

Union and Sutherland's River Presbyterian Churches

Thorburn and Sutherland's River, NS

Modelling faith in our communities one conversation at a time

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Sutherland's River



Thorburn

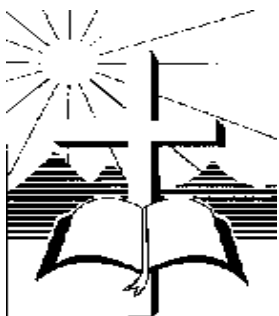
From the Minister's Desk

Congratulations everyone! You have arrived – possibly somewhat bruised – at the threshold of a New Year! Are you ready for it? Or do you have some lingering apprehension? You might be fearful that what happened in 2020 is just going to get worse until you get the vaccine and develop immunity to the contagion that has ravaged so many peoples' lives. Maybe you're angry with the people in authority. Maybe you wish there were faster and better decisions made so life could go on as before – that someone, somewhere made too many mistakes and gave too much misdirection so as to make us feel like we were walking on thin ice.

Maybe you're angry with God. Maybe all you want to do is lament, asking like the Psalmist, How long, LORD? Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me? How long must I wrestle with my thoughts and day after day have sorrow in my heart? How long will my enemy triumph over me? Look on me and answer, LORD my God. Give light to my eyes, or I will sleep in death, and my enemy will say, "I have overcome him," and my foes will rejoice when I fall. But I trust in your unfailing love; my heart rejoices in your salvation. I will sing the LORD's praise, for he has been good to me. — *Psalm 13*

So, here's a prayer from Chara Donahue that I hope will help you as you enter 2021.

Oh my God, I am so weary from waiting for relief. My soul is dry and despairing. My fears as I enter into a new year crush my will to rise in the morning and plague the few moments of sleep that I can find. Each day my thoughts spin around what lies in store in the new year and they torment me as I strain for control that is out of my reach. The fears press in and solace is silent. I find myself wondering whether you really care for the mess we are in, for it seems there is nobody to help me. I am blinded to the movement of your hands.



From the Minister's Desk (cont'd)

Why have you not intervened? Where are you? Why do I not see you fighting for me? Where can I find sanctuary? I cannot see your light in this darkness, and yet, my soul recoils because the truth is that you are still good. Though fear infiltrates my every hour, you are still the one who binds up hearts. You bring order to the chaos that rages around me. You who set me free and saved my soul from the tendrils of sin are who you always were, are, and will be. I believe you can free and restore me again. Come quickly, Lord Jesus, for it is in your name that I seek your aid. AMEN Submitted by Rev. Greg Dickson

Saving Good-bye to 2020

The year 2020 has been challenging for everyone, everywhere. We have never lived through a pandemic such as COVID-19. The rules and precautions put in place by the Health Authorities to keep us safe have been challenging. We were not able to visit our loved ones or friends and this was extremely difficult for those in nursing homes. Our schools were closed but are now re-opened; our churches were closed but some places of worship have re-opened although with limited numbers being able to attend. Wearing a protective mask has become second nature to us and it is such an easy thing to do to help keep us safe from the dreaded virus.

Our community has mourned the loss of several friends and relatives who were very near and dear to all of us. They will live in our hearts forever.

We were unable to deliver Christmas Treat boxes to our friends in Nursing Homes and the community this year; however, the Sunday School students made angels from pinecones and these were delivered to them along with homemade Christmas cards. We wanted to let them know they were in our thoughts and prayers and this gesture was well received. The Sunday School students had fun with this activity.

Submitted by: Gail Jordan

The 10 Commandments

An interesting look at an excerpt from Matthew Ruttan in his daily devotional at TheUpDevo.com

I once heard someone speak dismissively about the 10 Commandments. They thought they were just a bunch of random rules. It got me thinking about how the wisdom and commands of God are not something he does TO us but FOR us. For example, let's imagine a world where all of God's people actually observed the 10 Commandments. It would be a world...

