

# 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*

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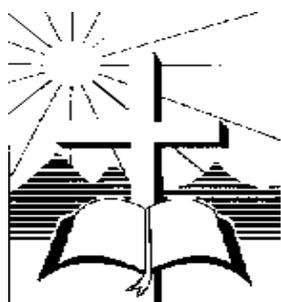
## Experiencing the Peace of God

When we talk about peace – the kind of peace every Christian hopes for personally in their lives and family – we enter into a way of being that God in Jesus promised for the whole world. You see, God wants us to have peace. If we do not have it, we miss part of the blessings of being a Christian.

This seems rather simple, does it not? Well friends, it really is simple – until we make it too hard; too complicated. When we are in the midst of a storm, we think that peace of mind can only be for the few among us who have some super kind of faith. Since most of us know we are not super anything, we figure such experiences are not for us.

But they are...! The word peace runs through the whole Bible. In the Old Testament, the promise is: "The Lord lift up His countenance upon you and give you peace" (Numbers 6:26). In the words of Job's friend Eliphaz, "Acquaint now yourselves with Him and be at peace" (Job 22:21). The Messiah is foretold as the Prince of Peace.

Where does peace begin? It begins as we get acquainted personally with the mighty Prince of Peace and begin to do His will on Earth. His Peace enters the heart by the Holy Spirit and makes it independent of everything else. We cannot hope for a life without sorrow. One of two friends must hold the other's hand and stand by the other's coffin. But when joy isn't possible, peace is. The peace of God can turn sorrow into joy.



## **Experiencing the Peace of God (con't)**

Here is a little piece of poetry:

*God hasn't promised skies ever blue  
Flower-strewn pathways always for you  
God hasn't promised sun without rain  
Joy without sorrow  
Peace without pain.  
But God has promised  
Strength from above  
Unfailing sympathy  
Undying love.*

Folks, every one of us can be at peace. If you do not feel it, please know that it is the will of God and will appear when you do God's will in your life. When you are focused on God and others first, you will know the peace of God. AMEN

*Rev. Greg Dickson  
Interim Moderator*

## **The Old Thorburn School**



A blast from the past...Above is a photo of the old Thorburn School which was in the area of the current Fire Hall. To the right of the building, in the background, you can see the spire of the Anglican Church. This school closed in the early 50's when the new one, which was located off the Finlay Dan Road, was opened. Can anyone recognize the teachers and students out front? A fine looking, sturdy building but I'm sure the families appreciated the new updated school. Thanks to Evelyn MacKay for submitting this interesting photo!

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## Churches by the Sea

### *Churches by the sea*



Union Presbyterian

## 'Unity of the spirit' goal of faithful

By M. ALLEN GIBSON

That the Presbyterian church, in Thornburn bears the name, Union, is a testimony to the vision of those, who, in an earlier generation, sought to realize something of that "unity of the spirit" of which the Apostle Paul long ago wrote to the Ephesian Christians. The fact that many today are unaware of the reason for such a name is evidence of the success achieved by those who wove various Presbyterian strands into one.

In the early days of the Presbyterian Church in Nova Scotia, there were discords, most of them transplanted from

the old country. Frank Baird in his delightful tale, *Rob MacNab*, reflects something of the old theological animosities in a conversation between Hector Davie and his father, "Has yer mither no telt ye that, Davie? They're two kinds of Presbyterians: one holds to the truth an' the other doesna. The Burghers are wrong; they live at Truro . . ."

Nor was that the whole of the matter. Language, too, caused problems, and the same story tells of the argument, "I say te Gaelic — te sermon must be in te Gaelic." Only the intervention of the minister and his promise to preach both in English and Gaelic saved the situation from fisticuffs.

Pictou County, however, had a mellowing effect, and when a Presbyterian church was built at Sutherland's River in 1854, its members were from no less than three branches of the Presbyterian family. Of that congregation, Rev. J. P. MacPhie has written that it was "the first union Presbyterian Church in the province."

Thornburn still was known as Vale Colliery when, in 1875, a Presbyterian congregation was organized there. It was connected with Sutherland's River in a single pastoral charge, and shared with its partner the union motif.

The first minister after the founding of the congregation in Thornburn was Rev. W. T. Bruce, who served from 1876 to 1881. Early in his ministry, on Dec. 17, 1876, the Thornburn church was opened for use.

When Mr. MacPhie's history was published in 1914, the author noted the remarkable record of service of James W. McLean who "has been clerk of the Session for 25 years, and choir leader for over 40 years."

Among the natives of Thornburn who became ministers, one observes the name of James A. McLean. Mr. McLean was pastor of the Presbyterian church in Mahone Bay from 1908 to 1920, the longest pastorate in the history of that church.

During the years since its founding, the Presbyterian church in Thornburn has observed many anniversaries, two of which are especially memorable.

On August 26, 1945, while Dr. W. A. Cunningham was serving as interim pastor, a new organ was dedicated. By that act the congregation marked the conclusion of a year in which more than \$10,000 was paid for improvements to its place of worship.

In 1961, too, the anniversary services were of special significance. Rev. Charles Shaver was minister at the time and rededication was the theme.

A century has passed since the story began of the Presbyterian church in Thornburn, the name of which bespeaks a proud and enviable tradition.

This article appeared in the Chronicle Herald in 1975 and was written by Rev. Morley Allen Gibson who was a Baptist minister and an author. He wrote for the Herald for 46 years, having written some 25,000 editorials, 2,000 short histories of Nova Scotia "Churches by the Sea" and thousands more columns on spiritual topics. An interesting bit of history!

## Sunday School Update



We're happy to share that Sunday School restarted in September and we have a lovely group of students! One of our first projects was to decorate outside the church for the Fall. Many thanks to the students, teachers and parents for helping with the work, and to Jillian Roy for painting the Bible quote on our sign! The children also planted bulbs and seeds which we look forward to seeing in the Spring!

Currently we have another project going which is raising funds for the Thorburn School Breakfast and Backpack Program. There is a big need in this area and our students are happy to help. Many thanks to all who contributed!

A huge thank you to Evelyn MacKay for the great treat bags for Halloween and to Sheryl Tree for packing them up. The children and adults were so excited to receive them! We would also like to thank our teachers and parents/grandparents who take the time to make sure the children come each week. We know it's not easy in these busy times and your efforts are much appreciated! Also, many thanks to the Board of Managers, Session and members of the congregation who are so supportive!

***“Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old, he will not depart from it”***

Proverbs 22:6

## Year-end Reflections

As 2021 draws to a close we remember events, both happy and sad, that touched our lives over the past year.

In October we celebrated our church's 145th Anniversary and were able to gather, socially, for refreshments and fellowship after the service .

As the Christmas Season is fast approaching, we remember the shut-ins in our community, nursing homes and other special care facilities. We remember those who have lost loved ones over the past year as we keep their families in our hearts and prayers during the Holiday Season. As this is the last newsletter for 2021, we wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and a healthy and happy New Year.

A little Christmas prayer.....

Lord, you Came Upon a Midnight Clear to bring Joy to the World and draw us near. It was a Holy Night when you came from above to fill our hearts with hope and love. Thank you, Sweet Jesus Boy, for clothing us with Comfort and Joy. Amen

*Submitted by: Gail Jordan*