Kairos '87 at Carleton University in

Ontario, several years at Youth Forum - where I heard Spirit of Gentleness for the first time - it has become one of my favorite hymns to sing. Teaching Sunday School, becoming a Beaver leader, working in the office for two summers while Elva was on vacation. My wedding, the baptism of my children, working part time in the office and then assuming full time duties in 2003. The church has been instrumental in how I have lived my life.

Remember the old children's rhyme with the hand actions? "Here is the Church and here is the steeple, open the doors and see all the people!" Well to me the church is all about the people. The building is just that... a building without the people. It's the people who make it a faith family. And the work we do together continues to give me hope for our future.

The theme for this 100th anniversary celebration is Deep, Bold and Daring! So let's experience deep spirituality, let's be bold and daring in our endeavours and continue the work while charting the path for a bright future. Just imagine... this kind of faith family in every church, across the province, across the country and around the world.



Message from Chris Bowman, Minister of Music

As the United Church of Canada celebrates 100 years this month, it has given me the chance to reflect on how my own life has intersected with the church. My first UCC experience was at Richmond Hill United Church, where former moderator the Very Rev. Bruce MacLeod baptized me.

Other churches north of Toronto were a part of my childhood and youth, including opportunities to dip my toe into music leadership at a vacation bible school program at Sharon-Hope United (where I also recorded tracks for a CD of children's music that its minister at the time, Rev. Lesley Clare, was preparing).

When my mom decided to embark on a career in ministry, I ended up teaching in the Sunday School and in VBS programs at Thornhill United. Through high school,

I was part of a praise band at Bedford Park United in Toronto. In university at Mount A, I ended up as organist at Upper Sackville United and assistant organist at Sackville United. Upon graduation, I returned home to Ontario and took a job at Mount Albert United, where my grandmother Elsie Steeves had recently been organist/choir director... it was there I started my first handbell group. My Master's degree took me to Newfoundland, where I had a chance to be a substitute organist or substitute choir director at Gower Street United.

In May 2005 I began as organist and choir director at First United in Truro, and within my first 2 weeks on the job, led music for a service featuring then moderator the Very Rev. Peter Short. And, as they say, the rest is history... the past twenty years have been such a gift for me and for my family. There have been opportunities to work for the local area, presbytery, conference/region, and nationally over the years, including working with a few other moderators (Jordan Cantwell, Carmen Lansdowne, Gary Paterson, Marion Pardy). I feel so fortunate to have connections far and wide through the United Church of Canada, and look forward to serving the church in other ways in the years to come (this summer, for instance, our family will return to Berwick Church Camp in a music leadership role). Thanks to First United for keeping me rooted in this united and uniting church family.

NEWS AT FIRST looks back at this headline from 20 years ago:



*First United News
Welcomes
Chris Bowman*

Our new leader in the Ministry of Music

The Organist/Search Committee is very pleased to have negotiated the hiring of Chris Bowman as our new Organist and Music Director.

CHRIS, THE MUSIC MAN!

Contributed by John McElhiney

Armed with a freshly minted Masters Degree in voice, choral conducting and organ from Memorial University and an earlier Bachelor of Music Degree from Mt. Allison University, Chris Bowman arrived at First United Church 20 years ago this past May to become our Minister of Music.

The Search Committee back in 2005, of which I was a member, was impressed by the fact that over several years Chris had worked with a wide range of musical ensembles and had an obvious keen interest and experience in sharing his gift of music across many genres of music from the traditional to the contemporary. Those who had worked with him were unanimous in their high praise of him as “an excellent musician who relates very well to people”.

Those words of praise were well-founded as members of the various music ensembles that Chris now conducts can well attest. Personally, what a pleasure and honour it has been for me to continue to share with Chris our mutual love of music with the congregation from time to time. Through performances of Vivaldi's Gloria (c. 1715), Handel's Messiah (1741), Faure's Requiem (1888) right up to Chris' own composition, Under Cathedral Skies (2022) he has covered over 300 years of choral repertoire in just 20 years! In addition, we enjoy singing many hymns and responses on various Sundays that came to fruition as a result of the collaboration Chris and Rev. Valerie Kingsbury had during their ministries together; from that collaboration also came the publication by Silent Dawn Publishing in October of 2024 of their choral benediction Go and Be Light.

