

# Union and Sutherland's River Presbyterian Churches

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

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*Thorburn*

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## But the Spring Didn't Know It....

It was early 2020...

People had finished a long dark winter. February had been a very unsettled month with lots of storms and a lot of rain. Nature was restless, as if it wanted to tell people something, as if it wanted to warn people about something... And then it became March...

It was March 2020...

The streets were empty, most shops were closed, most of the cars were on the side of the road, people almost didn't get outside anymore, and that was all over the world. Countries were locked, people couldn't believe this was happening, it was so surreal... Everyone knew what was going on. But the spring did not know it; and the flowers came out in bloom and the sun shone... The first beautiful spring day since long time arrived and the swallows came back, and the sky turned pink and blue. It got dark later and in the morning the light came through the windows early.

It was March 2020...

The youngsters studied online, from home. Children inevitably played mainly in-house. Adolescents were bored, parents did not know what to do. People only went outside to run errands or to let the dog out. Almost everything was closed ... even the offices, hotels, restaurants and bars. The army started to guard exits and borders and people had to work from home. Entrepreneurs got into financial trouble. Most children could no longer go to school. There suddenly was not enough space for sick people in hospitals, operations and health tests were postponed... Everyone knew... But the spring didn't know, and it woke up. She turned on her annual program and just did what she had always done. She gave us her most beautiful flowers and her most delicious scents.

## But the Spring Didn't Know It...(con't)

It was March 2020...

Everyone was quarantined at home for health reasons or preventive measures.

Some people were no longer allowed to go to work, others were essential services and "had to" go. Hugs, kisses or shaking hands were suddenly a threat. Everyone had to keep a considerable distance from each other. It was horrible.

In the supermarket all kinds of shelves were empty. All fun things were cancelled, nobody knew when they would resume. People were limited in their freedom while there was peace all over the world. Many people got sick and ...it was contagious...There was isolation, illness and panic....Then the fear really became real!!

And the days all looked the same...

And the weeks felt suddenly much longer...

And everyone hoped there would be no stricter measures following...

People felt they were stuck in a movie and were hoping for the HERO to appear. The world had slowed down drastically while it wasn't a holiday, no one expected this... But everyone realized what was happening.

But spring didn't know it and the roses kept blooming. All the gardens were in bud as the birds started building their nests.

And then...

The pleasure of cooking and eating together was rediscovered! Everyone gave each other tips on fun things you could do with your children. There was more time to write and read again, people let their imagination run wild and boredom transformed into creativity.

Some learned a new language. Some discovered art. Some discovered that they didn't really live and found their way back to their inner selves. Others stopped negotiating unnecessarily...

Everyone suddenly, from one day to other, had much more time for their family. One person closed the office and opened an inn for only four people. Others left their mind-numbing relationship to find the love of their lives. Others offered to run or cook for vulnerable people. Everyone realized suddenly what "essential services" were as those employees became heroes, more appreciated than ever before. Others played music and sang from a distance just to somehow still connect with the world.

People suddenly realized the meaning of loneliness, and how to do something about it. They became creative and thought about new things to do. People recovered from their stressful lives. People that didn't know each other started to talk to each other. Some made kites out of paper with their phone number on it so that lonely people could contact them.

The government was going to help businesses, the self-employed and others so they wouldn't go bankrupt or need to fire their staff. Retired caregivers offered their help to give the regular staff a break. All kinds of volunteers offered their services, everyone wanted to do something. At 8 PM in the evening people in many different countries started clapping for all the doctors, nurses and care staff that were working extra hard to keep health care running.

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## But the Spring Didn't Know It...(con't)

It was the year in which one recognized the utmost importance of health, connections, togetherness, of social contacts and perhaps even questioned "their calling". It did something to the collective consciousness of all people...The economy almost went under, but didn't stop, it reinvented itself. It was the year when the world seemed to stop, the year we would come together in the history books... We all knew that.

But the spring didn't know it. And the flowers kept blooming, and the trees were budding, and it was getting warmer and there were a lot more birds.

And then came the day of liberation...People were watching TV and the Prime Minister told everyone that the emergency was over; that the virus had lost ...That everyone had won TOGETHER!!! And then everyone took to the streets... With tears in their eyes...

Without masks and gloves... The neighbor was hugged as if he were a brother and the world had become more beautiful and loving and caring. People seemed more human -they had regained values and norms. The hearts of people-kind were open again, that had many positive consequences.

Because everything had stood still, now the earth could also breathe again. It too had . healed from what the people had done to her much earlier.

And then came the summer....Despite everything; despite the virus; despite the fear.

Despite death.

Because spring didn't know it and had kept on going, everyone learned about the power of life...

***Contributed by Greg Dickson***

***Written by Susan Blanco, "Inspired by people"***

## Community Interest

This year, 2022 is the 150th Anniversary of the Village of Thorburn. It is an exciting time and an opportunity to share some of the community's important history.

We have formed a committee and are planning to construct a three-part Historical Community Kiosk in the village. The panels will display (1) earliest history with such things as maps, land grants, first settlers, way of life and industries in the very beginning (2) more focused on the early 1900s with type of industry and where people would work; churches, schools, sports and clubs, interesting events, etc. (3) newer history about changes that took place, people who helped make changes, the evolution of our village and the surrounding villages such as Greenwood, MacLellan's Brook, Coalburn and MacLellan's Mountain, all bordering on Thorburn.

Funding for this project is a must and we are presently applying for Government grants, etc.

To find out how you can honor your ancestors, or support this project, please contact Kathryn Campbell, Manon Potvin or Gail Jordan. Any historical documents, photos, etc. you might want to share would be appreciated.

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## The Bell



In 1899 the order of service was changed to have the offering taken up and the 21 minutes read before the service, which order is still our custom. The general practice of ringing the bell at 20 minutes and again at 5 minutes to the hour of service was started in 1914. The previous way the use of individual contributions was through the practice. Much earlier—in 1890—the Woman's Christian Temperance Union was pressing for "the discontinuing of the use of insubstantiating notes at the Lord's Table," but some years later have slipped before our present custom of taking unfermented juice came into being.

### **The Bell**

Not much is known about our church bell, that has been there since the early 1900s. It is mentioned briefly in the Union Presbyterian Church Centennial book on page 28.

1914 – Church Bell is purchased.

In another place that it was mentioned is in an old church bulletin commemorating the church's 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. This tells us when it was the correct time to ring the bell, like a set of instructions.

What is interesting is that this bell was made by the McShane Bell Company, which was at the time, located in Baltimore, Maryland and they have since moved to St. Louis, Missouri. They have no records of this bell being shipped to Thorburn or at least they haven't found any yet.

The bell has inscribed on it:

**Union Church**

**Thorburn**

**1913**

It is seen faintly in the enlarged photo. Besides its beautiful shape and sound, it can use a cleaning. It is wonderful to have the technology to photograph it and share it with you today.

Now that the bell ringing has been revived, we try as much as possible to keep the schedule on Sunday, having the bell ring at 20 minutes to eleven and at 5 minutes to eleven.



## New Group for Young People

Some dedicated volunteers are preparing to start a new group for young people ages 8 to 14. This group will provide a safe, caring environment for young people after all this time living of with Covid Restrictions. Many thanks to Session for the use of the Church Hall and providing some funding. Your support is much appreciated! The first evening will be Wednesday, March 23rd at 6:30 to 8pm. Please pass the information on to any young person who you think might be interested. For more information, please text Darlene Reeves at (902)921-0639 or email [darlreeves@hotmail.com](mailto:darlreeves@hotmail.com)

*As we enter the Easter Season, may God bless you and grow your faith!*