

Tidings

First-St Andrew's
UNITED CHURCH

Where liberal theology meets the best of tradition



Vol. 22 - No. 4

Advent/Christmas/Epiphany



Isabel Getliffe Sewing Group in Action

(See Page 6)

INSIDE

The Editors' Desk	2	Here and There	7
Announcements	3	Vignettes	8
Changes	3	The Building	9
Council Report	3	Past Events	10
Notes from Kate	4	Committee Reports	11
View from the Pew	4	UCW Report	13
Getting to Know	5	The Last Word	14
Noteworthy	5	Advertisements	2, 15
Profile	6	Windows on First-St. Andrew's	16
Behind the Scene	6	First-St. Andrew's Ministry	16
Roots of the United Church	7		

Tidings

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EDITORIAL

David Flynn (pdflynn@rogers.com)

A time of waiting during the darkest days of mid-winter. A sense of waiting intensified by the cooling days of November, the early darkness. How pleasant then, that during the sombreness of the winter solstice, we celebrate the coming of the Light of the World, the promise that even when times are most hopeless, hope appears.

We are expanding our subject matter. In the past it was assumed that every article was directly related to FSA, and indirectly related to our Christian faith. The turning point began more than a year ago with Mary McKim's first vignettes, relating interesting incidents in her life.

Now we have travel articles, and articles on nature. Of course, John Eberhard's account of a recent trip to Israel is very much, as he titles it, "In the Footsteps of Jesus," but our earlier travel pieces were less obviously 'religious,' although I like to think they demonstrated an interest in other cultures; other times.

As well, David Wake's column on Juncos points out that these avian visitors from the North need our care if they are to survive the 'big city' of London.

We have a vignette from Gavin McGregor with its surprising conclusion to his gesture at Christmas to cheer up those desperately needing Christmas hope.

The point it seems, is that when FSA people write for *Tidings*, their innate sympathy to the 'other' emerges. Please let us know what you think about this broader approach to our articles.

We also begin a three-part series on the founding denominations of the UCC, with Fred Lloyd's succinct summary of what we owe to the Congregationalist concept of the 'Gathered Fellowship.' In later issues we plan to present Presbyterianism and Methodism. We'd like them to be written by someone who grew up in one of those denominations. Of course, there is no reason to stop there: several people at FSA have a Baptist background, including our music director, Paul Merritt, and there are other backgrounds—each making up part of who we are.

May you have a joyous Christmas, fulfilling all your Advent expectations. 



ANNOUNCEMENTS

FROM CHRISTIAN DEVELOPMENT

- December 9th — Family Christmas Party.

FROM MUSIC

- January 25th — A Taste of Burns (eleventh annual). Get tickets from Enid Merritt emerritt@gmail.com or at Coffee and Conversation.
- January 30th — The St. Lawrence String Quartet.

FROM WORSHIP

- The "Connections" sermon series continues, featuring *Miracle on 34th Street*, December 16th and *Kim's Convenience*, Feb. 3rd.
- January 13th — Workshop: "Welcoming Various Groups Well," with Leslie Ramsay-Taylor. Register with Anne Cummings, cummings@uwo.ca or 519-660-6106.

FROM MOE

The Hope Book, the London Conference M&S Alternative Gift Catalogue, is now available. Choose gifts that support United Church projects in eight countries abroad and three locally, including ELUCO. In 2011 this initiative raised \$93,000. It is also available on line at www.londonconference.ca. Think about buying a mosquito net as a hostess gift this season. In order to receive gift cards, orders must be in by December 10th.

COUNCIL REPORT



George Jolink, Chair

The season of Advent is upon us, a time of waiting and a time of wondering. Each of us is busy with the demands of our lives, and often this season feels the busiest of all. Nevertheless, this is a time to rejoice and to reflect on the richness we share in the knowledge that Christ came to earth, and that we as a church community continue his work in our world.

During the fall months your Council, the Board of Trustees and our staff have been busy carrying out the day-to-day operations of FSA and planning for the future. The Pledge Campaign, strategic planning, ongoing capital improvements and special events are but a few examples of the dedicated efforts of these individuals on your behalf. I want to pause briefly in this busy time to thank all those whose ongoing commitment to FSA ensures that we will remain a strong presence in the heart of London.

CHANGES

MARRIAGES

November 16th, 2012, Heather Williamson and Jonathan Holzapfel

DEATHS

September 2nd, 2012, Marie Robinson

October 7th, 2012, Anita O'Brien

October 15th, 2012, Betty Milroy

October 30th, 2012, Don McLean

November 7th, Bernice McHardy

November 18th, Leslie Wagner

BAPTISMS

(September 30th, 2012)

Isla Margaret Conn, daughter of Mark and Dana Conn

Callum Robert McKie, son of Alasdair McKie and Emma Evans

Zoe Elizabeth van Marwyk, daughter of Paul and Holly van Marwyk

NEW MEMBERS

(November 18th, 2012)

Cara Bulmer

Mary Lou Douglas-Dubois

Donna Goulin

Holly van Marwyk

Kerry Mogg

We have been talking much this fall about our future and what we as a church community may look like in ten years' time. I can only imagine that our forefathers had these same conversations over the 180 years of our existence, and we are the beneficiaries of that legacy. Each generation has lived in times of change, and each has found a way to continue the work of First-St. Andrew's. Now it is our turn. What can we do? No doubt the world is changing, the church is changing and FSA is changing. I invite each of you to join this dialogue and to consider what part you can play in our future. Advent is a time of waiting—waiting to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ. I believe it is also a time of wondering—wondering what the future will bring. We are, by the grace of God, the architects of that future.

