

At Saint David's

Presbyterian Church of Saint David, Halifax, NS

Fall 2011

Truth & Reconciliation Commission Comes to Halifax

For the Child Taken, For the Parent Left Behind

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) of Canada is the result of a historic agreement which came into effect in 2007 among the churches, federal government, Aboriginal leaders, and survivors who were a part of the tragic legacy of Indian Residential Schools in Canada. That legacy is of enormous significance to modern day Canada. The impacts are multi-faceted and multi-generational. Some 90,000 former residential schools survivors are alive in Canada today, along with many former staff of the schools—all of whom have important stories to share.

A Process Towards Healing

Learning from other Truth and Reconciliation processes, including that within South Africa under the leadership of Bishop Desmond Tutu, this unique five-year process within Canada, guided by three Commissioners, includes seven national events, the first of which was held from June 16-19, 2010 in Winnipeg, MB and the second from June 28-July 1, 2011 in Inuvik, N.W.T. The process provides a historic opportunity for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples in Canada to engage in truth-telling, lament and healing regarding the devastating racism and abuse that is the dominant, though not exclusive, legacy of the residential school system.

The Commission describes its work as follows:

There is an emerging and compelling desire to put the events of the past behind us so that we can work towards a stronger and healthier future. The truth telling and reconciliation process as part of an overall holistic and comprehensive response to the Indian residential school legacy is a sincere indication and acknowledgement of the injustices and harms experienced by Aboriginal people and the need for continued healing. This is a profound commitment to establishing new relationships embedded in mutual recognition and respect that will forge a brighter future. The truth of our common experiences will help set our spirits free and pave the way to reconciliation.

Canada Apologizes

In June of 2008, the Government of Canada offered an historic apology to residential school survivors in a moving and long-sought occasion of repentance in Parliament. This apology marked an official recognition of the harm and abuse that occurred in the residential school system. The apology marks a turning point in the kind of relationships that are to be built and maintained in the future between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples in Canada.

National TRC Event Coming to Atlantic Canada

Love, one of the seven traditional sacred teachings among Aboriginal peoples, is the theme of TRC's third national event, which will take place at the Halifax Convention Centre from October 26-29, 2011.



A sacred fire will be maintained throughout the event to symbolize the sacredness of this gathering of peoples who will come together to show their love for others, for their children and for all the children of Canada, as they seek healing and reconciliation.

Members of the public will have many opportunities to participate, to witness and to learn. Reflection on the experience of residential schools will be shared in truth-telling circles and sharing panels' statements. History will come alive at learning venue, in children's programming, through photo displays, and at an academic conference.

Hopes for the future and gestures of reconciliation will be offered through artistic and cultural expression, hospitality, and special programming. More information is available on the national website: www.trc.ca.

Moderator of The Presbyterian Church in Canada to Attend

The Presbyterian Church in Canada will be represented at the Atlantic Canadian national event by The Rev. Dr. Rick Horst, Moderator of the 137th General Assembly. Members of the national staff of The PCC also will be present.

Church members from the Presbytery of Halifax-Lunenburg and other presbyteries in the region are warmly invited to attend at any time throughout the October 26-29, 2011 event.

Tired Feet

Have you ever had them? You've been standing all day, in your work or in the home. Your feet feel like baked hams. You just haven't been able to sit down, but now the work day is over. You can kick off your shoes, relax, and maybe even soak those tired feet in epsom salts! Your spouse brings you your slippers, nicely warmed by the fire, you sit back with a hot beverage, and life is good again after all!

The word "feet" occurs 151 times in the Bible ([Strong's Exhaustive Concordance](#)). This is not surprising - the main mode of transportation in Bible lands was walking. In Genesis 18:4 Abraham entertains three messengers from God. His first thought is to provide water to wash the tired men's feet. In Exodus 3:5 Moses must "put off the shoes from off his feet" because he was on holy ground.

John 13:1-17 relates the wonderful story of Jesus washing the disciples' feet. It brings me back to the CY03 conference at Brock University in 2003. One of the most wonderful spiritual experiences of my life was the night all the participants in the conference went out to the field and washed one another's feet. All the feet were the same: dirty, smelly and hot. We were all equal! No pretensions there! And what a lesson that simple illustration was for us.

As we worship in Saint David's sanctuary each week, it reminds me that our feet need rest, but our souls need it even more. Every Christian needs other Christians. John Wesley said, "The Bible knows nothing of a solitary religion". Gathering each week in the house of God, we come to be instructed, challenged, and, yes, refreshed. It is all right to be a bit selfish here. It is all right to soak in the refreshment of the music, the message, the Scriptures. It is quite acceptable to let God renew and revive us. No matter how spiritual we think we are, church fellowship makes us stronger. And that is only *one* of the advantages of regular attendance.

What we bring to church has a lot to do with what we take away. If we come expecting nothing, that is probably what we will take home. But, if we come with anticipation that God is going to refresh and renew us as we meet together, we will do our part by letting God work in us. Then he can work *through* us to refresh others.

Certainly church attendance means more than just pampering our tired feet and souls. But, let's not forget that God wants that for us also.

John Wamboldt

Hints for Readers

Reading on Sunday morning can be a meaningful way to contribute to life at Saint David's.

If you are one of the readers, you will have noticed the readings are introduced by the choir as they sing "Speak Lord in the Stillness". The opening notes of the introduction are your cue to head to the lectern.

When you get to the lectern, don't be afraid of the microphone. It will not bite you. Speak in a normal, clear voice and it will do the rest. Remember, reading is not a sprint, it's a marathon. So, pace yourself so that you're not out of breath at the end of every sentence.

When the choir starts the 'Gloria Patri', it's your cue to return to your seat... and thanks for your contribution!

