



At Saint David's

Presbyterian Church of Saint David Summer 2015

Grafton Street Shelter Will House 58

Most of Halifax's churches, including Grafton Street Methodist (now The Presbyterian Church of Saint David), were damaged to a greater or lesser extent in the catastrophic explosion of shipboard munitions in Halifax Harbour on 6 December 1917. Five churches were destroyed, including Kaye Street Methodist, 52 of whose congregants perished. Grafton Street Methodist and Robie Street Methodist (site of today's St Andrew's United), where the Methodist relief depot was situated, sustained less damage than the other Methodist

churches, thus allowing public worship to resume sooner. The Methodist memorial service for victims of the disaster was held in Grafton Street church on New Year's Day 1918. Subsequently, the schoolhouse -- afterwards Saint David's old hall -- was lent to the Halifax Relief Committee as a homeless shelter (Grafton Street's minister, the Reverend Alfred S. Rogers*, chair of the Halifax district, was serving as head of the Methodist relief committee). A sturdy brick building constructed in 1866, the schoolhouse was in demand at a time when

housing homeless survivors of the disaster was a pressing problem. In its issue of 17 January 1918, six weeks after the disaster -- by this time the period of emergency relief had passed -- Halifax's Evening Mail told the story thus: **"The Work of Adapting the Church Hall to Present Needs is Now Completed and the Hall is Full.** **"Visitation of the Shelters and the Hand of Fellowship, One Important Phase of Rehabilitation.** "WORK on the Grafton Street Methodist church hall, with a view to adapting it to use for a shelter during the winter for victims of the

explosion, is now completed, and forty-eight people are now being housed there – at least ten more, it is expected, will be received there shortly. It is surprising to see the degree to which it has been possible to adapt it to use as a shelter, without in the smallest degree interfering with the building as it was originally – when evacuated by the refugees, and when the partitions, etc. are removed, the hall will be precisely as it was on the day it was taken over for shelter purposes.

“An effort has been made to provide a number of small bedrooms, instead of one large sleeping apartment. A fine porcelain bathtub and strictly up-to-date plumbing has been installed, and Mrs Virtue, who is in charge, and who is well-known in Halifax as one of the most popular superintendents ever stationed at the Salvation Army

Maternity Hospital on Tower Road, is keenly alert to such matters as ventilation, insofar as it can be gotten in a building with windows which cannot be lowered from the top; strict, spotless, cleanliness [sic], etc.

“An office for the transaction of such business as comes up from day to day is provided; a kitchen, immaculately clean; and a bright dining room where yesterday afternoon, when *The Mail* called, the tables were bountifully spread.

“The sights in these shelters are touching – the groups of quiet, courageous people, whose all has been swept away, and who are here because there are no rooms procurable at this time – they are, with patience which commands admiration, abiding completion of the little houses on the Common and elsewhere. There are groups of wide-eyed, expectant children – just here it is suggested that some of our women of

means and leisure – our bright, loving, gentle, maternal women who ‘have a way with them’, would be welcomed very warmly if they could find time to drop in and pay the small people some ‘quite informal’ little attentions – leave a few inexpensive sweets for a party of the kind these kiddies enjoy – or a nice little story book or two. It is dull, when you are little to have just to ‘wait’. God knows it is a hard business for their elders, and so we must not forget the shelters as the weeks go on – we must try to keep up the hearts of the houseless groups who are enduring bitter misfortune so bravely.

“*YESTERDAY* *The Mail*, in one hour and a half on the round, captured enough that was sorrowful to fill columns – there was a 7-year old girl who has lost her father, mother, four brothers and a sister, and whose confiding little hand slipped gently into yours thrills you with its

silent appeal to you to take its owner under a warm protecting wing! There was a brave, silent woman whose chief stay – a twenty-two year old daughter – has been rendered totally blind, while another has lost one eye; whose home with all its contents is gone, who is for the present absolutely penniless; there is a woman whose husband fell in action overseas who has lost her home; whose daughter, her husband and her baby were killed; there is a young man tenderly caring for a fine baby boy of some seven months, whose mother met a terrible death. The ‘cases’ might be indefinitely multiplied, and as one makes the rounds, the feeling grows that one of the most vitally important aspects of that large problem designated as ‘rehabilitation’ – starting the stranded again is that human, red-blooded, direct ‘personal touch’ as of the friend who, listening to the simple –

pathetically, poignantly simple – stories of the cruel things done by the Bolt of Terror – sets herself to thinking out in what way she can assist these sufferers in solution of the most practical matters which confront them.