As a congregation we continue to benefit from Chris' mentorship with the Choral Apprentices in the Adult Choir as well as with the Resonance Youth Choir and we enjoy their various performances that enrich the musical life of our congregation and the town. Chris also shares his gift of music beyond just us; for instance, at Berwick Camp during summers and just last month when conducting a Choral Workshop for the Royal Canadian College of Organists, Halifax Centre. I would be remiss if I did not mention the wonderful program that Chris has established with the Summer Lunchtime Concerts; they have become increasingly popular with each passing summer.

Chris has enriched the musical life of not only this congregation, both at the keyboards and in conducting the various musical ensembles, but also that of the town and the province for these past 20 years for which we all are profoundly grateful. Music does indeed “Happen” at First United with Chris at the helm. Carry on Music Man!



On Sunday, June 8, the congregation of First United recognized Chris's 20 years of music ministry, with music presented by the amazing Resonance Youth Choir.





Message from Rev. Cathie Crooks, Minister of Word, Sacrament, and Spiritual Formation

In this month of centennial celebrations of our United Church of Canada, my mind and heart have returned to memories of manses and moves, of callings and communities, of deep relationships with family and friends formed under the beautiful banner of the UCC. As I shared in my Reflection on Sunday, June 1st –

“The United Church of Canada has forever been the soil from which my MacLean-Crooks clans grew, and to be celebrating its 100th Anniversary today boggles my mind. I am struck by how old it is, and, yet, keenly aware that it is ever new.”

In the flood of memories that have come with the commemoration of the beginnings of the United Church is a moment in a softly lit conference room at a Retreat Center in Waterloo, Ontario. The year is 1991. It is the very first gathering of the newly appointed Hymn and Worship Resource Committee. We are embarking on a five-year project, tasked with creating the third hymnal of the United Church of Canada, *Voices United*.

At thirty and newly ordained, serving my first pastorate in Tatamagouche, I am thrilled to be part of this national endeavour. Honouring issues of inclusiveness as they relate to both persons and ‘God language’ in our society and in the church, exploring the vast world of new and inspired hymn-writing, and searching out material to reflect the ‘global village’ in which we live is exhilarating. Upwards of thirty members of the UCC laity and order of ministry and professional church musicians pour over texts and tunes from early morning into the late hours of the night. Before we turn in, we end with a hymn sing.

This particular night, Rev. Dr. John Ambrose, the Managing Editor of this project and a fine musician himself, invites us to stand and to join in the singing of the African American Spiritual, *This Little Light of Mine*. Despite the weariness of the

hour, we enthusiastically, almost playfully, enter into that Spiritual which is familiar to us all from Sunday School or church camps. After several robust verses, we pause... and John speaks to us in a tone as soft as the lighting in the room, and invites us in with these gentle but powerful words –

“Now, friends, let’s sing this Spiritual again. This time, imagine, if you will, the context in which this Spiritual was born. Night has fallen, and those of African descent who are enslaved in the Deep South are undoubtedly gathered in the forest, after their ‘masters’ have gone to bed. Their only light is the moon overhead. In hushed, soulful tones, refusing to be silenced by the injustices of their day, they snap their fingers, ever so slowly... unhurried... and begin...”

John, then, sets the tempo with the slow, unhurried, snapping of his fingers, and leads us, once again, in this Spiritual. Our voices, this time, echo that which he has invited us to imagine, and in that softly lit room we sing in hushed tones, as soulfully as we have ever sung, eyes brimming with tears and a new and deeper knowing.

It was a ‘moment’, it is a memory, that Rev. Dr. John Ambrose and my fellow singers gave to me that night that will forever be with me. Thanks be to Spirit and to the power of living in community with friends, with kin, near and far, who seek the Truth in the living of our days. Thanks be to Spirit for our United Church of Canada.

Memory of a Different Era Contributed by Alison MacLean

The year was 1955, 30 years since the creation of The United Church of Canada. The Sunday Service was reportedly regularly attended by upwards of 1,000 people, and the children gathered in the Hall for the Sunday School Assembly, probably numbered 60 or more (ages 5- 12).

Through the window of the memory of one who has been on the United Church Journey for 77 of its 100 years, I invite you to join me in a flashback to the early days of Sunday School at First.

Picture this:



The Hall gym is filled with school age children sitting in neat rows facing the stage. To the left is Mrs. Layton on the piano. ('Isabel' to her friends and family, 'Mum' to her children Charlotte, Norman and Elma). Bringing greetings from the stage, dressed in his dark suit and tie, is the Sunday School Superintendent of the day, Walter Grant, of the Agricultural Hall of Fame, a kindly giant of a man. Together they create a welcoming and safe place where songs are sung, stories are told, and lessons are taught.

