



At Saint David's

Presbyterian Church of Saint David
Christmas 2014

Why Only Seven Families?

We know Saint David's used to take a lot more in the past. We certainly remember delivering to 26 one year. Flo pressed all of us into service. We also remember being on pyjama duty and buying more than 40 pairs at once at Sears Bargain basement.

We also know that, with the amount of money we collect, we could buy just a Christmas dinner for a larger number of families. We toured several other operations a few years ago.

There are a couple of different factors that fostered the program we have now. One was a comment by Jamie Campbell when we were working on a different project many, many years ago and he said that potatoes are pretty much free. At the time it was \$10 for 50 lbs of potatoes and you could certainly make that fill a few bellies and keep a family going for a while. So our program came to include a 50 lb bag of potatoes for each family.

One year, when Amy was very small, perhaps 3 or 4, we delivered to a refugee family from Africa. The house was as neat as a pin. The mom and kids greeted us at the door and were extremely polite and grateful. Amy and one of the little boys were talking and playing while we unloaded the car. I asked her what she did in Africa and how she came to be here? She said she was saving money to buy a sewing

machine. She knew once she had a sewing machine she could both make clothes for her own family and take jobs in. I went home, packed up my own machine, and all of the spare fabric etc. I had in the house and brought it back to her that night. I gave her the job of finishing the projects I had underway. We stayed in touch for a little while, but, after a couple of years, she was well on her way. I have watched over the years and seen her children do well at sports and academically. Whenever their name, catches my eye in the paper, I feel very, very happy and very, very lucky.

For me, and for my family, that is what Saint David's Christmas Families is about.

It's about making a lasting difference.

We had a young mom two years ago who was in desperate circumstances. She had a 10-month old daughter. She was also looking after her mother, who was dying of breast cancer and her grandfather, who had Alzheimers, and she was doing all of that while working full time at Tim Horton's. When I met with her, it was readily apparent she was very smart and capable of much more. As I got to know her, I learned that she had been accepted into law school but couldn't afford to go. She had way too much on her shoulders. She was 21. I knew

what it was like to be a single mom supporting terminally ill family members and how hard that was for me – much older and with many more life skills and resources to make it happen. I have a close friend who both owns a fashion store and is a lawyer. I called her and told her about this young woman. Lisa gave her three really nice outfits for job interviews and I was able to ask another lawyer friend to help her. She eventually got an entry level job at a local major law firm. They are supportive of her part time studies. I then worked with the daycare in her building to arrange for a subsidized spot. She doesn't need our help anymore. Her grandfather has since been moved into long term care. Her mom has passed away... but she and her daughter have a path to a better life that might not have been possible without us.

This year we have a mom who is a full time student learning a trade as well as a full time Tim Horton's employee and single mom of two. What is holding her back is the inability to afford the tools for her trade. She will immediately move from making \$11.60 an hour to more than \$20 an hour when she is fully equipped. Yes it is expensive, but I have a specific donor for that task and she will be immediately able to better her circumstances and that of her children. They won't need help this time next year.

We have another mom who is a nail technician, but has to rent her spot in a salon and supply her own materials. She is undercapitalized and therefore can only take four clients per day and then has to take a bus to the beauty supply shop. This results in lost time and income. She can't afford the investment to get enough supplies for a few days. We have arranged to give her a hand-up by giving her enough so she can book 8-10 clients a day for a week. The impact is fairly immediate on that family.

It's about breaking the cycle.

We have a family where Dad has become disabled. The family is living in bankruptcy. Mom is working part time as a cashier at a retail food store. I've met with them and there is not much we can do to help either of them at this point. We will give them what they need for Christmas. However, they have a daughter who is 16. She's very bright but working under a significant disadvantage at school. She doesn't have the tools to support her capabilities. We are providing those. She is a bright young lady. We don't want to see her trapped by her circumstances.

We look to the Saint David's congregation for the help that is about making sure everyone gets what they need from Santa... and each family can celebrate Christmas with plenty of food and knowing that they are not alone and we, as a congregation care about them.

The long term help is something that comes from our larger family and community. As I meet each family and understand their needs we reach out to whomever we think can help and engage them.

As part of this we also try really hard to support local businesses and to spend this money with them. It is all part of trying to ensure that we not only help people at Christmas but help to solve the problem at its core.

I hope this answers the question of "Why only seven?" It's a choice. We have only so much space... and only so much time... and this is about trying very hard to provide meaningful help to break the cycle.

Thank you for your support.

The End Is In Sight or Is It the Beginning?