AND THIS IS HOW WE GRIEVE

And this is how we grieve:
It begins with the pianissimo of disbelief
And crescendos into a cacophony
That hurls questions
Toward the heavens where Mercy is mute.

And this is how we grieve:
Incompletely and with little understanding,
Half limping, half crawling, dazed and disoriented,
In a restless ritual around the rim
Of the black hole that was once our soul.

And this is how we grieve:
With anxiety and with whispered doubts
That want grace to account for
The unyielding darkness, the endless ebony,
That makes us believe we have gone blind or mad.

And this is how we grieve:
Not All at once, but intensely and to exhaustion;
Then we heave ourselves, spent and silent,
Into grief's arms to await
The next anniversary of the calendar or of the heart.

And this is how we grieve.

(Janet G. Tharpe, M.Div.)

Welcome Back!

Remember 'Welcome Back Kotter' – that bunch of misfit students with a misfit teacher who become something special because they refuse to drop out and go away?

I won't draw many parallels with church in 2011 but there are a few obvious ones. Today, let's just acknowledge how good it is that we are here together to do whatever the work of the church requires of us!

It is so good to see everyone – the returning Sunday School teachers, the cottagers, the travellers, those back from holiday, the student who may have just started classes, the member who just decided that today is the right day to begin again. (OK, that was the sermon for September 4 – see if you can find it on our website!).

Many paths take us to this moment on our journey and my prayer as pastor is that we will walk the path together. This fall has some promising programs and events, from the return of the early service and the circle of prayer, to the lecture series and the lead up to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission that arrives in Halifax for the end of October. Elders will be able to refresh their understanding of their calling as the Presbytery invites the new Mission and Educational Consultant to lead us in a day-long reflection on October 29.

In the past week, I have had a couple of calls from people actually volunteering to be part of special programs or events! That's almost unheard of in church circles!

The Session Committees are back and hard at work to help guide the life of the congregation and they are always looking for new people to assist with the work. I hope we get to hear from the committees themselves as they share their passion for what they do.

Synod will be coming to HRM (Lower Sackville) and everyone is welcome to see the church at work at this regional level.

And what more can I say as we gear up for the fall? Actually what I can say is that the church only works well and functions best when all of us are doing this 'together'.

1 Corinthians 12: 4 Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; 5 and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; 6 and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. 7 To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good

Kenn Stright

Can You Help?

For the last few years, three of our ladies have been co-ordinating receptions for funerals. For a variety of reasons they wish to step down at the end of the year. There are lots of people willing to help with baking, serving etc. but we need a co-ordinator(s). If you would like to be involved with this service to the members of the congregation at a difficult time in their lives, please contact any member of the Worship and Church Life Committee.

Transitions

Deaths:

Florine Minnikin - July 30

Jim Smart - August 12

Blessed are they who die in the Lord

Marriages:

Karen Stoddard-Cote and David Mann - August 27

Those whom God has joined together, let no man put asunder.

Directory Updates

Hilarie Embree - Apt. 1002

James Ellis Seary - Room 6420

David and Margaret Craig - 477-6949

Michael de la Ronde and Nancy MacDonald

Unit 1004, 5839 Cunard Street

Halifax, NS B3K 0B9

Congratulations To:

Amanda Saoud, on her graduation from the Halifax Christian Academy last spring. She will be attending Dalhousie this fall

Charlotte Taper, on being awarded a \$1000 scholarship from the Royal Canadian Legion Poppy Fund at the Citadel High School graduation last June. This award is given to a student who has a grandparent who is a veteran of the Armed Forces of Canada. Charlotte's grandfather, Charles Daniel Taper, served with the First Canadian Survey Regiment during World War II in Italy and North Africa. He was a member of St. David's from 1983 until his death in 1992.

Did you know?

This past summer Jamie Campbell, in his capacity as a Provincial Court Judge, performed a wedding in Cape Breton. This was not unique in itself, but the fact that the entire service was in Gaelic was unique.

Jamie worked with the Rev. Ivan Gregan of the Port Wallis United Church to get the Gaelic just right for the big day.

Reports are that all were very pleased with the ceremony.

Food Handling Course

Do you handle food in the kitchen at St. David's--or anywhere else for a crowd? A *Food Handling Course for Volunteer Organizations* will be offered Wednesday, September 21st, 2011, from 7-9 p.m. in the church hall. This course is being offered as the training of kitchen volunteers is in keeping with our Food Handling Policy, and we hope a number of our volunteers will be able to attend.

This food handling course, put on by the Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture, is free of charge, and is geared to volunteer organizations. The two-hour course will cover the four basic food safety principles of: "Cook, chill, separate and clean". **Please RSVP by Sept. 19 to the Saint David's church office at 423-1944 or stdavids.office@ns.sympatico.ca**

Pupils of Saint David's Sunday School

Once again our Sunday School classes have resumed, for ages two to 12. Please invite your friends to come with you. If you are a teenager you are welcome to help with the activities for the younger ones, or you may join the services in the Sanctuary. This year we expect to add a few new features to the classes. We always learn a lot and have fun doing it!

TAX REMINDER TO PARENTS: Your child's Sunday School offerings are tax deductible. To ensure that you get tax credit on your church receipt at the end of the year, **please put your own envelope number on your child's Sunday School envelope.** Extra Sunday School envelopes are available from Graeme Hicks or John Wamboldt.

Christmas Families

It may be only September, but it is time to start thinking about how we wish to do our annual Christmas Families Project. We may want to move to a donation only model, or partner with another group, such as a school. But, the first thing we need is a co-ordinator. It is an interesting position, and if you have the necessary organizational skills and empathy, it is a lot of fun. *If you would like to consider taking on this project and want more information, please call Val at 455-1893*