

At Saint David's

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Let Me Tell You a Story

Sometimes ministers find themselves in interesting situations and only later do they get any feedback 'from the other side' – from the people involved. Not many days into my first month here at Saint David's I made a 'cold call' to someone who hadn't been attending for quite some time. And so began a five-year pastoral relationship (and deep friendship). Mabel died not that long ago and one of the family sent us a long letter about the place and importance of Saint David's to their mother. Let me quote at length:

"Mabel was an adherent of Saint David's since our family moved to Halifax almost 60 years ago when her children were young. Attendance I often thought was mainly to ensure that we obtained a religious grounding to stand us in good stead throughout our lives. We were not a very religious family and I

wondered if only because of the children (and our participation in the children's Sunday school program) that took the entire family regularly to Saint David's. As her children got older, her ability to keep us attending weakened and eventually the family, including our mother, stopped attending except for major events (Christmas, Easter, etc.)... After our children left home and moved away, church attendance stopped entirely until Mom and I began attending services. Mom would pick me up at my home; we would drive together to Saint David's and spent a refreshing hour in 'her pew' at the very back of the church. Our pattern continued for many years while she lived (at home) and was still able to drive. She seemed to enjoy the service and Saint David's, once again, became an important part of her life. We both very much enjoyed our Sunday hour at Saint David's. It provided a

quiet, contemplative outing for my mother and I enjoyed the complete break from work and normal day to day matters.

Our attendance stopped before you <Kenn> came to Saint David's. I am not sure why but her interest in the church was rekindled by your visits to her homes... which she cherished very much... All of her children wish to acknowledge your, and Saint David's importance in her life..."

Mabel died last year but to the end received visits from her elder(s), participated in communion with her minister, and spoke of her hopes for what was to come next. Mabel's story reminds us how crucial it is to stay in contact with all our people – active or inactive – knowing that we are all part of the family of God.

Kenn Stright

Happy

Easter

Christ
is
Risen!

Phoenix House Snack Program Annual Appeal

Once again Saint David's is being asked to support the snack program at Phoenix House. This is a once a year contribution that goes towards healthy snacks for the youth who use Phoenix's facilities.

We have been asked to provide \$175 and anyone who wishes to contribute is asked to give their donations to Carol Dobson or Anne Sommerville. *(Income tax receipts will be issued).*

Thanks!

Transitions

Welcome to Pedro Hilton and Isabel Candeias. They live just up the street and hail from Rio de Janeiro, where they attend a Presbyterian church. They are here for about 18 months--at least to start--for Pedro's work as a lawyer.

David Read has been posthumously elected to the NS Business Hall of Fame.

Refugee Update

What an amazing story we have made our own! In December the Session met and approved a joint Syrian refugee sponsorship with Fort Massey and St. Matthew's United Churches. A month later we had more than \$8,000 raised without any campaign or canvass!

We are now ready to welcome and support the family expected after Easter 2016. St. David's has taken on the Education Committee co-chaired by Claudia Saoud and Ray Whitely.

The Al Saghrji family is originally from Damascus. The family currently resides in Beirut, Lebanon. The family of five is recognized as UNHCR refugees awaiting resettlement. The father's name is Mohammad Said Mohamad. He is 42 and has been a professional accountant in Syria. The mother is Maisan Al Najjar. She is 35 and has worked as a teacher. They have three children, Joudi (15), Sedra (9) and their son, Beshar (4).

Their story is frightening. In Damascus they lived in a house routinely searched by government authorities. Feeling threatened and harassed, the entire family lived

daily in fear. Their attempts to move put them at greater risk and so they gathered what resources they could and fled to Lebanon where they have lived since 2012. Mohammad has been able to work periodically on a part-time basis as an accountant and their children have not been allowed to attend school.

The applications for sponsorship have all been approved and are being processed by Canadian authorities in Lebanon. Now it is simply the time

to wait until a date is set for their arrival and then there will be a mad scramble to get everything in place. What an exciting time that will be. There is much still to do and when the time comes you are invited to get involved -- on the education committee, as one of the 'welcomers' at the airport, or in a social setting. And please remember, your prayers are always requested for their safety and for their new life among us!

Music Fund



Did you realize that Saint David's has a music fund? This fund is used to support our choral scholars, purchase music, and pay special soloists for our Christmas Carol Service. Currently we have three paid soloists. Many years ago we had four section leaders/soloists. Wouldn't it be wonderful to have at least four again?

After a generous donation several years ago, the fund has been slowly diminishing. If you would like to help replenish the fund, just use the **music** line on your envelope.

Alternatively, perhaps you would like to sponsor one of our choral scholars and get to know them better - just like Symphony Nova Scotia's program of sponsored musical chairs. Our treasurer, Mac Fyfe, would be pleased to provide you with the details of what that commitment would entail.

The Worship & Church Life Committee

Fidel Baute --A Lost Friend

Approximately 15 years ago we had a very special person become part of our congregation.

Fidel Baute from Caracas, Venezuela spent five years with us. Fidel was an office worker with a degree and a sometime opera singer from a family of opera singers.