Are you a glass half full person? Or maybe you are a glass half empty person? Or maybe you are an engineer. (*See the end of this piece for the answer to that one.*)

No matter which kind of person you are I am sure you will be glad to hear that our lengthy and drawn out renovations are nearing an end. The “yet to do” list is getting shorter every day, and most of what is left is in the basement and out of the way.

If you are a glass half full person, you will see that these renovations will usher in a new era for how we use our building – making more use out of less space. David's Place is adapting to smaller space, and they are coping well in our new gathering area. We entertained a large group after the first Sunday in Advent service November 30. There were about 150 people, and it was cosy, but it worked. It was sad to say goodbye to our friends from the Korean Presbyterian Church of Nova Scotia, but it was also a good time to see how we can make use of what we have.

We also had a very large attendance at the funeral service for Joseph Lappin on November 26 and the balcony was almost full. Yes, we still have a balcony and it is still there for all to use. It may be a bit harder to find the stairs, but there is new lighting and new stair treads, and it is now safe to use.

There will be some more changes coming, so here are a couple of the “new” things. There is a new door on the north side of the church (*aka The Northwest Passage*), and new stairs to the basement. The new door leads out to Blowers Street and will be very convenient for those who park on Market and Blowers Streets. It

will be the “back door” to the church until we have the new facilities.

The minister, who has been enduring sub-Arctic conditions in his office, will be relocating to what was once the “Session Room”. That is the south corridor we used to reach the Hall. The Hall is being decommissioned and we will not be using it this winter, so the corridor will become Kenn's study, vestry, and office until new facilities are built.

You will see some illustrations on display in the gathering area that show the design for the new development that we are working towards. It will take the place of the Hall, and we will have space at ground level - the same floor level as the church sanctuary. If all goes well we will have that new space in about two years, but in the meantime we will be compressed into slightly less space than we are used to. If you are a glass half full person, pretend you are going on a cruise - the cabin will be small, but the amenities will be great! If you are glass half empty person - pretend you are going on a camping trip, and have to live in a tent for a few nights, but the destination is worth it!

Oh yes about that engineer. For an engineer the glass is not half empty, nor is half full. To the engineer the glass is just too big. For us, let's get used to drinking from a smaller glass, but enjoying it just as much.

Mac Mackay

Trivia

While we were renovating we found a dozen or more little foot rests inserted in pews all over the sanctuary. If you are missing the footrest that you liked, please see Mac M., and we will restore it to you.

There is one foot rest that should be preserved for posterity however. I picked it up one day, and turned it over to look at the underside. There I found a little white gummed label with a red border. On the label, inscribed with beautiful copper plate penmanship was the signature "W.J.Kane".

Mr. Kane was the first Clerk of Session of our church from 1925, until his death in 1960, so that label has been there undisturbed for more than half century. I hope to see to it that it remains so.

You will see a plaque in memory of Mr. Kane and another in memory of his son Ralph W. Kane, our second Clerk of Session, on the south wall.

Timeline for the Next Few Months

Our developer, Bill Greenwood, is working diligently to gain the proper approvals to allow the development to proceed. The timelines are largely determined by the city.

A couple of milestones include:

**Application for Land use by-law amendment and rezoning
Public Information Hearing November 2014**

**Staff Report December 2014
Heritage advisory committee Feb 2015
Regional Council Public Hearing April 2015**

The site plan approval requires several steps, including public consultation, staff review, and recommendations, expected to be complete by late spring, early summer.

Where Are They Now? *Cont'd*

Shauna Krasuski lives in Clayton Park and has been a banquet manager for Murphy's on the Water for the past year and a half. She was very busy during tourist season with all the boat events. She loves to hike, camp, and explore, so in November she spent three weeks hiking in Peru.

Ainsley Hilliard (nee Miller) graduated from St.F.X in 2008 with an Honors B.Sc. in Math. In 2010 she graduated from Dalhousie with a Masters of Math. She then studied GIS (geographic information systems). She has combined both fields, and works as an aquatic tracking analyst for Vemco, a local company which invents and manufactures its own equipment for marine tracking and monitoring. Their clients are worldwide.

Brent Sherar is employed as a metallurgical -chemist with Blade Energy Partners in Houston. He was married in April 2014. He and his wife live in Katy, a suburb of Houston, Texas

Charlotte Taper is back in Montreal at Concordia University, working on her B. A. in English.

After completing her diploma in Human Resources at NSCC, **Emma Whitley** is now working in the office of the Dean of Computer Sciences at Dalhousie.



