

Please visit our website <https://wesleyunitedchurchstandrewsbytheseanb.ca/>
for any updates and information

Black History Month

“Stand up straight and realize who you are, that you tower over your circumstances.”

– Maya Angelou

Ponderings:

February is Black History Month and this year, the theme is “February and Forever: Celebrating Black History Today and Every Day”. It is meant to remind us that we should always seek to learn about the contributions of Black Canadians, rather than simply paying tribute one month of the year.

This year, Canada Post is marking Black History month with a postage stamp featuring jazz legend Eleanor Collins. The 102 year old said she is grateful to be remembered in this way. She had significant influence on the jazz scene in Vancouver and across the country including hosting her own TV show in the late 1950's. Though very successful in music, she faced much discrimination in her life including an attempt to oust her family from a white neighbourhood in Burnaby, BC.

In the church, we seek to honour the contributions of Black Canadians as well as their resistance to discrimination and fight for equality in our nation. In this way, we hope to break down racial barriers in our communities even as we admit the deeply entrenched racism in our denomination.

This week, I participated in a Zoom meeting that challenged our United Church as a whole to be filled with righteous anger concerning the serious injustice of black ministers being refused employment in our churches despite the many empty pulpits available across the church. It was shared with the Board of Vocation that there are over 40 racialized ministers living in foreign countries who have been approved to work within the UCC (passed background checks, interviews, etc.) but cannot find work here, though many of these ministers have been applying for jobs for over 2 years. Interestingly, their white counterparts find jobs within our congregations with ease. Why is this a reality within our “Inclusive” church in 2022? So frustrated are the volunteers on the Admissions Board that many have resigned their positions.

This is not the first time we have been confronted with stories of racism within the United Church. In 2018, at General Council 43, on the last day of the meeting, Indigenous, Black and People of Colour members of our church stood up and shared two hours of painful stories of racism. Racism that was experienced within our congregations and yet they remain in our church in hopes that we may one day finally become the Intercultural church we dream about.

Check out the video of meeting proceedings found at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y25Y3K2chtK>
(starts at 1:35:00)

This is a difficult but important reality that we must face so that we can change. May God inspire us to explore the vibrancy of Black Heritage and culture so that we may listen to the stories of hate and racism, seeking a new path of love and respect.

- Rev. Natasha Pearen

Information about Black History Month <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iaNOB-Ovbl4>

Reflective Music MV 66 Senzeni Na? <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SJP79Zon3Ek>

Prayer

Eternal One, we hear the cries of our neighbours near and far, and our hearts reach out to them. We are thankful for your promise of hope, and we are thankful for Jesus' love. Through this love we get a glimpse of you. Strengthen our faith and help us to see each other through your eyes. May we be open and sensitive to each other's needs and presence, recognizing that we are all your children. This is our prayer. Amen

Wesley and Saint James Co-Operator

Francie and I have been living in Bocabec for almost 17 years and we really love it. For the first five years or so, we noticed that we had lots of snow each winter, and the bay in front of our home often froze over. We never needed air conditioning in the summer. However, now it seems that we often have green Christmases and lots of freezing rain in the winter. The bay doesn't freeze over at all, and we now use air-conditioning for 2 or 3 weeks each summer. And of course, we seem to experience more frequent and more violent storms, summer and winter. That's my experience of climate change. As many of you know, I'm now a grandfather, so my concerns about the future of our climate have become very real!

This year the New Brunswick Government will update its Climate Action Plan and if, like me, you worry about climate change, now is the time for you to make that concern heard. My understanding is that the original Plan had lots of good ideas in it, and what I really want to is for the Government to implement those ideas faster. Here are a couple of simple things we can all do right now:

1. Go to the website of the Conservation Council of New Brunswick (<https://www.conservationcouncil.ca/>) and learn something. There's a lot of good stuff there, and most of it won't be over your head. The Conservation Council is working closely with the Government to update the Climate Action Plan in a constructive way. You'll learn a lot and find several suggestions for things you can do to help.
2. Write a couple of letters to our politicians. In our area they are:
 - Kathy Bockus, MLA, for Saint Croix
 - Hon. Mike Holland, Minister of Natural Resources and Energy Development
 - Hon. Blaine Higgs, Premier

You can find addresses at: https://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/gateways/your_government.html CCNB website has ideas of what to say, but you might choose to keep your message very simple. The most important thing might be to express your concerns, tell them why action on climate change is important to you, and instruct them to take action now.

I bet that you didn't know that our local Member of the Legislative Assembly (Kathy Bockus) is on the Standing Committee on Environmental Change and Environmental Stewardship. She's actually in a position to make constructive change. Why not tell her that you love your grandchildren and worry about the climate that we're leaving for them. Tell her to get on with it.

Lance S Howard

Events and Announcements

ZOOM Worship

Sun February 20th 10am

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/7092753988?pwd=YVIFbTVrU2pZd3lRNINmL1ZtaTlnUT09>

Meeting ID: 709 275 3988 Passcode: 3527

Call one of these #'s to join by phone with audio only +1 587 328 1099,
+1 647 374 4685 or +1 438 809 7799

Book Study: "The Gifts of Imperfection"

Tuesday at 10: 30am on Zoom, extended to March 15th

St. James Annual Meeting

Sunday February 20th

Reports are to be submitted to Karen Dempsey by February 13th. Thank you!

Wesley Annual Meeting will be held on Sunday February 27th.

Worship will commence at **10am** followed by the meeting.

In Person Worship

Sunday February 20th

Wesley United 10am and St James at Oak Hill 11:30am

Tax Receipts for donations are available for collection at Wesley United

Upcoming in March: (More information to follow later.)

- Lent begins March 6th with the theme: Setting a Place for All
- Guided Meditation beginning on Wednesday March 2nd at 2pm
- Ukrainian Egg Decorating workshops

. **Please check our calendar on our website for any upcoming events or changes to events**

<https://wesleyunitedchurchstandrewsbytheseanb.ca/events/>

Dedications are most welcome remembering, honouring, celebrating a special person, event or season! Please email wesleyunitedstandrews@gmail.com with your request. Thanks!

Photos or any other requests to go with dedications – favourite flower or season etc.....

Please send all announcements to: WesleyUnitedStAndrews@gmail.com State if you wish them to go on the Bulletin, the COOP, Facebook page, Website, or all four! (photos can be placed on all but the bulletin) Thank you!

PRAYER REQUESTS: may be given to our Prayer Circle by

1. contacting Barb King davebarbking@gmail.com
2. contacting Sharon Hannan retired@xplornet.ca or phone 466-1435
3. by asking any of us from Wesley/St James community to pass on a request

Sent to you by

Wesley United Church, 77 William St, St Andrews NB E5B1W8 and
St James Pastoral Charge, 731 Route 745, Oak Hill, NB E5A3C7

Office email: WesleyUnitedStAndrews@gmail.com Website: <https://wesleyunitedchurchstandrewsbytheseanb.ca>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Wesley-and-St-James-United-St-AndrewsOak-HillScotch-Ridge>

Minister - Rev Natasha Pearen

email: rev.natasha.nb@gmail.com or cell phone 506-898-0390