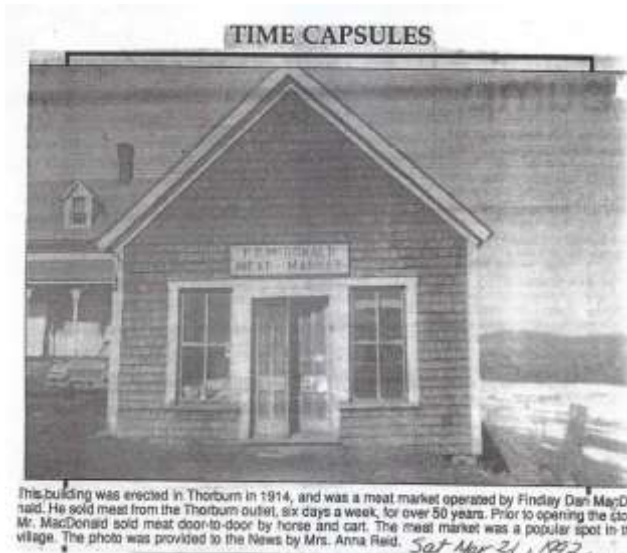
- where people were faithful to their loving and rescuing Creator
- where people always put God first and weren't duped by lesser priorities and loyalties
- where everyone respected God's name and used it with dignity
- where all people took one entire day each week for worship and rest and refreshment
- where parents and elders were truly honoured
- where murder and violence were things of the past
- where wives and husbands were unwavering in their faithfulness and commitment to one another
- where no one stole from anybody else, so much so that we didn't even need to lock our doors
- where no one spread lies or gossip, but where truthfulness reigned supreme
- and where everyone was content with what they already had because they deeply trusted in a God who provided for their needs

Wow. Can you imagine a world like that? It would be breathtakingly beautiful! Let's be thankful, informed, and eager to embrace a way of living which values God's good design. The wisdom and commands of God are not something he does TO us but FOR us.

A Look Back...Meet Finlay Dan

Finlay Dan MacDonald ran a butcher shop in Thorburn starting in the early 1900s. This time capsule photo gives us the name of his shop, F.D. McDonald Meat Market. It's another fantastic piece of Thorburn history that the younger generations may not know about.

The building of where the F.D. McDonald Meat Market was located, and the house still stands today, where else, but on the Finlay Dan Road!



Finlay Dan MacDonald and Ella Fraser were married December 24th, 1903, in Thorburn, by the Rev. J. A. MacKenzie. I like to think it was in this church, but I do not know for sure. Pictured below are Ella Fraser (b.ca 1889-1922) and Finlay Dan MacDonald (1883-1970).



It was not always an easy life, as Finlay Dan's wife Ella died in 1922. Five years later, he married Elsie May Crocket, and continued working in the meat business while raising a family. Finlay Dan MacDonald has many descendants, but anyone can go visit him at the Thorburn Cemetery, just down the road from our church. He and his wives and sons are resting there.

Photo credits to Anne MacDonald, James Reeves, scrapbooks with newspaper clippings.

Submitted by: Manon Potvin, preserving, recording, and sharing Pictou County history



Sunday School will be restarting on January 17th. Please spread the word!

Our Sunday School is restarting after our Christmas Break and we welcome all young people. Classes will take place downstairs at Thorburn Union Church each Sunday at 11:00am to 12:00 noon, starting again January 17th, 2021. The purpose of the program is to help young people enjoy time together while developing a love of God, good values, faith in times of difficulty such as Covid and to interact in a positive way with others. This will be done through stories, crafts, videos, games, and music while teamwork and youth leadership are developed. The program is not specific to any one religion /denomination but is based on Christian values. Safety guidelines are followed. For further information or sign up, please text Darlene at 921-0639 or e-mail at darlreeves@hotmail.com

LIVING LIFE

Life is not a race – but indeed a journey. Be honest. Work hard. Be choosy. Say “thank you”, “I love you”, and “great job” to someone each day. Go to church, take time for prayer. The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh. Let your handshake mean more than pen and paper. Love your life and what you’ve been given, it is not accidental – search for your purpose and do it as best you can. Dreaming does matter. It allows you to become that which you aspire to be. Laugh often. Appreciate the little things in life and enjoy them. Some of the best things really are free. Do not worry, less wrinkles are more becoming. Forgive, it frees the soul. Take time for yourself – plan for longevity. Recognize the special people you’ve been blessed to know. Live for today, enjoy the moment.

Bonnie L. Mohr

Wishing everyone many blessings in 2021