On behalf of Council, I wish each of you all the blessings of this holiday season as you celebrate with family and friends. Rest a while, and ready yourselves for the work ahead.

RS

NOTES FROM KATE



I had the opportunity early in November to attend two important events. The first, Ministry in Motion, was a conference on courageous leadership; the second was our own Middlesex Presbytery retreat on reconciliation and visioning.

At MIM I learned that there is one significant factor which has been proven to draw people to a church community. This one factor is more important than the worship, the music, the youth programming, the parking, the minister ... more important than anything else. It is *warmth*. You know that quality—because you feel it here. It is the welcoming smile from a new friend, the warm handshake from the usher at the door, the concerned inquiry, or the caring phone call. Many of us have received this kind of ‘warm’ welcome here—and give it as well. Your Council has named ‘welcoming well’

as a priority for this coming year, and you will notice many initiatives which flow from this (clearer signage, Sunday security, efforts to reach out to newcomers, etc). This is all exciting—but the best welcome, as always, is the truest one—when you take the time to build community through your own warm connections to others.

At the presbytery retreat I jotted down the following: “Intentional Christian community: (1) looks beyond itself with the ultimate concern not with itself but rather with justice and standing with the widow and the orphan, and those on the margins; (2) is where members forgive one another regularly and have a deep respect for one another; (3) is hard.” I like the honesty of this—and I like the challenge in it. We are not here to feel good; we are here to stand for justice. And it’s hard! Amen to that—but friends, it’s worth it!

✂



Welcoming September Visitors: Cabinet of [Ontario Youth Parliament](#)

VIEW FROM THE PEW



BEYOND RELIGION

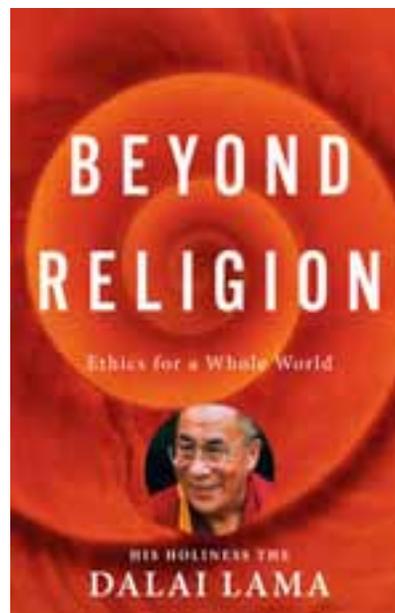
Steve Elson

B*eyond Religion: Ethics for a Whole World* [2011] is the name of the latest book by the Dalai Lama. It’s interesting from a couple of different perspectives. First, the main thesis is that it’s possible to talk about “inner values and ethical living in an age of science.” He suggests that while science may undermine some aspects of traditional religions, there is no reason to suggest it should have a negative impact or discount spiritual values.

The second reason I found it interesting is that it provides a way to think of inner values and ethical living, rather than belief, as cornerstones to guide one’s daily actions and relationship with the world.

Beliefs are just that—held by some but not by others. Beliefs, as we all know, can be vulnerable to being disproved by science. When they are raised to the level

of being considered “true,” they can serve to define ones religion and bring people together, but at the same time they can divide and separate. Having a religious “truth” disproven by science can have deep and long-lasting consequences. Just ask Galileo. Having statements of faith that defy our known and understood reality—the way the world works—can serve to make religion look antiquated and out of touch.



So what to do if one’s ethical foundation is a religious faith based on beliefs? The Dalai Lama suggests that while faith can be a force for good in the world, the fact is that for many people religion is meaningless and traditional beliefs have no hold. To quote: “To my mind, although humans can manage without religion, they cannot manage without inner values.” He goes on to say that while religion can add flavour to our lives, the foundation on which we all need to live our lives is our human spirituality, our need to give and receive love, kindness,

affection and compassion. I think these are inner values and standards of living life to which everyone can relate.

At least that’s the way I see it, from the pew. ✂

GETTING TO KNOW



SANDRA BLACK-EVANS

Ellen McKim

If you have not had the pleasure of meeting Sandra Black-Evans, when you do, you will be impressed with her candour, spirit, warmth and talents.

Born in Montreal, one of four children, her father held a high-level position with Canada Steamship Lines, and upon his passing, Prime Minister Paul Martin wrote his eulogy, which his son eloquently delivered.

Some years earlier, she left Montreal for Saltspring Island, where she remained for fourteen years. Finding island life appealing, she moved to the Bahamas where she met her soulmate, Bill Thorndycraft, from Blenheim, who had been sent down with the CIBC. Their subsequent marriage was one of the happiest times of her life.

In Nassau, Sandra attended St. Andrew's Presbyterian Kirk, and when she settled with Bill on Abaco, they and four others, including the lay minister, founded the Kirk of the Pines, a mission station of St. Andrew's. Eighteen years later they have their own building and forty members. Sandra was vice-president of the Building Committee, and Bill was an elder and



treasurer. As well, they were involved in scouting, she as district commissioner of Scouts Bahamas, and Bill, a Queen's Scout, was the scout master.