“THE Mail knows of one wise, sweet, resourceful woman who has been a true staff and stay thru [sic] her practical, helpful suggestions to individual sufferers – she has given them the benefit of her knowledge of the whole machinery of relief; facilitated their efforts to secure aid in such a form as best and most fully solved their individual problems, and done it most quietly.

“The value of the visitor lies in her ability and her willingness to become mind and feet, thought and action, to the more or less dazed or perplexed, and in many cases physically broken and weakened woman to whom she goes. She does not rest

content with routine, ‘bloodless’, impersonal questioning – she seeks to see herself in the sufferer as a cruel fate might tomorrow make her and she says to herself: -- ‘How can I best help my sister woman to her feet – how best accompany her a little way towards a sure new start? May I become for this hour of her overwhelming, eyes, hand, feet, mind to her!’

“WHAT woman, suffering under such blows as fortune has dealt these sufferers, can possibly be normal in her ability to plan and act? What woman indeed! And to the credit of our townswomen generally be it said, that they are, as a rule, keenly sensible of the claim of their sisters upon all that is chivalrous, all that is capable in them, and are eager to help – to extend the hand of true help; to steady still trembling hearts and uncertain feet – thank heaven for the lovely outpouring of fellowship!”

**It had been a difficult year for Mr Rogers who in January lost his five-year-old son in a fire at the parsonage on Dresden Row. He afterwards became a prominent minister in the United Church of Canada and died in 1958.*

Barry Cahill

The Appropriate Place for Public Prayer in a Pluralistic Province

Across the country people are debating the place of public (and patrician) prayer in the public forum. Where do you stand and what are your concerns, both pro and con? I'm sure you've heard more times than you care that freedom of religion includes freedom from religion in the public sphere. I'm also certain you've heard that prayer is a cornerstone of the culture of a Christian Canada. Both statements bother me.

My lectionary group has set aside a few meetings to discuss this question. You need to know that this isn't a Christian group... containing representatives from Universalist Unitarians, Jewish tradition, often Baha'i and Buddhist and most mainline Christian denominations. We are seeking to get back to basics and reflect on what the place and purpose of prayer is... and we come at this question from various vantage points.

It's interesting that prayer has become so divisive when its primary purpose was to create a common concern for the work of councils and organizations serving the public good. Please remember that the Canadian Supreme Court did not ban inclusive prayer or reflective times or private prayer prior to a meeting. It dealt with sectarian prayer from a particular tradition that had the appearance of excluding others from

an act that was meant to be inclusive.

The Supreme Court decision focused on the necessity of neutrality which reflects the evolving interpretation of conscience and religion in this country – a country that has changed dramatically in the past fifty years. Nowhere does it prohibit a moment to reflect on the higher aspirations that motivate those who hold public office. Nowhere does it say that the public should be restrained from offering prayer for elected officials.

Our prayer group here at St. David's has a regular routine of praying for those who put themselves in harm's way – military, police, firefighters, medical personnel... and politicians. I think we have little to complain about regarding this ruling until we all spend considerably more time in prayer for such folks.

I don't want prayer to continue as an empty and meaningless ritual while those being prayed for are plotting their plans for the meeting ahead. There are enough empty rituals in this country already. But if such a moment at the beginning of a meeting can draw people together in a circle of common care for one another and concern for the work at hand then prayer still has a place in this province and this country.

I hope this gets some reaction as we reflect on such issues in an ever-changing public forum. I hope it gets us considering our own practice of prayer. I'm still somewhat amazed by two things: first, the power of the prayer circle here at St. David's as it offers prayer week by week and, second, the pitiful handful who take time to join us in one of the most meaningful expressions of our connections with

one another and the divine.