All I Want For Christmas

You've all been there – whether with children, grandchildren or a spouse – with the dilemma of figuring out the 'perfect' Christmas gift. And when I was asked years ago by my children what I wanted for Christmas, I gave the tired answer "Peace on Earth."

I guess I wasn't the only one. Joel-Steven wrote a song for his children with such a wish and entitled it: "All I want for Christmas (is peace on earth)". It goes like this:

*When you first see Christmas through
children's eyes,
You'll remember their innocence and start to
realize
There's a reason for the season,
Like a star shining bright
On a baby in a manger on a cold winter's night.*

When we pause on the journey to Bethlehem, we begin to realize the reason for the season really is all about 'a baby in a manger on a cold winter's night'. I want to hear again, as if for the very first time, the angel chorus "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favours!"

I want the elusive peace promised in Christ – I want it in my family, in my church and community and in the world. I want to be a channel of such peace... enabling others to find peace and live peace and offer peace to one and all, across the street and around the world. I want to call the leaders of the world to gather in Bethlehem and "see

Christmas through children's eyes" and commit to a just and lasting peace.

OK, that's all I want for Christmas and you can now roll your eyes (as did my children) and say, "get real". But before you write me off, just dream of what the world would look like if you have the gift, if you lived at peace and peaceably, if you reached out to another with an open hand and an open heart. Maybe, just maybe in some small corner or in a distant and remote place peace will break out. If so, then I have everything I've ever wanted for Christmas.

Blessings to all!

Kenn Stright

1 Samuel 25:6: *"Peace be to you, and peace be to your house, and peace be to all that you have."*

Update on David's Place

On November 7, the volunteers and guests made a very successful return to Saint David's after 2 months at Fort Massey. While we enjoyed our time at our sister church and were warmly welcomed, it was time to come home, and that we did in style. We had a full house that day for a delicious meal of homemade turkey soup and egg sandwiches. Our guests just kept arriving and we pretty much ran out of everything. They were impressed with our new space and enjoyed its bright and inviting atmosphere. We had several new guests as well as our old friends. There was great excitement and enthusiasm that we were home! This has continued each week since.

Feed Nova Scotia continues to visit each week bringing us baked goods, produce, and prepared meals. Some of this we share

immediately with our guests and sometimes we freeze it for future use. Often members of the congregation bring in extra household items to add to the table. Although we are not able to store as much as we used to, our guests certainly appreciate these opportunities. If you have items such as jams or preserves, Christmas baking or decorations, or winter accessories these would be welcome additions to the Food Bank table.

We continue to work on fine tuning our use of the new servery to be as efficient and flexible as possible. We are still moving in supplies, purchasing equipment, and trying new ways of doing things. Just last week we used the big chowder warming containers and they gave us a great boost in our ability to heat and keep warm prepared meals. However we have done it, each week we have been able to provide a different and nutritious meal for our many guests.

While we have not done a "Christmas" dinner for several years, having moved this type of meal to January and our anniversary date, we do make an effort to provide something a little extra in December. *Please note the suggestions above.* Many of our guests come to us with various issues and concerns and we make every effort to help each person find a solution, make progress, or at least feel they are not alone. Several of our regulars have come to Rev. Stright for counselling outside of David's Place hours and he visits them both at home and in hospital if the circumstances present themselves. David's Place is a community and we care deeply for one another.

The most important element of David's Place is that we continue to share our friendship and fellowship. Everyone is welcome to drop by between 10 and 12 on Friday and experience this very special Place. We will even be there on Boxing

Day. Particularly at this season of Peace and Light please remember all of our guests and volunteers in your prayers.

Valerie Macdonald

The Organ

You will notice that we now have our organ back in working order. Part of the renovations involved new wiring to the console. The old wiring from the main electrical panel had been cobbled together with the original wire from the Casavant organ of 1926. That organ was rebuilt by Hill, Norman and Beard in the 1960s, but the wiring was not changed. When Leslie Smith rebuilt the organ he had to keep the old wiring and it still worked – after a fashion. Now however the state of the art console is powered with new (and safe) wiring from a new electrical panel.

Leslie was here December 4-6, tuning and servicing the organ, so it is now in top form. You may notice that it sounds "brighter". This is because during our renovations we removed sound absorbing carpet and built new partitions under the balcony. A lot of sound used to get "lost" in that back area. Now it bounces off the hard surfaces and sounds more lively.

When love is strong it binds like a cord.

Knitting two souls together as one.

They melt like ice when apart.

They cling together when times are rough.

And when things are smooth they still unite.