On Abaco, Sandra started a real estate company, and she still has an internet presence as well as her broker's licence.

Married sixteen years, Bill passed away two and a half years ago. Profoundly saddened, she felt a change was needed, and moved to London, geographically located for visitations from friends in Montreal and the Bahamas. She chose FSA because of the church name, a happy decision.

Sandra is in her fifth semester at Fanshawe, training to be a paralegal, graduating in August 2013, and hoping to specialize in mediation.

Sandra has three sons, from twenty-one to thirty-five, living in Thunder Bay, Toronto and London.

She is looking forward to her next chapter, to her new profession, reading, travelling, and collecting stamps, saying this is the first time in thirty-five years she feels free to follow her own bent.

We wish her well. And don't forget the stamps. 📧

NOTEWORTHY

We are fortunate to be the church home of two Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal recipients. This new commemorative serves to honour significant contributions and achievements by Canadians. We offer congratulations to **John Eberhard**, who received his medal as a result of exceptional dedication to public service at the municipal, provincial, national and international levels. Perhaps most noteworthy has been his work with Rotary International.

Congratulations also go to **Jane Glaves**, similarly honoured, for fostering hundreds of children over almost fifty years and, in particular, for her dedication to the children in Malawi, where she opened a school. It was said of her that she routinely stepped up to take on the care of foster children who did not have a home to go to when they left hospital, and that she embodies the true meaning of "grandmotherly love."

Best wishes to **Dr. Paul Cooper**, who was recently named Chair/Chief of the Department of Clinical Neurological Sciences at the Schulich School of

Medicine & Dentistry at Western.

Kudos to **Fiona Robson**, cellist and member of our FSA Strings. She has been honoured as one of only three regional musicians to be featured at selected upcoming London Youth Symphony concerts. You may catch her performance of Tchaikovsky's *Variations on a Rococo Theme* on Sunday, February 17th at 3:00pm at Dundas Street Centre United Church.

Jean Comfort attended Western's Golden Anniversary Dinner at Homecoming in September and is seen below, honoured by the president, Amat Chakma.



PROFILE



GEORGE JOLINK

David Flynn

George, in his second year as Council Chair, is a warmly spiritual person who remains optimistic about the future of FSA. After his first Sunday service, recommended by a co-worker who knew of his interest in music, he immediately volunteered for the choir under choir director, Alan Barthel, and has remained here for 31 years.

He was raised in the Dutch Reformed denomination, but wanted our more liberal theology. He was also attracted by the soaring symmetry of our sanctuary, its beautiful stained glass and rich, wood trim. He has found a sense of family here, an unconditional support for all.

After graduating from Waterloo, he came here for teacher training, and is now vice-principal at Montcalm Secondary School. He has brought his managerial and people skills to his role as Council Chair.

George's parents remain in Woodstock; his three brothers and a sister are scattered around southern Ontario. His home is within easy walking distance of FSA. He and his partner Rick recently moved from their

north London home to a condo in an award-winning restoration of an 1881 Victorian doctor's home recently described in the Free Press. George misses their garden—but is able to do some landscaping around their new three-unit house, more practical since Rick now commutes to Toronto. The renovators expect the formerly run-down house to last another hundred years, a good inspiration for our own Victorian building.



Beyond work, George's abiding interest is in community theatre. He has directed several theatrical productions here, although he is, perhaps, best known as the embodiment of the Reverend William Proudfoot throughout our 175th anniversary year.

Commenting on the variety of music during the October Music Appreciation Sunday, profoundly moved by singing with the choir, he continues to find spirituality in music.

He has suggestions for our future while remaining passionately committed to this church: "We need to work more collectively with other downtown churches; better meet the needs of downtown residents—retirees, urban professionals, but ... I believe in this place which has done so much for me and ... we will survive."

DF

BEHIND THE SCENE



ISABEL GETLIFFE SEWING GROUP

Shelly Pinkard.

Jean Comfort says it's been going "for ever." Lorraine MacDonald has been serving since 1992, and estimates that the group has been in existence at least 30 years. She is the chairperson, and the co-chair is Dallas Knight. These two leaders are stitched together by members Edna Allcorn, Millie Bates, Barbara Robson, Pat Flynn, Jan Hendry, Shelley Kostecki, Dawn Mahabir, Glenda Robinson, Pat Sole, Jeane Stewardson, Jane Westmorland, Cindi Lee, and Marion Wilson. This organization even has two honorary members: Lillian Robertson and Connie Hiscock. Together they have designed everything, from cushions for the Sunday School to tablecloths for the tables at the Holly Bazaar.

This group of close, friendly and caring ladies has one big meeting in January, where ideas are shared about what design dreams will become reality creations for sale at the Holly Bazaar. This time is also used to

take advantage of sales on seasonal fabrics, and to sort donated fabrics, crafts and notions. Mrs. MacDonald stated that they are frugal buyers, but expert sewers. From April until November, 32 weeks, these ladies donate their time, talent and sewing machines every Wednesday from 9:30am to 2:00pm. These four to five hours include coffee, lunch and fun. Members are free to come and go as they need. They don't have membership drives but welcome anyone who wishes to join.

