

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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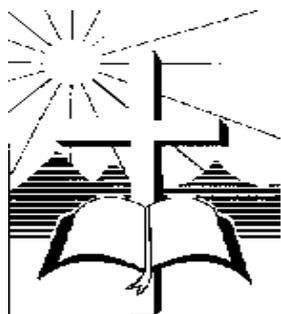
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A Prayer for the New Year

The arrival of a new year brings a great opportunity to renew our faith and love for God and Jesus. It's also a wonderful time to renew the joy of salvation in our hearts - as new creations in Christ. "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come" (2 Corinthians 5:17).

Whether 2021 brought you success, fulfillment and joy or you faced nothing but the consequences of Covid-19, it is my prayer that you can look ahead to 2022 with hope. Jeremiah had it right when he wrote God's prophetic words, "...for I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."

So, let's end this year with a thankful heart and start the new year with peace and faith. Let's release the bitterness and frustrations of the past year and move into the coming year knowing that God loves us and wants the best for us. Let's pray that the new year will be focused on healing through the renewing of our minds and spirits.

After all, Paul's letter to the Romans says, "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect." ~ Romans 12:2

Heavenly Father, thank You for making all things new! We pray for your Spirit to lead us each step of this New Year in our decisions, hope and dreams. Open doors that need to be opened and close the ones that must remain shut tight. Lord, help us release our grip on the things to which you've said "no," "not yet," or "wait, and with each new day to recognize with gratitude how you're at work in our lives.

A Prayer for the New Year (cont'd)

Thank you, gracious Lord, that you are greater than anything else we might face each day. Thank you that your presence goes with us and that your joy is our true and lasting strength, no matter what we're up against. Cover our lives with grace, love and peace as we enter the new year, for we love you Lord...and we need you. In Jesus' name we pray. AMEN

HAPPY NEW YEAR EVERYONE!

Rev. Greg Dickson
Interim Moderator

A Distracted Lifestyle

An interesting excerpt from Matthew Ruttan on a distracted lifestyle

Someone told me they had a squirrel's attention span, meaning that their focus ping-ponged from this to that, regardless of what this or that was.

Unfortunately, distraction is the air we breathe these days. It's hard to avoid. We are continually interrupted, bombarded with information and advertising, or the next shiny new thing.

Alan Noble has a word of caution: "Living a distracted lifestyle does more than waste our time, it forms our minds, often in ways that are harmful for deep, sustained thought—the kind of thought so important to religious discourse."

That's helpful. It seems we're losing the capacity to think deeply and in a sustained way about important things. Do you want to know who loses in that scenario? We do. So do the people we care about.

Proverbs 4:25 (and several passages like it) informs us that focus is a virtue: "Let your eyes look straight ahead; fix your gaze directly before you." Ping-ponging from one mostly irrelevant thing to the next is for squirrels, not for people who are made in God's image and summoned to honour him with our priorities.

To start, it can be as simple as:

- turning your ringer and notifications off
- having only one browser open at a time
- not filling every morsel of silence with sound

If a distracted lifestyle not only wastes our time but forms our minds, then the opposite should also be true: An intentional, thoughtful lifestyle is a good use of time and forms our minds for God's glory...

...and for our sanity.

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Wishing everyone many blessings in 2022!

Sunday School Update

We have a wonderful group of children in our Sunday School. To start the year, we learned about the Fruit of the Spirit and made several donations to the local school for their Breakfast Program. Unfortunately, due to Covid we needed to stop classes again on December 19th and couldn't do the Children's Christmas Service. However, before that we managed to learn all about Advent and God's gift of Jesus to the world! Our students and their families also donated to Good Samaritan Boxes for those in need. Also, one evening, we had a craft night to make ornaments and decorate bags for shut-ins. We hope to resume classes towards the end of January when it is safer for the children. We'll have something special with the children at that time. Many thanks to Susan, Ashley, Amanda, Sarah, Courtney, and all of you for your help and support. It is so much appreciated! Stay safe everyone!



Much fun was had by all as we decorated for Christmas. Many thanks to Jillian Roy for the lovely sign!



Some young people in front of the Christmas Tree decorated by Sunday School students. Little did we know at the time, but it was a nice decoration when we had to hold one of our church services in the basement when the furnace wouldn't work. Thanks to Gail for making the patterns for the little Christmas Tree decorations and Sheryl for loaning us the Cradle Roll decorations. It was made all the more special that the tree was donated to us by Calder Livingston, and it gave us time to reflect

Christmas Craft Evening



Above are some photos from our craft evening where we decorated ornaments and bags to give to those who are shut-in or might benefit in our community. Many thanks to Gail, Chrissy, Manon, Susan, and Julianna who helped with set up. Also, thanks to Tina for doing the beautiful little churches and the other adults who helped that night. An enjoyable evening was had by all!