They stand together in the fight.

Against all the giants that come in life.

John and Marie Wamboldt

**Stay tuned for information on the Men's
Soup Contest in the New Year!**

Transitions

Deaths:

Walter Fitzgerald

Joseph Lappin

Blessed are they who die in the Lord

Directory Updates:

Wendy Booth

Apt. 1707, 5770 Spring Garden Road

Halifax, NS B3H 4J8

Janette Guy

Suite 400, 5266 Green Street

Halifax, NS B3H 4N2

Phyllis Morrison

Suite 312, 11 Springvale Avenue

Halifax, NS B3N 0A3

Congratulations to Kathy Large on her retirement.

Christmas Families Update – December 7

We now have all of our families... and I've spoken with each mom. There are more tags on the tree today.

Please be sure to return your new, unwrapped present, with the tag to the church by the 16th. If you take a tag, and for some reason are unable to pick up the present or get it to the church on time, please let us know and we will make other arrangements. Gifts delivered after that time will be donated to the Salvation Army for use by other needy families.

We continue to receive generous support from a few local businesses. *Gordon Stevens*, from UnCommonGrounds, has again donated gift baskets for each family and *Karen Furlong* of Nova Dental has again offered toothbrushes and toothpaste. *Malcolm Norton* from Thumpers Salon and *Denise Morency*, DBM DeZigns, will again help with the gift baskets for the moms.

Where at all possible I encourage you to purchase your donations from locally owned businesses. We try our best to make our project about long term change. Your support of locally

owned businesses is one way to ensure we grow a stronger economy and help more people.

We have a couple of families with children who have indicated they would be happy to receive good used clothing. If you have some to donate, please let us know and we can see if there is a match with any of our families.

Unopened personal care products are also very welcome. We use these for gift baskets for the parents.

Cash donations for the groceries and for any last minute gift items are most appreciated. Please make cheques out to Saint Davids and put them in an envelope marked Christmas Families. You may leave them at Saint David's or at 5960 McCulloch Ct.

You may also email money to SaintDavidChristmas@minnikin.ca.

The angel tree tags are located at the back of the church. Each tag has two portions - one you keep for yourself to return with your gift. The other you leave in the box, with your name on it.

- Please submit all cash donations to the church or to Paula Minnikin by December 16th.
- Wrapping and delivery day is December 20th. We will be underway at 10 a.m.
- We need wrapping supplies and boxes for deliveries... and many hearts, hands, and minds. Bring your own scissors!
- Please give your receipts to Mac Fyfe by December 23 for tax purposes.

Thank you!

***The Minnikin/Schmidt family
Paula, Michael, Annika, Franzie and Amy***

Dates to Remember

December 20

10:00 AM

Wrapping Party for Christmas Families

December 21

7:00 PM.

Carol Service

December 22

11:00 AM

Homeless Memorial Service

PAXnorth

5568 Cunard Street.

7:00 PM

Longest Night Service

December 24:

Services at 4:00 & 7:00 PM

December 28:

10:00 AM

Congregational Breakfast

Presbyterian Record Subscriptions

Saint David's subscribes to the Record under the "Every Home Plan" and has paid \$2,286 for a 12 month subscription. If you are receiving the Record under Saint David's plan, you should give Saint David's \$27.54, tax incl. (If you are giving cash, please round the amount up to \$28 to avoid giving a lot of coins.)

Place your contribution in your pink Record envelope and place this in the offering plate. If you do not have offering envelopes, mark an envelope "Presbyterian Record", with the amount and your name.

If you give through PAR, you can notify the finance convenor, Mac Fyfe, that you would like to have \$2.30 donated per month for the Record. (One person pays this way.)



Carols for a Winter's Eve

One of the Christmas highlights at Saint David's is the annual lessons and carol service led by our faithful choir. In recent years, our music director Tristan Cleveland Thompson has brought the experience for the congregation to a new level by augmenting the regular choir with star choral performers who are friends and colleagues. The sanctuary comes alive with wonderful music like no other time of the year.

This year, the programme will include solos from Zoe Leger and Kallie White, as well as by our own regular choristers Kate Kempster-Harper and Ian Gilmore

The service will feature two pieces by Paul Halley, the director of the Kings College Chapel Choir in Halifax. Other works are by Willcocks, Rutter, and Pearsall.

This special service takes place on **Sunday, December 21st at 7 pm**. Mark it on your calendar and plan to take your family for this memorable sharing of the Christmas story through the scripture and song. **There'll be a freewill offering to support our music programme at Saint David's!**