Missed getting to their table, but saw an item that someone else raved about purchasing from them at the Bazaar? No problem, a quick call to the chair or co-chair and you could possibly buy that item. You see, these ladies will continue to provide you the option to buy any items that remain after the big day. People sometimes raise their eyes at the prices, but have no idea how much effort goes into its production.

This group so far holds the title for making the most sales at the Holly Bazaar, but they wonder whether the sale of meat pies this year will give them some competition!

SP



CONGREGATIONALISM: A GATHERED FELLOWSHIP

Fred Lloyd

This is the first of a series of articles on the three founding denominations of our United Church of Canada.

Fred Lloyd was ordained by the Congregational Church of Lincoln, England, and was honoured in May by London Conference for sixty years of ordination. Ed.

Congregationalism is one of the jewels in the crown of the United Church. These churches existed around one principle: "Responsible Churchmanship." The denomination arose out of the Reformed tradition of the open bible and the biblical promise that "Where two or three are gathered in my name there I am in the midst of them." John Robinson of Lincolnshire, England, one of the founders of the Congregational denomination in the sixteenth century, expressed the progressive attitude that Congregationalists had to the Christian life in these words: "God in His mercy has more light to shed on His word."

This stand led Congregationalists to see that each company of God's people is a gathered fellowship to worship God, which, in turn, implied that each congregation was autonomous. This gathered principle is the motive that leads to the conviction and commitment for a new type of churchmanship. You are not a member of the church simply by being part of a wider parish, but need to be part of a church community.

The early Congregational churches had ministers, deacons and a simpler form of worship, but this was coupled with their special gift: the Church Meeting. The Church Meeting is the core of Congregationalism. Here, in a collective sense, the members met to make decisions both spiritual and material, understanding that they were complete in themselves. Members sought the unity of agreement through the mind of Christ, doing all things in love. This is not an operation by consensus or by assuming that the majority is right. Rather, if there were divisions in the fellowship, these people sought complete unity. If not, then the Church Meeting would postpone a decision until a unanimous position emerged and unity was preserved. This is not an easy churchmanship but it is responsible. That is the jewel of Congregationalism. *fa*

HERE AND THERE



JUNCO—A FAVOURITE WINTER BIRD

David Wake

If you have a bird feeder at home, you likely will have juncos among your winter guests. The Dark-eyed Junco

is a sparrow-sized bird, grey in colour, with white outer tail feathers, a white belly and a pale pink bill. The junco is one of the most common winter birds in the London area.

Juncos nest in woodlands across Canada from Yukon to Newfoundland. In Ontario, breeding locations are typically north of us, in places such as the Bruce peninsula, Algonquin Park, and all the way to Hudson Bay. To a junco, going south for the winter may mean going no farther than London, though many continue into the US, as far as Georgia and northern Florida. In all seasons, seeds make up a major part of their diet, but insects and spiders are also eaten.

Nearly all of our wintering juncos are of the subspecies Slate-coloured Junco, the name used in many field guides. It is a very descriptive term, as the

male birds are a rich slate-grey in colour. Females are paler grey, while young birds in their first winter are pale grey, tinged with brown. The crisp grey and white plumage of the junco distinguishes it from other members of the sparrow family, which for the most part are brown, with streaks.



Juncos remind us of the rhythm of the seasons. They are part of the natural world around us, and their well-being is intimately linked with the health of the ecosystems in which they live. Juncos that have nested in remote northern woodlands may be unfamiliar with city predators. For example, in our suburban garden, they are more susceptible to predation by free-roaming cats than are species such as the House Sparrow, which live in our neighbourhood year round.

The junco is sometimes called the Snowbird, possibly because early observers noticed these birds arriving with the first snowfall. In the London area, however, juncos arrive in October, before the first snow, and stay through April, well past snow season.

Keep your eyes open for these northern visitors and ponder the journey that brought them here. *fa*



WILLIAM PROUDFOOT HOUSE (WPH)—THE LEGACY CONTINUES...

Robert (Bob) Vosper

Vision: Judge Jack Seneshen, a member of FSA, came to the church Session in 1977 and planted the seed for supporting the development of a home for women in conflict with the law. Under the spiritual guidance of the Rev. Alex Farquhar the plan took root.

1977–1979: Planning and development continued until late 1979 when Ontario government funds were secured.

1980: William Proudfoot House (WPH) opened officially on Palm Sunday as a halfway house. It operated as a non-profit corporation under the laws of the Province of Ontario with ten directors, five from FSA: Katherine Beeler, Bill Deyell, Anne Pinchin, Bob Vosper and D. Carlton Williams, and five from the community.

1980–1995: During this time period over 1500 women were residents at WPH and were assisted in their return to productive lives in society. Many members of FSA acted as directors and were intimately involved with programmes at the house.

1995: The provincial government withdrew funding for all halfway houses in Ontario.

WPH closed and the house on Briscoe Street was sold. The funds were invested with the hope of reopening another facility. The wait continued until 2012.

