

Union and Sutherland's River Presbyterian Churches

Thorburn and Sutherland's River, NS

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*Modelling faith in our communities one
conversation at a time*



Sutherland's River



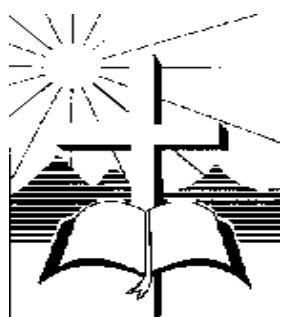
Thorburn

A Message from our National Moderator **Following the Mass Shooting in Nova Scotia**

Yesterday morning, before I heard about the violent rampage in rural Nova Scotia, I preached on John 20:19-31 in which Jesus came to his frightened and bewildered disciples in the locked room where they were sheltering themselves. The Risen Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." He breathed on them and gave them the gift of the Holy Spirit to comfort, encourage, and empower them for their mission.

I invited those who were worshipping online with my church community to look for the presence of Jesus standing beside them in their homes, in their work, in their grief and struggle, and in our worship and fellowship together even in these unsettling and scary days of the COVID-19 pandemic. I reminded my congregation to breathe and to know that God's Spirit is in them, around them, and between them. And I sang to them from a hymn by Tom Booth: "Here I am, standing right beside you. Here I am, do not be afraid. Here I am, waiting like a lover. I am here, here I am."

Together with Canadians across the country, I was shocked and saddened by the developing news reports from Nova Scotia as we moved through Sunday. I can hardly believe that these small, friendly, rural communities just experienced the deadliest mass shooting in Canadian history. As I listened to a community member on the news commenting that Portapique was not the kind of place where people locked their doors, but maybe they would think about doing it now, my thoughts returned to the disciples in their locked room.



A Message from the Moderator

I began to pray in that moment, that the people of Portapique and the other affected communities would have an experience of Jesus standing beside them in the midst of their fear. I prayed that those who have suddenly lost their loved ones would know the Spirit's consolation as close as their own breath. I prayed with gratitude for the members of the RCMP and other emergency personnel who hurried to the aid of those communities, putting themselves at risk, and doing everything they could to put an end to the violence.

The death toll is currently reported as at least 19 people, including RCMP Constable Heidi Stevenson, a 23-year veteran and married mother of two, who was killed Sunday morning responding to the active shooter incident. As a church, let us keep Heidi's family, the families of those who died and everyone throughout Nova Scotia in our prayers.

Let us also pray for the pastors and churches of Nova Scotia, that they will know Christ's presence standing beside them and the Spirit's breath equipping and empowering them as they minister to the hurting people of their communities. Especially in this current context of staying home and physical distancing, may the church find faithful and creative ways to share God's love with those who are grieving.

The first place I visited after becoming Moderator last summer was Nova Scotia. I enjoyed the beauty of the province and the warmth and hospitality of the people. Today my heart breaks with the thought of the pain and sorrow that they are experiencing. May the peace of Christ that surpasses all understanding be with them now and always.

—The Rev. Amanda Currie,
Moderator of the General Assembly

Happy Birthday, Josie!



(Josie and Sheryl enjoy some delicious food together. Both are dedicated members of Thorburn Union Church Choir)

Our Hope in God



By Matthew Ruttan

A crisis tends to create clarity about what's important.

Many of the things we were really concerned about even two months ago are now way down the priority list. We are now dealing with essentials. And what is essential?

Our hope in God. And the people around us.

Sure, there are other things. But those are up there, aren't they? Wouldn't it be great if those things stayed at the top of your priority list, no matter what you happened to be going through?

Psalm 39:4-7 says this:

*"Show me, Lord, my life's end
and the number of my days;
let me know how fleeting my life is...
Everyone is but a breath,
even those who seem secure.
Surely everyone goes around like a mere phantom;
in vain they rush about, heaping up wealth
without knowing whose it will finally be.
But now, Lord, what do I look for?
My hope is in you."*

These words are both sobering and focusing.

It's never too late. Why not use this time of upheaval to re-establish the priorities that matter most?

Matthew's devotions are thought provoking and informative.

They can be found at: theupdevo.com

Remember When



The Rev. Charles Shaver enjoying his first Sunday School picnic with us (July 1959). Note the straw in his mouth, brings you back!

Rabbit Stew

Out of the past..... A true story

During the time Rev. Charles Shaver was minister at our church, he was also interim moderator at the Glenelg and Sherbrooke charges. One Sunday, when he was in Sherbrooke for a Communion Service, my uncle Calvin Jordan (who was on the Session there) invited Rev. Shaver for dinner. When he was leaving for home my uncle asked him if he would take a couple of rabbits to my grandmother. He said he had never eaten rabbit stew before so when she made her stew, she sent some to him to try. When he returned the bowl to her she asked if he liked it. He replied, "Not really, but my cats loved it."

Submitted by Gail Jordan

Until we meet again...

In challenging times like this, it is difficult to know how to help ourselves and others. We miss our time together and we worry about our family and friends that we cannot visit. Here are 5 ideas to help us:

- 1) Call someone who is shut in to let them know you care
- 2) Write a card or note to let someone know you are thinking about them
- 3) Pray as often as you can for your family and others for their safety
- 4) Thank God for any blessings you have even in these trying times
- 5) Take quiet time with God for prayer, reading and reflection

May God keep you, your family and friends healthy. We look forward to seeing you again. God bless!