Disturbed by the political troubles occurring in Venezuela, he walked out of his country and went to the United States where he remained for five years. He worked as a delivery man for a bakery. Fidel found a Presbyterian church where he felt accepted and where he met a wonderful young woman, Michelle, a Spanish instructor. Michelle's family fell in love with Fidel and he spent time with them in California.

A few days before 911 Fidel crossed the border into Canada. In Canada he obtained a work permit, working at a recycling plant and then at Future Shop. He visited several Presbyterian churches in the city and found a

welcoming home at Saint David's where he became a strong asset to the senior choir, as well as taking time to sing with our youth (including Spanish church music), all the while accompanying with his guitar. He became a good friend to them and attended one of the Atlantic Youth Worship Weekends with them.

Fidel remained with us for five years. He brought warmth and friendliness to our church congregation and we responded in kind. Many adults took him 'under their wing' with meals, drives, and items for his bachelor apartment.

Michelle visited regularly and she and Fidel were married at Saint David's. Fidel obtained a lawyer and was in the process of working towards a Canadian Residency permit - a long and tedious process.

However, one evening, while talking with his mother on the phone, Fidel suddenly became very homesick. He decided to return home to

Venezuela and while he could not enter the United States as a married husband, Michelle would visit Venezuela. Before he left, several get-togethers were held for Fidel and Kay Foxtan, a special friend, drove him to the airport. It was sad day for many.

At one of our recent Bible sessions, we remembered the time Fidel was with us and wondered what had become of him - so hoping he still had the same e-mail address after all these years. I e-mailed him in December and was quite surprised to receive a reply - almost immediately!

Following is a paraphrase from Fidel:

"Of course I remember you all! It seems like a distant dream though, because so much has happened since I left you guys. I've been living for 2 years and a half in Panama. I'm still single. (I got divorced from Michelle 1 year after I left Canada). I have my new car and I just started to pay the down payment on a house." "I'm in Panama because

This country is very friendly and easy to get around, with migration paperwork, jobs, and everything! Probably you already know that the Venezuelan economy is a horrible mess. It will take some years to go back to the nice Venezuela in which I was born. For this reason, thousands of Venezuelans have left the country and now live in Columbia, Peru, Miami, Ecuador, Panama, etc. My family is still there, and I get worried when they tell me about their life in general. What I have accomplished here is virtually impossible to achieve in Venezuela!!! And the only thing I do here is: Teaching English!!!"

"I miss so much Canada!!! But I've decided to stay in Latin America, because I don't have the strength to deal with North American migration authorities anymore! I am glad to hear that the youngsters (I knew) are now big boys and girls."

"You won't believe this, but there's no Presbyterian church in Panama."

There are zillions of Pentecostal churches - And, unfortunately, I'm not singing, because the cultural scene here is very much in its early stages. No choirs or orchestras. "Thank you for writing and have a wonderful Christmas!!!!

Fidel Baute:

fidelbaute@yahoo.com

In a follow-up note Fidel mentions that his marriage to Michelle was sort of a sad experience. They were 'best friends' and were extremely frustrated with the migration restrictions. His 11 years in North America did give him "experience in life, the English language, and friends". For now, with his work he hopes to visit other Latin American countries.

"I don't know if God wants me to visit Canada again, but if I do, believe me I will go straight to Halifax to say hello to all of you!!!

I have a sense that Fidel would love to receive some e-mails from those who knew him.

Anne Sommerville

Update from David's Place

David's Place continues to welcome between 35 and 50 guests each Friday. It is a blessed time of fellowship and everyone is welcome. We will be open on Good Friday and plan to serve a ham dinner. If you would like to help out we would appreciate donations of sweets for dessert-on the 25th or any time!

Thank you for all the donations that come in during the month and particularly on Food Bank Sunday. We are most appreciative. We and our guests make good use of all you provide.

We have a number of new volunteers, which is wonderful as it means some of our long-serving, faithful ones can take a break occasionally and not feel we are going to be very short staffed. Gwen Larsen is a recent addition to our roster. She originally hailed from

The Valley and is a retired nurse.

Mike McPhee came to us through the encouragement of volunteer Elizabeth Thorpe, who volunteers with him at Meals on Wheels. Mike loves to cook and each week helps out with the main meal and also brings biscuits and sweets, which are very popular. He hails from Cape Breton.

Marlene Murphy, another of the retired Public Health Nurses, corralled by Johannah, is a strong worker in the kitchen. She seems quiet at first, but the longer she is with us, the more her bouncy personality shines through. She is originally from Tatamagouche.

Barb and Gary Smith joined us in the fall. Barb has Cape Breton roots and was friends with one of Johannah's teachers. It is a small world that circles around. The Smiths

retired from education and social work backgrounds to Halifax from Hamilton, ONT where they knew Steve Gal and Janet Lala. While the other new volunteers prefer to work in the kitchen, Gary spends his time serving and visiting with our guests. We need folks in all areas of our program.

We are so pleased to have these new friends step up and volunteer to help provide the fellowship and food that are the hallmarks of David's Place. Thank you and welcome to each of them.