2012: The remaining directors elected to surrender the charter and disburse the assets of WPH. Approximately \$200,000 was given to the London Community Foundation to be administered under the name of William Proudfoot House Foundation. The annual revenue is to be shared equally between My Sisters' Place and the Rotholme Women's and Family Shelter, thus keeping alive the spirit of faith in action displayed so many years ago by a handful of FSA members and friends in the community. *JSA*

VIGNETTES



WHEN THE WIND OF CHANGE BLOWS

Gavin McGregor

By 1952 Glasgow's mighty shipbuilding industry was in decline, characterized by outdated facilities, by the ear-pounding racket of riveting, by smoke, smog and smells, by poor working conditions and by a litany of health and social problems associated with tenement slums.



In the midst of an uncertain future, a cheery, optimistic, industrial chaplain, known in the Govan district as the Padre, was joshing with some students preparing a hall where Christmas dinners would be served the following week to families desperately in need of care, warmth and hope. Looking around the colourfully decorated room, he remarked with a knowing nod, "All we need now is a Christmas tree!"

I thought to myself, I just may be able to get him that tree! Most weekends I went home to the fresh air of southern Scotland, and had noticed forestry workers thinning out trees left unattended for years.

That Saturday I headed to the woods and found several spruce trees marked for removal. One in particular had a nice-looking top that would be destroyed when the workers felled the tree. Armed with a small saw I struggled up through the prickly boughs to about six feet from the top and started to cut. Almost through the trunk, the saw jammed, and as I attempted to free it, a gust of wintry wind lifted the top and whisked it away, leaving the novice lumberjack swaying and clawing the air like a bronco rider.

With the help of friends, the less-than-perfect tree was securely wrapped in sackcloth and propped in the stairwell of a double-decker bus. With me keeping watch—fielding jibes and questions—we arrived Sunday afternoon in Glasgow.

Entering by the back door to the hall—poised to spring my surprise—I heard, "Hello Gavin, come away in and see the bonnie big tree we got from a director of Fairfield" (shipyards).

Fairfield's tree was a positive sign of change. The story behind the other tree became the source of good humour and inspiration.

Slowly, and often painfully, Glasgow set about re-inventing itself, and in 1990 was voted European City of Culture. *JSA*

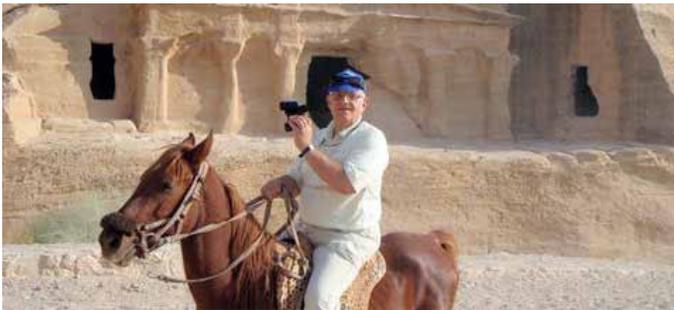


"IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF JESUS"

John Eberhard

There are many reasons why I was attracted to a "pilgrimage" to Israel. Walking "in the footsteps of Jesus" was a special dimension to a whirlwind tour of a country whose history spans thousands of years.

For any first-time visitor, the experience is invariably an instant feeling of familiarity, and reflects on much of one's personal biblical convictions: Sea of Galilee, Nazareth, Bethlehem, the Jordan, Mount Sinai, Capernaum, Cana, the Mount of the Beatitudes, Gethsemane, Mount of Olives and of course the old city of Jerusalem.



The experience includes the special thrill of walking in the footsteps of history. One can retrace the steps of Abraham (4,000 years ago), King David (3000 years ago), Jesus (2000 years ago) and the Crusaders (1000 years ago). But Israel is a modern country that combines a rich, illustrious history with a tourism infrastructure that caters to every vacation taste.

Jerusalem itself has something for everyone. Nowhere are the contrasts more apparent than in Jerusalem. Roman arches, Byzantine moats, Crusader walls and Ottoman ramparts. Jerusalem is one big

colourful mosaic. It contains shrines that are holy to Jews, Christians and Moslems: the Western Wall, the Via Dolorosa, the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, the glistening domes of the mosques on the Temple Mount and the Shrine of the Book that houses the 2000-year-old Dead Sea Scrolls.

With the tradition of making visitors feel welcome going back to biblical times, the friendly people of this functional, sophisticated yet still emerging nation open doors to glorious beaches, bustling cities, sophisticated infrastructure, nature reserves, spas, religious shrines, malls and history interpreted in meaningful ways for all. Notwithstanding current scimmages in isolated parts of



the country, it is apparent that in virtually every place a tourist safely travels, Moslems, Jews, Christians and Baha'is coexist in a tolerant and peaceful determination and resiliency.

A pilgrimage to the Holy Land will widen your religious horizons and stretch out before you a panorama of faith and history which will enrich your life.

[John Eberhard travelled to Israel in October, 2012, with the Judicial Council of Ontario on what was described as a "Judges' Israeli trip—return to the footprints of the Bible." Ed.]

THE BUILDING



A LITTLE ORGAN HISTORY

Jim Hutchinson

During the 1960s it became increasingly evident that something had to be done about the organ. Of a Sunday morning Barrie Cabena, director of music at the time, was known to come in early to borrow pipes from the echo organ in the gallery to replace ones in the main organ in order to play what he wanted for a service. No one, particularly Casavant, was willing to put their name on an instrument stashed

"...it became increasingly evident that something had to be done about the organ."

behind the sides of the chancel, as had been done in 1938. This was not a time of economic depression, but one expecting musical integrity. With some difficulty, the congregation was persuaded to consider moving the choir and organ to the rear of the gallery.

