

Union and Sutherland's River Presbyterian Churches

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

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Sutherland's River



Thorburn

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Service Times

Sutherland's
River: 9:30am
Thorburn:
11:00am



Together in Ministry.... (cont'd)

A few issues ago, I promised we would have a brief look at what is the human understanding of the beginnings of the Church – The Protestant Reformation. But to do this very large subject any justice in such a small space takes a few bites.

First, in the 15th and 16th centuries, a small number of theologians who became known as The Reformers, (Martin Luther, Jean Calvin, John Knox, Erasmus), sought to correct what they regarded as imbalances in the life of the church. The major thrust of the Reformers was to return the church to the practice and theology of the Bible, and particularly to that of the New Testament.

One of Luther's major contributions came from his belief that each Christian is open to the guidance of the Holy Spirit and is called to be a vehicle of God's work on earth. By extension, everyone was saved for eternity by the grace of God through faith.

However, this concept was pushed to extremes by many enthusiasts of his time. So, Luther later modified his position to one that was advocated by John Calvin, the Geneva Reformer, who taught that the actions of individuals must always be subject to the work of the Spirit speaking through the church.

Calvin, working in Geneva, Switzerland, added that the liturgy was to be said in the language of the people and that the sermon was to be a major part of Sunday worship. Calvin also demanded the return of weekly celebrations of the Sacrament of Holy Communion as the practice of the New Testament, as was the singing of the psalms by the laity.

In Calvin's view, Christians could live and witness faithfully only if they were anchored to the spiritual reality of faith experienced in prayer and devotion to God. He said, "Necessity demands that we possess all things as though we possessed them not; that we bear poverty with mildness and abundance with moderation."

Together in Ministry.... (cont'd)

For Calvin, living the Christian life also required certain disciplines of faith such as prayer, devotions, meditation on one's own faults and shortcomings, and the seeking of God's help through the Spirit in one's living and corporate witness to the world. Without these disciplines there could be no expression of Christian life and no growth in grace.

More to come...

**Rev. Greg Dickson,
Interim Moderator**

WELCOME 2023.....Hoping this year is bringing good health and happiness to everyone. We are still not free of the Covid situation, but being mindful of the health problems the virus brings will help us stay on the safe side of the bug.

In December approximately 30 tins were packed with homemade cookies and candy and delivered to shut-ins in our community as well as those in nursing homes. The tins were decorated with cards and ornaments made by the Sunday School children.

All in all, our Newsletters keep everyone well advised of church activities throughout the year. We look forward to reporting other church activities in 2023.

We would love to hear from anyone in our congregation and beyond. Any input makes for interesting reading. Why not write a poem....tell a joke.....submit a favorite recipe.....tell us about an interesting vacation you had, etc. just use your imagination.

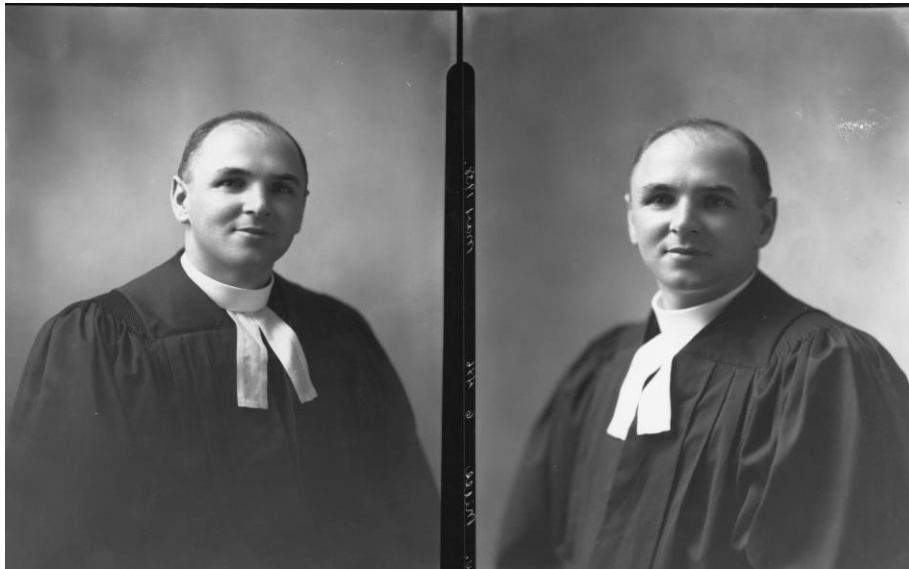
Contributed by Gail Jordan

Winter Fun at the Pictou County Wellness Centre Sobeys Arena!