We kids are probably a little out of breath and full of chatter as we have just run over from the sanctuary where our parents are worshipping and there is no doubt a great deal of noise as we settle into our chairs in the Hall before going to our Sunday Classes in the basement. Mr. Grant brings greetings. Mrs. Layton leads us in singing the much-loved children's hymns of the day: "All Things Bright and Beautiful", "Jesus Loves Me", "This is my Father's World" and "God Sees the Little Sparrow Fall". And then, the friendly giant, Mr. Grant shepherds us downstairs to our classes.

I know there are still folks in the congregation who will remember Mrs. Layton and Mr. Grant, and maybe, if you ask, they will take you back in time with a few stories of their own.

Under The Hemlocks – All Are Welcome

Contributed by Alison MacLean



Berwick United Church Camp is celebrating over 150 years of camping. The first Berwick Camp opened July 5, 1872, and was a "huge success and the beginning of a wonderful community of connection to be carried on for generations." This year's camp runs from July 25 to August 3. You can come for an hour, for a day, for a week.

Why Come? Let us count the reasons. When you come, you will be surprised by the number of familiar and welcoming faces you recognize from Truro and from various congregations in town.

Chris, Laura, Erica and Meridith are coming. Chris and Laura are the Music Leaders! All you who love to sing, come and join the choir. You will meet new friends, learn new music and sing many familiar, much-loved tunes. There is daily practice as the choir is part of the evening services under the Hemlocks.

Rev. Cath will be there as a camper, though on Study Leave for part of that time, taking in all the opportunities the camp has to offer ministers and laity alike – such as ‘Exploring Faith Today’ in the mornings, Monday to Friday. This year the leader is Rev. David Felton. He is the co-author of “Living the Questions: The Wisdom of Progressive Christianity.”



Karen Oliveto, retired bishop of the United Methodist Church will also be there. Many of you will remember her from a Sunday this past February when she spoke at First United. Bishop Oliveto will be the ‘Minister in Residence’ and will offer the meditation at the evening services.

The Hemlocks stand waiting to offer shade wherever you go. Perhaps you will experience their ancient wisdom, if you choose to sit under them and contemplate their majesty. You cannot miss them. On the other hand, if you are new to the grounds, you can make a game out of seeing who in your group is the first to spot the polka dot cottage or the rainbow cottage, evidence of the spirit of joy, of hope, of creativity that pervades the grounds. You might even consider treating the winner to an ice cream when the canteen is open (morning, noon and night).

Be sure to seek out the Cookie Cottage. There you will find a cool drink, a hot coffee or tea, a homemade cookie, and inevitably some other person with a sweet tooth and a yen for conversation.

The children and youth, ages 2 to 18, will find lots of age-appropriate programming involving story, song, dance, arts





and crafts, discussions, sports, games. Many lifelong friendships have developed from the annual connection made through these on-going activities.

“Whatever your style of worship ... there is something to meet your spiritual needs”. For more information, go to berwickcamp.org, or just type Berwick Camp into google search and you will have access to all the info you could possibly need, including how to register, services, events, history of the camp, the 2025 Leadership Team, menus for the Dining Hall, Deli and Canteen, accommodations, and

much more. Or watch the videos on their website:

<https://www.youtube.com/@berwickunitedchurchcamp9717/videos>

So, come. Immerse yourself in the beauty of the hemlocks and take time to explore your faith away from the frenzy of the everyday world.

Senior Strawberry Social



Summer Lunchtime Concerts 2025

Wednesdays at 12:15pm. Bring your lunch!
Donations in support of church music programming appreciated.



July 2 - Rising Stars Showcase

Lily Arthurs, Holden Hoover,
Emily LaBonte

July 9 - Rising Stars Showcase

Matthew Davis,
Olivia Gouthro, Ty Shreve

July 16 - Rising Stars Showcase

Carter, Emmett, James, and
Lily Robertson;
Molly Thompson;
Spotlight Musical Theatre cameo

July 23 - TMF Concert Group Encore

Lily Arthurs, Erica Bowman,
Olivia Gouthro, Holden Hoover,
Emily LaBonte, Sienna Lindsay-Pike