We gather here today as colleagues and friends with attention to a common goal. That goal is the continued service to the citizens of our city/province/country through our programs and initiatives and information. We understand our responsibilities as those entrusted with the good governance of this city/province, country. It is obvious that we work and live in challenging times. We seek the patience of one another as we strive to fulfill our commitment, and the stamina to make a difference in our province, nation and the world. We express our thanks for this opportunity to gather together where we can reinforce our community principles of openness and engagement for all people, especially those who rely on us to be a voice for them.

The Supreme Court ruling can be found on our website

Kenn Stright

From the Finance Committee



We are enjoying our newly renovated sanctuary. The open area behind the pews is extensively used for various functions - Sunday morning coffee hour, David's Place on Fridays, and committee meetings.

On the financial side, we are experiencing decreases in investment income, facility rental and fundraising. When the development permit is issued, we will be receiving land lease payments.

The Finance Committee is challenged during the summer months with decreased offerings from the congregation, as many people take time for special vacation trips.

Please consider making a summer donation to Saint David's, especially if you will be out of town for part of the summer, or give post-dated cheques.

Mac Fyfe & Davida Mackay



For over 100 years, Aboriginal children were removed from their families and sent to institutions called residential schools. The government-funded, church-run schools were located across Canada and established with the purpose to eliminate parental involvement in the spiritual, cultural and intellectual development of Aboriginal children. The last residential schools closed in the mid-1990s.

During this chapter in Canadian history, more than 150,000 First Nations, Métis, and Inuit children were forced to attend these schools some of which were hundreds of miles from their home. The cumulative impact of residential schools is a legacy of unresolved trauma passed from generation to generation

and has had a profound effect on the relationship between

Aboriginal peoples and other Canadians. Collective efforts from all peoples are necessary to revitalize the relationship between Aboriginal peoples and Canadian society – reconciliation is the goal. It is a goal that will take the commitment of multiple generations but when it is achieved, when we have reconciliation - it will make for a better, stronger Canada. (*From the TRC Commission.*)

The Presbyterian Church of Saint David will reflect on the work of the TRC, the involvement of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, and our collective work on the issue through Kairos. Kenn Stright and Katie Campbell experienced the closing of the TRC in Ottawa May 31-June 2 while Valerie and Roderick MacDonald

attended an event at the Mik'maq Friendship Centre on June 2.

A Note about Your Envelopes

The people who count collection each Sunday are Session members who volunteer their time and stay after church – hopefully not for the whole afternoon! You can make their job so much easier by following these simple instructions:

1. Only put in ONE envelope per week (except on occasions when there is a special offering in a colored envelope). It is not necessary, if you have missed two or three Sundays to put each envelope in—just put the grand total in the current envelope. This makes the counters' work much easier.
2. ALWAYS fill out the front of your envelope and make sure the total is correct.
3. Please put your envelope # on your cheque.

Three easy steps for you—fewer frustrations for the counters.

Please clip this and tape it to your box of envelopes.
Thank you.

P.S. No tape or staples—please!

Phyllis Morrison

Presbyterian Record

At the 2015 Annual Congregational Meeting, the congregation voted to terminate our Every Home Plan subscription to the Presbyterian Record. The Every Home Plan will expire on June 15, 2015. If you have paid your subscription to the Record by using the special envelope in your envelope box, that payment covered the period from June 15, 2014 to June 15, 2015.

To continue receiving the Presbyterian Record via subscription, you can take out an individual subscription through the website, www.PresbyterianRecord.ca, or by writing to Presbyterian Record, 50 Wynford Drive, Toronto ON M3C 1J7.

For those with internet access, another option is to read the Record on the website at no charge.

Also, Saint David's will arrange for four subscriptions; these copies will be available in the narthex for congregation members to borrow.