During the summer of 1968 the sanctuary was closed and worship held in the gymnasium below, while the gallery was strengthened, a choir platform created and thousands of pipes installed. The result: a magnificent instrument and a clarity of singing, impossible in the confines of the chancel. E. Power Biggs was our first recitalist and a Festival of the Arts came into being.

PAST EVENTS



The Mikado, September 23rd



Kate McLarty Young
at our 180th Anniversary, November 25th



FSA's Got Talent, October 20th



Families Placing Leaves on
the Memorial Tree, May 27th



Nicaragua Lunch, October 14th
Speaker: Christie Neufeldt



Corn Roast, September 9th



The Proudfoot Papers, November 11th



The Big Pot Pie Project,
October-November

COMMITTEE REPORTS



WORSHIP

Jo Ann Silcox

"Do not be afraid, for see, I am bringing you good news of great joy for all people" [Luke 2:10]; so said the angel to the frightened shepherds on the advent of

Jesus' birth, and so says that same angel to all with ears to hear this Advent season.

What would happen if we took that message seriously this time round? Instead of worrying about church budgets, declining attendance and failing buildings, what difference might it make to those of us still privileged to hear the Good News if we set fear aside, got out our dancing shoes and tambourines and prepared to live out the years ahead in this congregation like the lowly shepherds, for whom the life first announced in the fields around Bethlehem made such a difference? What would happen if it made as much difference to us today as it did to them?

"Suppose this Christmas the gifts we elected to cherish were joy, love, peace, patience, long-suffering, kindness and compassion, family, friendship, community, caring, joy, sharing, thanksgiving?"

Suppose this Christmas the gifts we elected to cherish were joy, love, peace, patience, long-suffering, kindness and compassion, family, friendship, community, caring, joy, sharing, thanksgiving?

Suppose we stopped all of our worry work and instead concentrated on sharing those gifts with all who cross our thresholds, not only here in this wonderful sanctuary which is First-St. Andrew's—but also in our homes and neighbourhoods, businesses and communities—so that, like the shepherds, all might be embraced by that power lent to those who follow in the Way, that we in turn might become agents of peace on earth and goodwill to all humankind?

As we worship this Advent season, may our joy be palpable, our love be tangible, our faith be contagious, our generosity overflowing, and our thanksgiving unending, in response to the ineffable joy of being allowed to follow in the service of One who gave His all that we might live.

✠



MUSIC

Paul Cooper

September 23rd saw the start of our fall musical season, when Darryl Edwards and The Concert Opera Group performed *The Mikado*—featuring soloists and sing-along

choruses.

On November 4th the senior choir, accompanied by strings, performed Baroque Fest (III), a concert of works by Bach, Purcell, Schutz, Pergolesi and others. Sonja Gustafson, Terese Sirek-Ng, Jordan Baldwin and Ross Dodington gave wonderful solo performances. Paul Merritt not only conducted the strings, but gave another fantastic performance of baroque organ pieces. Lynda Kennedy and Nancy Jackson accompanied the strings on the organ, and Barbara Plante and Anne Cummings provided bell accompaniment for one of Terese Sirek-Ng's solos.

Music Appreciation Sunday this year was a wonderful collage of music, with participation by all music groups in the congregation—the FSA Strings, Laudamus Bells, Junior Joyfuls, Joyful Singers, Youth Trio and the senior choir. We also had the debut of a new group of young vocalists who are three and under—Tots &

Tunes & Teddies Too—an enthusiastic bunch "led," or might we say "choraled" (or is it corralled?) by Margaret Trethewey. The senior choir sang *O Glory*, a medley of spirituals arranged by Joseph Joubert, with Sonja Gustafson performing the solos, and it was a wonderfully stirring musical end to a service that celebrated the many musical talents at FSA.

On Remembrance Sunday we were treated to the trumpet of Ken Baldwin and the pipes of Bruce Richardson, who combined to make our act of remembrance very memorable. Many members of the congregation commented on the stirring music during the service, including the senior choir's singing of *In Remembrance* from Eleanor Daley's *Requiem* and Archer's anthem, *And I Saw a New Heaven*.

The London Citadel Salvation Army Band joined us again this year for our anniversary service; the senior choir will be joining them at Centennial Hall for their annual Christmas celebration on Monday, December 3rd.

Music and Advent always go together at FSA. This year our Friday Advent Noon Recitals are occurring on November 30th (Young Performers); December 7th (Laudamus Bells) and December 14th (Paul Merritt, organ and Lynda Kennedy, keyboard).