Johannah Roberts

If you would like some very pleasant reading and lovely photography, check out Kathy Large's blog about her winter in Rome.

It can be found at: <https://largewordpress.com.wordpress.com>.

Women's Interchurch Council (WICC) - Update

The Halifax Chapter of the Women's Inter-Church Council of Canada is a group of ecumenical women who represent churches across Halifax and Dartmouth. The Presbyterian Church has three representatives, from Saint David's and Calvin/Knox. Until recently First Presbyterian Church, Lower Sackville, First Presbyterian Church, Lower Sackville, and Iona, Dartmouth, also had representatives.

The group meets five times a year and consists of several committees which liaise with organizations such as the Elizabeth Fry Society, Coverdale, Atlantic Provinces Special Education Authority (APSEA), Social Justice Interests (e.g. Prison Ministry), Phoenix Youth Program. It is under the umbrella of the WICC that Saint David's supports the 'Food for Phoenix Program'. For myself, attending these meetings means working with a group

of inspiring, strong women who are very committed and dedicated to outreach within the Halifax/Dartmouth area.

Two major programmes which the WICC undertakes each year are the annual Fall Rally which includes the Fellowship of the Least Coin - a worldwide service of prayer, peace, and reconciliation and the World Day of Prayer in March. This is a service observed by more than 170 countries when Christians (men and women) around the world 'worship together' guided by the same programme.

This year's World Day of Prayer took place on Friday, March 4th at St. Agnes Roman Catholic Parish. The programme was prepared by the women of Cuba ('Receive Children, Receive Me'), and apart from WICC members taking the roles of several Cuban women, our guest speaker, Rev. Kimberlynn McNabb

(Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Resurrection) spoke of the obstacles that face Cuban women but also of the hope, the 'resurrection' of their lives. Rev. Kim had us dancing to Cuban music, as a Cuban woman would participate in her church and spiritual life. It was a wonderful service and it was a pleasure to have a nice day, weather wise, as compared to last year's World Day of Prayer!

As mentioned, the WICC sponsors the 'Food for Phoenix Program' which Saint David's supports - a programme which provides nutritional snacks to youth who visit the Phoenix House Drop-In Centre. In the past the Presbyterian churches in Halifax were assigned the month of either March or April and Saint David's appointed week tended to be around Easter week. The Ladies Guild would provide the financial support and members of the Saint David's

Auxiliary would do the shopping.

The method of providing funding and food items has been updated. The WICC now collects financial support from the various denominations - request for financial support goes out to Presbyterian churches in March/April and members of WICC and Phoenix House do the shopping.

Anyone wishing to learn more about the WICC and its programmes, please contact me.

annesommerville@me.com

Anne Sommerville

Helen Watson Fund of the Presbyterian Church of Saint David

The deadline for applications to the Watson Fund is April 30.

Contact Mac MacKay for information at 902-422-5481



Ladling out the winning soup

Curried Sweet Potato Soup - *Ian Gllmore*

- Place 4 large sweet potatoes directly onto rack of oven, preheated to 400* for 30-40 min, until skin can easily be pierced with a fork.
- Brown one large diced onion in 2 tbsp of Sesame Oil for about 5 minutes
- Add 2 Tbsp of curry paste or curry powder. Continue to brown.
- Stir in 4 cups of Vegetable Broth (one tetra pak). and the juice of 1 Lime
- Add 3-4 Roma Tomatoes, diced and seeded.
- Stir in equal parts cumin, ginger, and garlic powder. I started with 2 tsp of each.
- Bring mixture to a rolling boil and reduce to a simmer.
- Remove Sweet potatoes from oven and let cool. Remove skins and dice.
- Add to mixture and let simmer for 30 minutes, stirring on and off.
- Blend entire mix in the blender to a smooth consistency and pour into crock pot.
- Taste and adjust spices. At this point I ended up adding much more of each to bring out the garlic at the beginning and the curry at the end.
- To beef it up I stirred in a .5L of cream. Stir until completely integrated. Set crock pot on low and let stand for an hour or two.
- Upon reheating I threw in diced red pepper so it would still have a bit of crunch when serving.
- Garnish: Chopped Cilantro and crumbled goat cheese

Holy Week Services

Please join us for a half hour prayer service at 7:30 a.m. followed by a continental style breakfast:

- All Saints Anglican Cathedral, Monday March 21
- First Baptist Tuesday, March 22
- St Mary's Basilica, Wednesday, March 23
- St Andrew's United Church, Thursday, March 24

Maundy Thursday joint service March 24 with Calvin Presbyterian (at Calvin) 7 pm

Good Friday service will be at St. John's United on Friday, March 25, at 10:30 am (meeting at the Maritime Conservatory of Music on Chebucto Road.)

Sunrise Easter service will be held at the Lower Parking lot of Point Pleasant Park, Sunday, March 27 at 6:55 am

Early Communion service at 9 am

Congregational Potluck Breakfast at 9:45 am

Easter Communion service at 11 am - we will be joined by the Nova Scotia Korean Presbyterian Church