The Finance Committee

David's Place Recognized During National Nursing Week

It's a normal Friday morning at the historic Presbyterian Church of Saint David on Halifax's famed Pizza Corner. Tables and chairs are set at the back of the sanctuary. A hearty meal of shepherd's pie and salad is being served from the kitchen, and a number of guests have come for a meal, counselling, and friendship. David's Place, the church's outreach programme welcomes between 25 and 40 'guests' each Friday morning. They come in to have either breakfast or lunch, talk to the retired public health nurses who volunteer each week for referrals to other health care providers, or seek counselling from the minister, the Rev. Kenn Stright. This programme started as a partnership between Saint David's and the Victorian Order of Nurses 11 years ago. At one point, VON nurses were at the church every week carrying out various checks, including blood pressure, diabetic counselling, and foot care. With the impending destruction of Saint David's church hall, the format has changed, the demand for these medical services has diminished, but the outreach continues.

One of the reasons David's Place exists is because of a bequest made by Helen M. Watson, a retired public health nurse who left money in her will for mission projects.

"I had worked under her in her position as supervisor of Public Health Nurses for the Armdale office (on the St. Margaret's Bay Road, which was responsible for Spryfield and parts of Halifax County)," David's Place volunteer and retired public health nurse Johannah Roberts says. "I found her to be a quiet reserved lady who was committed to helping people both during her long nursing career and through support and participation in mission at Saint David's." Watson passed away more than a decade ago, but she continues to be active in the life and ministry of her congregation and in various charities across the province. She left a \$300,000 bequest to Saint David's which she designated for 'mission work in Nova Scotia'. With her gift, the congregation decided to establish a permanent endowment fund in her name. Over the past decade, money has been disbursed from the Watson Fund to a wide variety of ministries including The Out of the Cold Shelter at St. Matthew's United Church in Halifax, Camp Geddie, the Presbyterian Synod camp, Coverdale Centre (for

women who are having trouble with the law), Phoenix House (for vulnerable youth), and David's Place itself. "I remember Helen from her usual pew on the south side of the church, half way back," Roberts says. "I found

her to be a lady who was committed to helping people both during her long nursing career and through support and participation in mission at St David's. What I remember most was her quiet form of leadership by example, which I then

connected to reading the excerpt from Presbyterian Church in Canada about her legacy of the Watson Fund.

Carol Dobson

Transitions

Baptisms:

Benjamin Glennie
Owen Lavery
Simon Liot
"Let the little children come unto me"

Memorial Service:

Margot McCurdy- Saturday,
June 13 11 a.m. @ Snow's

Deaths:

Olive Clark
June Herron
"Blessed are they who die in the Lord"

New Members:

Paul Service
Barbara and Gary Smith

Congratulations to our

Graduates:

Margaret Campbell-Acadia
Stephen Fyfe- Dalhousie
Andrew Saoud- Armbrae
Amanda Saoud-Dalhousie

Update:

Charlotte Taper is in Montreal this summer where she is currently volunteering at Santropol Roulant (essentially a Meals on Wheels).

Her sister Alissa is going to Equador and will be gone for 11 days, building schools with her classmates.

SUMMER WORSHIP SCHEDULE

ALL SERVICES BEGIN AT 10:30 A.M.

Host Congregation	Location	Participating
June 21	St. David's	St. David's & St. Andrew's
June 28	St. David's	St. David's, St. Andrew's <i>(Russ Daye preaching)</i>
July 5	St. David's	All four churches
July 12, 19, 26	St. John's	All four churches <i>(N.B., St. John's worships at the Maritime Conservatory of Music)</i>
August 2, 9, 16	St. Andrew's	All four churches <i>(Kenn Stright preaching Aug. 16)</i>
Aug 23 -30	First Baptist	All four churches
September 6	First Baptist	St. Andrew's, St. David's, & First Baptist

Pot Luck Barbecue on Sunday, June 14



This marks the end of services on our own until September, as the next Sunday will be the start of joint services with St. Andrews, St. John's and First Baptist.

That day we will host barbecue with hotdogs and hamburgers, salads, sweets, and the monthly birthday cake.

If you would like to contribute, please see the sign up sheet by the coffee urn, or contact Valerie Macdonald at 455-1893.