



The United Church of Canada  
75 Alma Street, Moncton, NB E1C 4Y3  
506-858-8289 [sjuc@nb.aibn.com](mailto:sjuc@nb.aibn.com) [www.stjohnsmoncton.ca](http://www.stjohnsmoncton.ca)  
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/16465565858>  
Office Hours: M-F, 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

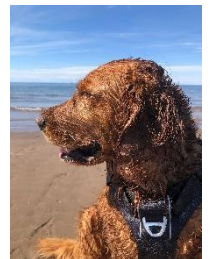
## **PASTORAL LETTER**

June 28, 2024

Last Friday, we sent our son to school and told him that he still had two more days of school next week on Monday and Tuesday which we had been told in an email. He called us in a panic at lunchtime to say, “Today is the last day of school!” I was visiting someone at 1:30pm so I knew I had lots of time to run up and get him. He came out of the school with a giant clear bag filled with all of his school supplies and projects, along with his 40-pound rucksack of a school bag. I don’t know how kids carry these things. Anyway. Eli was lifting and dropping the bag one step at a time so I said, “Let me carry that, buddy,” as I took his school bag too. As we were walking he asked, “Did you bring the car?” Because we only live a few houses down from the school and because there’s so much construction work on our street, I said it was easier to walk. That’s when the bag broke and all of his papers and supplies went flying. “Dad!” I said, “Don’t worry, buddy! We Billard Boys have got this!” Eli replied, “No we don’t!” as he chased papers in the grass.



Lori-Ann took her mother and the kids and the dog to the camper and I, for once, had the whole house to myself. I usually use these opportunities to cook and to watch movies really loudly. I didn’t intend to wake up on the couch around 10pm wondering who I was and where I was. It’s been a busy stretch. The next morning I woke up and made my favourite “Eggs in Purgatory” dish that is from a recipe by Nigella Lawson. I was so proud of my effort that I sent her a picture on Twitter and the next day she had responded that it looked gorgeous! I love the internet sometimes. Lori-Ann had taken Halo for a swim and messaged that Eli wasn’t feeling well so she was bringing him back home. I had just finished making breakfast and she walked in and said, “I’m starving!” So we had a nice chat as we ate.



After church on Sunday I was shaking hands at the door and everyone kept saying, “Have a great vacation!” as they were leaving church and I said, “I’m still here for another Sunday!” but I quickly surmised that they wouldn’t be! We had a brief Council meeting upstairs in relation to grant applications. So much work, so many hours, so many phone calls have gone in by our Finance and Property people to access resources and money for our church that by the end of the meeting the Council members gave a round of applause. More on that later as we get information. New heat pumps have been installed in the Karing Kitchen, thanks be to God and a grant!

## Dieppe teen has a passion for the pipes at local cathedral



Élie LeBlanc taught himself to play massive pipe organ at Moncton's Cathédrale Notre-Dame de l'Assomption



Maeve McFadden - CBC News

Posted: August 01, 2023



Élie LeBlanc playing the Casavant organ at the Cathédrale Notre-Dame de l'Assomption. LeBlanc said the first time he sat down at this organ, he was 'really intimidated.' (Maeve McFadden/CBC)

Part of the buzz on Sunday morning was that there was a young man visiting our church. I had gone over to shake his hand and sort of recognized him but I wasn't sure why. He introduced himself to me as Eli LeBlanc. I remembered. (Name associations help me and I knew there was an organist named Eli in the area.) I told him I recognized him from the news. He was pleased. He said, "I've never been in a Protestant church before." I told him we have lots of Catholics who attend here and that he was safe. A church member had met him and invited him to come hear our pipe organ and here he was. "Do you think I could meet your organist?" Of course! I knew Rev. Mel would love to meet Eli as Mel has been such a big advocate for young people and music his whole life. After the service I saw him speaking with Mel and a few others. He had played a few notes on the organ and he enthusiastically said, "If you ever do a fundraiser for this organ, please call me. I'll come play." He made the comment that the best thing for the upkeep of an organ was to play it. Eli planned on visiting other Protestant churches in the coming weeks to hear their pipe organs too.

For the past week I've thought in my head that I was two weeks away from vacation. To my shock, I opened my book to see that I had just one week to complete everything, including writing three presentations for a course for United Church students on worship and a commencement address for the Health Sciences graduates from Oulton College along with my regular duties and obligations.