July 30

Truro Concert Band

August 6 - Long & McQuade Teachers in Concert

Rhonda MacLellan,
Danielle Richard

August 13 - Long & McQuade Teachers in Concert

Natsumi Wakasa

August 20 - Rising Stars Showcase

Erica Bowman,
Sienna Lindsay-Pike, Josh Varner



First United Church - 711 Prince Street, Truro 902-895-8098

CELEBRATING OUR GRADUATES



Abigail Archibald

Abigail is the granddaughter of Mona Smith-Pike, just graduated from St. Francis Xavier University with a Bachelor of Arts and Science Health. In September she will go back to St. FX for a two-year Education degree. We are very proud of her and think she will make a wonderful elementary teacher. She will turn 22 in August and has worked the past six summers at Masstown Market, Fox Harbour, Pur and Simple, Daycare, Foodland in Tata, and Restaurant in PEI. This summer she is working at Coldstream Brewery. She is a hard worker and I think it is a good experience to work at different places and to meet new people. Being my only granddaughter, she of course is the 'Apple of my eye'.

Ainsley Corbett

Ainsley is the granddaughter of Carol Patton, daughter of Derrick and Allison Corbett, Coldbrook, NS. Ainsley plans to attend Mount Allison University to pursue studies in the Sciences. Enjoy your years at Mt Allison, Ainsley.



Carol MacKenzie Laura Campbell ("Mack")

Mack has spent the last 4 years at Cape Breton University finding her passion in tourism and is graduating this year with not one but two degrees. Her first degree is a Bachelor of Hospitality and Tourism Management which she completed in Spring 2024. MacK opted to take a 4th year of study and will also be graduating with her Bachelor of Business Administration (Spring 2025). In true tourism fashion, MacK decided to forgo the 5 day convocation event and

instead, drove from home to Dawson City, Yukon with 3 of her bestie pals, hitting key points in every province along the way.

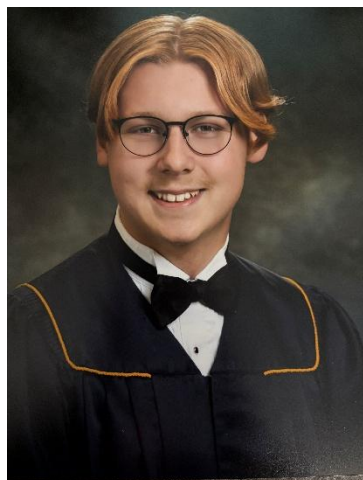
Mack will be working once again this year at the Holland America Dawson City Inn as Front Desk Staff. After that, the plan is that the travellers will journey back across Canada hitting different tourist destinations before coming home in the fall and becoming "real adults" We couldn't be more proud of all that Mack has accomplished and wish her all the best in the adventures that lie ahead.

Jenna Mackay Emanuel

is the daughter of Brian Emanuel and Granddaughter of Frank and Carolyn Emanuel. Jenna Graduated with a BScN in Nursing(RN) with a certificate in Mental Health. She is working in 4.1 Vascular General Surgery at Halifax Infirmary. Jenna was the Dalhousie Ruby Captain and won the Tiger of the year award. She will continue to play in a local Halifax Competitive Club League.



Patrick Gilroy



Patrick is graduating from CEC, and was fortunate enough to be one of CEC's early graduates, meaning he finished grade 12 in February. He is taking a year off from continuing his studies to work a full-time job. He hopes to work on computers/audio or IT in the future. He wants to thank everyone at First United for their support over the years! He has enjoyed working here in the back at the sound booth.

Holden Hoover

Holden is a 17-year-old student recently graduated from Cobequid Educational Centre in Truro, Nova Scotia. He has been a Choral Apprentice in the First United Church Choir since April 2022. He plans to go to the University of Waterloo next year to study Computer Engineering. Music has always been a big part of his life, and he loves to sing, perform, and play the trumpet. He also enjoys listening to and performing all styles of music. He helped to start up the new Resonance Youth Choir at First United Church. He was in the CEC Choir and Band all four years of his high school, and took vocal lessons with Brenna Conrad. He has participated in the Truro Music Festival since 2022. He was in the 2025 CEC Musical: Mamma Mia, playing the part of Sam Carmichael, which he really enjoyed and learned a lot from.

