

# Union Presbyterian Church

Thorburn, NS

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

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## Janet's Journey

Janet stood at the door waiting for her friends to walk with her to school. She smiled, thinking of the party at her new church last night. Friends from her school had been there... and their parents. Even some grandparents. Janet hadn't planned to go. After all, a party at the church...? But it had been fun and, for the first time since she arrived in Canada, Janet felt as if she really belonged.

It was three months since Janet, her brother Robbie and her parents emigrated to Edmonton from Belfast in Northern Ireland. In Belfast, Janet's family lived on a street that was a dividing line between two neighbourhoods. Catholic families lived on the streets to their right. Protestants, like Janet's family, lived to the left. Tensions were often high, something that Janet could not completely understand. Sometimes there were street fights. Sometimes there were car bombs. Their neighbourhood was not a safe place to live.

Janet remembered the exact moment when Mom and Dad decided to go to Canada. It was a Sunday morning, and they were in church. Their minister was telling the story of Abraham and Sarah. "When Abraham and Sarah were living in Bethel, a terrible famine came over the land. They decided to move to Egypt where they hoped that life would be better. God had been with them in Bethel. Would God be with them in Egypt, too? Yes!" their minister said, "God is with us wherever we go." Janet saw Mom glance at Dad.

Dad looked directly into Mom's eyes and then he nodded, slowly and solemnly. Mom nodded too and closed her eyes. Janet had seen them that week, sitting at the kitchen table, talking late into the night. She did not know what they were talking about, but she knew it was important.

## CONTACT INFORMATION

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## Service Times

Thorburn: 11:00am



## Website

[unionchurchthorburn.ca](http://unionchurchthorburn.ca)

## Online Donations

[www.canadahelps.org/en/charities/union-presbyterian-church/](http://www.canadahelps.org/en/charities/union-presbyterian-church/)

## Janet's Journey (cont'd)

It was hard for Janet to leave. She was excited about a new life in Canada, but she cried when she thought she might never see her friends and the streets of Belfast again. On the last Sunday before they left, Janet and her family attended worship at Knox Presbyterian Church. She looked around at the oak pews, the choir loft, and the framed pictures of the Reformers which hung on the wall near Janet's pew.

I can't believe, Janet thought with a sigh, how many years I've amused myself in the sermon looking at the pointed beard of John Calvin and those eyes of John Knox. I tried to imagine what he was seeing. What was he thinking? I'll even miss that old row of Reformers.

Then the voice of her minister broke into her thoughts. He was wishing her family a safe journey, and, he said, "I know that you will find a fine Presbyterian Church in Edmonton. After all, Presbyterians in Canada follow the same Jesus as we do in Ireland," he said, smiling.

Janet stood waiting at the front window of her home in Edmonton. Her new friends waved from the sidewalk. She grabbed her school backpack and started out the door. God would be with her as she walked to high school in Edmonton just as God had been with Janet's family in Belfast and as God had been with the Reformers, with Jesus, with Sarah and Abraham.

Friends, now that we have moved through Advent and celebrated the Birth of Jesus at Christmas, let's all remember that wherever we are and whatever we do, Emmanuel – God With Us – goes before us to prepare the way of his choosing. He makes everything new by the power of the Spirit and now, at the opening of a New Year, wants us always to be at home in the tender love of Jesus, our Saviour and Lord.

May God be Praised!

**Rev. Greg Dickson, Interim Moderator**

## Even More Talent in Pictou County



In December 2024, we were honoured to have Miss Violet Webster join us at a Sunday service, as well as sing for us. She is 16 years old and has been taking piano and voice lessons for 10 years. A voice so sweet that you never want it to end.

*"The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. 'The Lord is my portion,' says my soul, 'therefore I will hope in him.'"*

**Lamentations 3:22-24**



## Church Activities over Christmas 2024



### Christmas Season highlights for 2024!

*Above:* Photo of a service at High Crest Seniors over the Christmas Season with Margie, part of the choir and John. It was a great way to end the Christmas Season.



*Left and below:* Some of our Sunday School children and parents at the Sunday School Christmas Service and Lunch. Also, some photos of the lovely Christmas decorations.



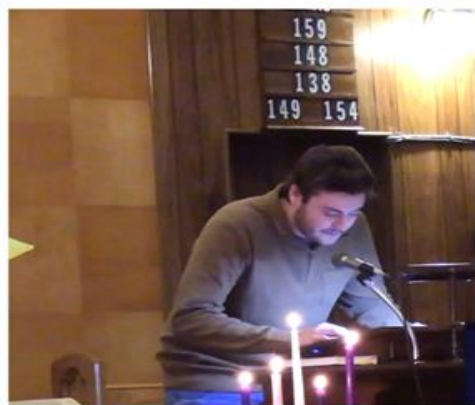
Our church celebrated Christmas, the birth of Jesus, in many ways. Some of the moments were captured throughout the season. Many thanks to those who sent us the photos and everyone who contributed in so many ways to these celebrations of God's greatest gift to the world. We are so grateful that God is moving in our church and community. May we continue to build our faith and to follow Jesus. We pray that God will give us strength to face any challenges and bring much happiness to our church family in the new year! **May God Bless Everyone in 2025!**







It was great to see Katey and Pierre Aucoin home for the holidays from university and we enjoyed their beautiful music with the choir. In addition, Campbell Hayman moved us with her lovely voice and special music for our Christmas Eve Service. A big thank you to all the readers, greeters and everyone who contributed so much to the glory of God over the Christmas Season. We are so fortunate and blessed to have so many helping hands during one of our most important times of the church year!



We would like to pass on our sincere condolences to the family of Reverend John Finlayson. John was minister of the Thorburn-Gutherland's River pastoral charge from 1974-1982 and a friend to many members of the two congregations.