✠



**FINANCE COMMITTEE:
Financial Stewardship**

Harold Jackson,

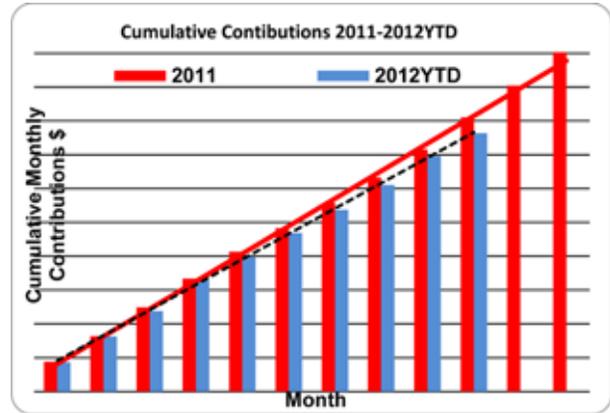
*"We may not always realize that everything we do
Affects not only our lives, but touches others too.
The times you have a kind and gentle word of care,
It helps someone find beauty in this precious life we share.
Stewardship is the act of giving so that all may fare."*

(Author unknown, amended)

Such inspiration derives from our surroundings to add fulfillment to our daily lives. Indeed, we are privileged to live in a part of the world where this is relatively natural. This year the physical space we call First-St. Andrew's celebrates 180 years of promises made and kept. It is our church home, our sacred space where we give thanks for spiritual nourishment and guidance, and celebrate the many opportunities for ministry.

Are we at a juncture, which our new moderator in his September message suggests is "... living in exile in Babylon, and there's no going back to the good old days"? We lament the reality of declining membership, resource challenges, learning to live within our means. How can our exile be managed? Can we learn to live in our Babylon? **Sustaining the Heartbeat** continues to be

a focal point of our stewardship in this place. Generous support of the Capital Building Fund continues to be put to work keeping the promise of our strong physical presence **At the Heart**. This year completion of masonry repairs begun in 2011 will be realized. Our ability to resource the Capital Reserve Fund from last year's surplus has allowed for urgent repairs associated with the atrium roof area to be carried out.



As we plan for 2013, each one of us will have to consider the question: "What will be my part, financially, to **"Sustaining the Heartbeat?"** Our challenge continues in this 180th year: would **William** be **Proud** to set **Foot** among us today? Could/would he sense a strong heartbeat? Would he proclaim, **"Well done good and faithful stewards"**? Will we be able to count on you to be one of those good and faithful stewards? 🙏



STEWARDSHIP

Judith Walker

As Christians we are called to live and participate in God's mission as reflected in Jesus' life and ministry. We carry out this work in our decisions as individuals and as members of a faith community; here we use the gifts that God gives us: time, abilities, material resources, relationships.

Throughout October and November we were each asked to give prayerful consideration to our financial commitment to FSA's mission, under the banner of **Sustaining the Heartbeat**. Funds raised during the Annual Pledge Campaign are our major source of revenue for the coming year, and allow us to plan how we will meet our financial obligations. My sincere thanks

to all who responded to our request for support!

Each Sunday during the pledge period a member of the congregation shared their personal thoughts about **Sustaining the Heartbeat**. While each message was important, Chris Silcox captured the essence of our commitment as an *inclusive Christian family* with grace and humour, and he has agreed that I might use some of his words in this piece.

Chris spoke about the meaning of family, FSA style: F is for facility; A for accessibility; M for music; I for innovation and for inclusion; L for learning; Y for youthfulness. Chris delivered his thoughtful message whilst sharing the pulpit with two of his youngest family members; not once losing his place or his focus. Well done!

Sincere thanks to Chris and everyone who participated as stewards in this year's campaign. 🙏





BOARD OF TRUSTEES

John Eberhard



David Manness

Real life benefits of contributing stocks to the church

With December 31st rapidly approaching, it is timely to re-visit the tax advantages of contributing stocks to FSA. Recently, three congregation members were confidentially interviewed about their experience using this approach.

Why do you donate shares as the method of giving money to the church?

Donor A: "I love the church and it enables me to give more, because I save on income tax. My son is a senior tax professional and he recommended this way of giving."

Donor B: "My investment advisor suggested it. I contribute more because I save 20-23 percent on income tax."

Donor C: "I donated shares that had gained 90 percent in value and saved 12 percent off my income tax. I contributed more."

Is it easy to do?

Donor A: "My broker does it for me. It's done by just one phone call. He transfers the shares. I advise Debra Low so she knows to watch out for it."

Donor B: "My advisor picks the shares with the largest gains to donate after I tell him how much money I want to contribute. He contacts FSA's advisor and the transfer is done automatically in just one day. I advise the church to let Debra Low know how I want it distributed."

Donor C: "I sign a letter to my broker authorizing the transfer and he looks after it for me. I forewarn Debra Low to watch for this happening."

Will you continue to use this method, and do you recommend it for others?

Donor A: "Definitely, for those who are in a position to do it. In other words, there are taxes on capital gains that can be avoided."

Donor B: "Yes, I have done it now for about five years and will continue."

Donor C: "Yes, I have done this for many years and will not go back to the other method, unless the tax rules change."

So there you have it ... contributions by December 31st, 2012 will avoid income taxes due on capital gains this year! Contact us if you have any questions. *JSA*

UCW REPORT



THE UCW SALUTES ITS VOLUNTEERS

Shelly Pinkard

We wait 365 days for it to come around. We plan a year in advance what table we will visit. We even know what we want to buy before it sells out. When the doors open we stampede into Proudfoot Hall; we are hyped to spend. We seek items that we got here before and couldn't find again all year. We peruse the tables to fulfill gift ideas. Most importantly, we enjoy each other. For most of us this is our first gathering of the holiday season; our kick-off.