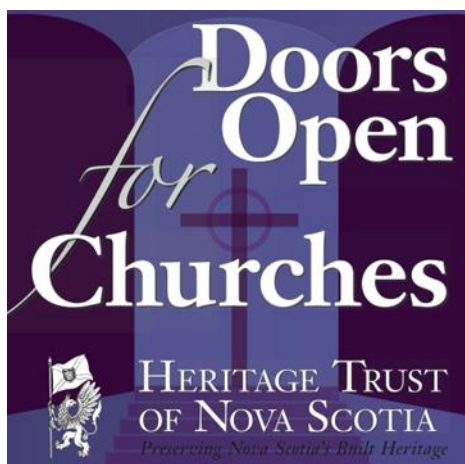


Emily Rachel Miller

Emily is the daughter of Elizabeth and Jason Miller of Fall River, granddaughter of Pam and Jon Miller of Rockingham and Jean and Don MacQueen of Truro. She is graduating from Lockview High School, and has been accepted to attend the Honours Bachelor of Film and Television Program at Sheridan, Oakville Campus, Oakville Ontario. She has also been offered a position on the Women's Volleyball Team at Sheridan.

Doors Open for Churches

An annual tour of church buildings in Nova Scotia



A year ago this June, Margaret Dunphy Herdman of The Heritage Trust of Nova Scotia, contacted First United Church and St. John's Anglican Church inviting the congregations to join in the annual province-wide celebration of heritage churches (Margaret grew up in this congregation, now lives in Cape Breton and serves on the Board of Directors.)

At the June 2024 meeting of Council, a motion was passed to accept the invitation from the Heritage Trust, setting the gears in motion. St. John's Anglican Church has also agreed to participate in this on-site, in-person event. On most weekends from June to October, there will be some community in the province opening the doors of churches of 'historic, architectural and cultural significance' to their area.

In cooperation with St. John's, the date for the Truro event has been set for Saturday, September 13, and our church building will be open from 12:00-2:00 p.m. Find out more about the events happening around the province by visiting Heritage Trust Nova Scotia. Scroll down to Doors Open for Churches, click on 'View Event' and you will find the 2025 calendar.

Pam Bowman and Carolyn Hunt have taken on the organization for the tour of First United Sanctuary. The day is shaping up into quite an exciting one with plans to highlight the pipe organ, the steeple and bell, to show a power point of the history of the church (commissioned by Charlotte MacQuarrie some years ago), as well as a power point on the recent church restoration prepared by Rob Dickson.

Already, volunteers have agreed to help in areas of special interest to them. Please contact Pam (thepambo@gmail.com) or Carolyn (carolynhunt7@gmail.com) if you are interested in helping, perhaps as a tour guide, a greeter, or if you have any suggestions as to additional things of interest to visitors.

Tracy has already put the event on our church calendar. Please add it to yours!

UCW Closing Party



Our Rogues' Gallery



Choral Apprentices



Thanking our Sunday School Teachers



"Saint Patrick"



Charlotte MacQuarrie's 95th birthday



John McElhiney at the organ



Easter Sunday



4th Advent/Christmas Sunday



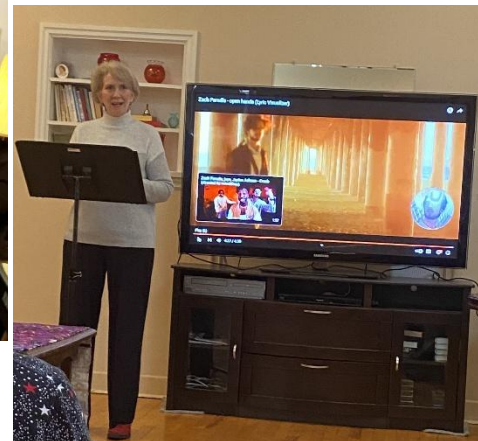
Lighting the Advent candles



Let's Talk Israel with Pam Bowman



Study Group with Rev. Cathie



Pretzel Making in the Sunday School

Resonance Youth Choir

Planting a Honey Crisp Apple Tree, purchased by the Farmers' Market, from the proceeds at Resonance's November concert.



Resonance Pride Concert



Pride Art Project



First United Church's Ad Hoc Affirming Committee:
Kathy Mack, Betty Darby, Susan Gallant, Rhonda Gallant, Lisa Annand (Chair)
Absent from the photo: Jennifer Jordan, Adam Bray

The Communications Committee is pleased to bring you this newsletter twice yearly. If you would like to give feedback, please contact:

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Photos compliments of Don MacQueen, Honorah Sheppard, Judy Richards, Dianne Wasson, Carolyn Hunt, Alison MacLean, Pam Bowman