A few photos from the U. C. Friends Evening at the Wellness Centre. Despite the terrible weather conditions that night, a good time was had by all who could make it out for ice skating. Many thanks to MOPC, our great volunteers and those who contributed delicious refreshments!

The Reverend Alexander Mills



The Reverend Alexander Mills came to Canada from Dundee, Scotland in September 1929. He was born in the year 1903. During his time as a Reverend, he was assigned to Union Presbyterian Church in Thorburn for the years 1938 to 1942.

Not much is known about Reverend Mills after he left Thorburn, but with a little bit of searching, this is what I found.

He earned a degree at McGill University in Montreal, and he also graduated from the Presbyterian College in Montreal in 1937. Others from Pictou County who have also graduated at the Presbyterian College, are Reverend John Wilkes MacDonald a 1930 graduate, Reverend Edwin Grant MacDonald, graduating in 1939 and Reverend Lloyd George MacDonald, graduating in 1974.

Rev. Mills was a real newbie when he was assigned to our little church. Times were not easy, by any means. In the same year that he began working, there was another mine disruption. A major one.

Dominion Steel and Coal Corporation announced early in September 1938, that they would soon be closing the mine in Thorburn. Dosco, part of the same mining company only under another name, also was involved.

The result was that the approximate 150 miners who worked in the Vale pit, who were dependant upon their wages to support their families, were left with nothing. One of the concessions of the company was to claim they would try to absorb some of the out of work Thorburn miners at other locations in Pictou County, depending on the circumstances.

Another newspaper article tells of the large mine closing on October 15th, due to a lack of market for the product. Those that did have some work, did not get any full time work, and now after expenses were deducted from their salary, only a few cents remained.

As the days turned into weeks, Reverend Alexander Mills must have gone out of his mind with worry and stress. Sitting back and waiting was not going to do it for him. Despite his young age and inexperience with the business side of politics, he talked to everyone and anyone.

He tried to speak and fight on behalf of the Thorburn citizens. According to another newspaper article, Rev. Mills and Father E. Chiasson (from St-Ann's Church) got themselves to Ottawa to have someone to listen to the dire conditions of the village of Thorburn.

The Reverend Alexander Mills (con't)

Sadly, their plight fell upon deaf ears. This was printed in the newspaper a couple of days after their visit. The Halifax Herald gives us this account: "The federal minister of mines is taking the extraordinary attitude that marketing of coal was not the concern of the Dominion government!"

After a long illness, Reverend Mills died on the 21st of February 1975 at the hospital in the town of Tonawanda, which is near the city of Buffalo in Erie County, the state of New York.

Reverend Alexander Mills was survived by his wife, the former Isabel Graham, and a son Alexander Mills, as well as 2 brothers, David Mills in England and John Mills in Scotland.

He is interred at the Elmlawn Cemetery, Tonawanda, New York, USA. His wife died in 1991 and is also buried at the same cemetery.

Question:

In 1938, who was the premier of Nova Scotia? Angus L MacDonald (Liberal)

Who was the federal minister of mines? Hon. T. A. Crerar? He was from Ontario, didn't give one care about Thorburn.

Contributed by Manon Potvin

U.C. Friends News for March



U. C. Friends had an evening of fun and fellowship as they baked some cookies for the Church Soup Lunch taking place the next day. We broke into groups, some baking in the kitchen and some playing cooperative games in the church hall. We are so fortunate to have access to a big kitchen where we can accommodate two groups at a time and have the larger outer hall for our other activities. It is much appreciated! Also, many thanks to our dedicated volunteers who take time from their busy lives to mentor our young people. Our next event was family skating at the Pictou County Wellness Centre with the cost being covered by a generous grant from the Municipality of Pictou County. We just made press time so a few photos can be seen earlier in this newsletter.