Do you ever stop to wonder what goes into making this happen for us? Do you ever pause and take in the magnificent organization of it all? I venture to say that most of us don't. We just count down to this moment of shopping frenzy and focus on getting these treasured goods that we can only access once a year. However,

there is one who insists that we take a moment out of this printed word to say thank you to those who work diligently behind the scenes making the Holly Bazaar a success. Laurel Kenney said, "I want this UCW article dedicated to saying thank you to the hard workers of the Bazaar." Well Ms. Kenney, with much respect to you and thanks to these unsung heroes, here goes...

Thank you to Heather Vosper and Deborah Roberts (co-chairs); Lorraine MacDonald and Dallas Knight (sewing table); Katherine Wonfor (Pet Shoppe); June McKay (gift/Christmas table); Eva Archibald and Millie Bates (knitting); Pat McGregor (jewellery); Elaine Wilson and Deborah Roberts (treasures); Jan Cram (bakery); Cathy Davies (deli); Audrey Coulthard (tea room/Café Noel); Liz Galbraith (volunteer organizer); Bev Lindsay (volunteer room); and Jeanette Morgan (selling of meat pies). The UCW and all of these ladies want to give an extra special thanks to the many volunteers who assisted in the success of another smooth-running Holly Bazaar! *JSA*



Holly Bazaar, November 24th

THE LAST WORD

VOLUNTEERS

Donna Travis



Here we are in the middle of November and towards the end of the formal part of the Stewardship Campaign. Stewardship, however, involves more than our financial

commitment to FSA. It also involves commitment of our time and talent. To that end you were recently asked to complete the volunteer sheet left in your mailboxes (the yellow forms). Many of the members of our volunteer family are often busy bees around our church property. Stewardship involves caring for our property.

Did you know spring and fall clean-up of our grounds and gardens is done by members of the Property Committee and their friends? However, we need to acknowledge and sincerely thank the ongoing support of David Beach, Audrey Coulthard, and Paul and Enid Merritt. David in a volunteer capacity cuts our grass. Audrey, with assistance from David, edges and fertilizes the lawn. Audrey has a passion for trying to control the pesky weeds in both the lawn and the

gardens. You will frequently see her in the growing season watering, hoeing, raking and trimming the flower beds. Enid Merritt has taken over the planting and maintaining of the front urns as they are changed throughout the seasons. Paul has helped her with the watering. We owe a debt of gratitude to these faithful stewards.

Geoff's right-hand helper is Bev MacDonald. We have been so fortunate to have Bev's help, and in recent years he has painted numerous areas in the church. He and Geoff have recently done work in the choir room to make it more comfortable for our choir. When the hospitality group needed more space for storage, he and Geoff reconfigured a flower room and built new shelving to convert it to a food storage area. Then they went to work on moving the candelabra to the banner room. Bev is always willing to tackle a new project. What an example of a good steward. Thank you Bev.

If you have not already done so, please fill out the yellow volunteer sheet and share your talents. ☺

SUPPER CLUB UPDATE

June McKay



Supper Club is up and running! With the help of some co-ordinators we are pleased to outline our meeting dates for 2012–2013: November 27th, January 29th, February 26th, March 26th, April 23rd, May

28th.

- On **November 27th**, **Mike and Joan Bancroft, Charlotte and Bill Oldham**, members of FSA, as well as **Marj and Art Frankel** from Metropolitan church, will present an interesting evening, highlighting their 17-day trip to Israel and Jordan in the spring this year.
- **January 29th**: Our guests will be **Maria Fallios and Valeria Fallios-Salmon**, daughters of third-generation coffee growers from Nicaragua, and founders of Las Chicas del cafe.

- **February 26th**: Our guest is **Jane Glaves**, a member of FSA, whose topic will be "Home of Hope, Malawi, Africa."
- **March 26th**: "3 Keyboards" ... well-known London organists **Peter Clements, Angus Sinclair** and **Stephen Holowitz** will present a thrilling programme of music in the sanctuary.
- **April 23rd**: Guest **Bruce Woods**, retired Stratford pastor and author, will speak on "Books as Theatre."
- **May 28th**: Programme to be arranged.

A convenor(s) is needed for **January** and **March** (programmes are in place).

New members and guests are **always** welcome ... come and join us for a great evening starting with a sumptuous pot luck supper at 6.00pm. ☺

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4.78kW solar photovoltaic system on the home of FSA's John and Fran Eberhard. System has fed 4,830 kWh of electricity into the grid, offsetting over 6,400 lbs of CO2 equivalent to 82 trees, in the past nine months.

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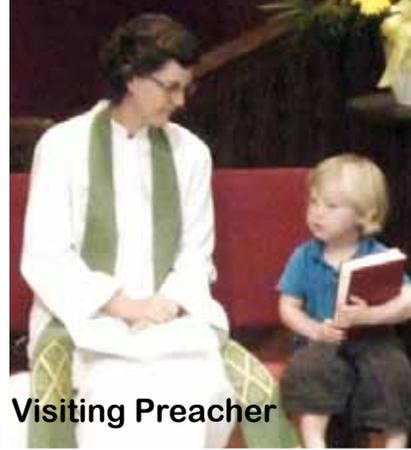
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Debut Performance of
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FSA walks for ELUCO



Junior Joyfuls
on Music Appreciation Sunday

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