I spent Monday and Tuesday writing first and second drafts for the course. It was supposed to be a course on Zoom that my colleague, the Rev. Dr. Shawn Redden was leading. Shawn, who recently was the minister at Visions United, invited me to participate because she said when it came to doing weddings, funerals, and nursing home services, "I immediately thought of you!" We'd had a call a few weeks before where she outlined what would be expected of me as I would spend a few hours with the students. I presented on each topic and then we had time for discussion and questions.

When the time came on Wednesday morning, I clicked the link and there they all were sitting in the chapel at the Atlantic School of Theology and I was on a giant screen in the chapel. I have warm memories of the chapel there. When I was a student it was my job to lock up the buildings at night and I always saved the chapel for last so that I could play the piano for a while. It's a beautiful, if not echoey, space! I've had some meaningful moments in worship there, too.

It was an engaging session with the students who are training for leadership in the church. There were lots of questions for me and I tried to communicate the joy of what I do - of what we do - in the church and that I consider it to be sacred and holy work, whether it's standing before a wedding couple; throwing dirt into a grave after writing words to comfort; or standing in the foyer of a busy special care home trying to yell over the staff who are working as the residents sit there that JESUS LOVES YOU.

I encouraged the students to remember that the church still has some power in it and that we are not at the mercy of the wedding industry and the expectations around all of that; that people come to the United Church for funerals when they have had terrible experiences with other pastors and priests who either use the opportunity to save souls or barely even mention the name of the person who died; and when it comes to care home services that we are about the work of Jesus when we are with people who could use some love, kindness, and sometimes advocacy.

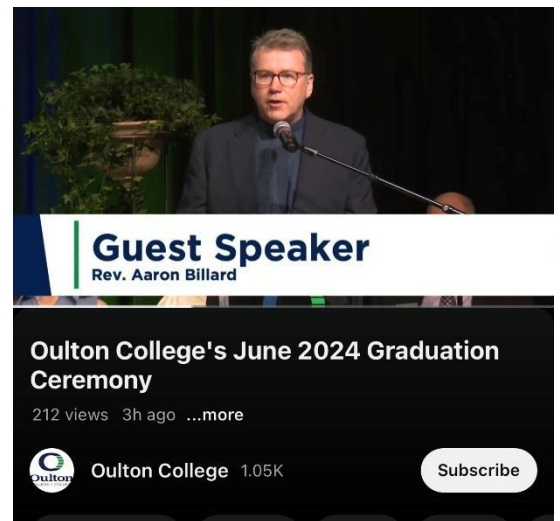
That afternoon, before I started working on my speech for the students and staff at Oultons College, I went for a walk in the warm breeze where I saw "love locks" in the park in front of the old Aberdeen school. I'd had two



phone calls from staff checking in on me to see if I needed anything. One person asked if she could see a copy of my speech ahead of time, which surprised me as I've never had that request before. When I gently asked why I was told that in today's climate things can be misheard and they wanted to avoid any kind of misunderstanding. To be honest, a few years ago I wouldn't have understood that but today I do. It takes just one person saying one thing on video that is posted on Facebook and it can be an unwelcome storm of horribleness for the organization and the speaker. I said, "A second set of eyes never hurts!"

To be completely honest, it was a challenge. As I've said before I never say no to an opportunity to speak in front of people. It's just who I've become. Plus, when I am asked to speak publicly I have this strong belief that it raises our church's profile. I think the church needs to be at all the tables it is invited to no matter how big or small.

I took my task with all the seriousness I could using all the abilities I have to speak for ten minutes without mentioning God or Jesus. I didn't know what to wear because I have never spoken for such an event but I knew I wanted people to hear a different kind of "pastor" (I rarely hear the word minister these days) than the one they are used to hearing given how conservative Moncton is religiously. So I wore a suit and a clergy shirt even though I did not invoke the holy of holies and made no mention of Christianity at all. I wanted people to see and understand that the church can be sophisticated and compassionate. We didn't need to hammer the name Jesus all the time. In fact, as I reminded someone recently, we say more to people about Jesus by how we live than any amount of preaching can achieve. "You may be the only Bible some people ever read." I was in to have lunch with church members and friends recently and they have a sign on their door that says no fliers or solicitation. I told them given the amount of Rogers sales people and Jehovah's Witnesses lately they should also add onto their sign one I saw years ago that said, "No peddlers of religion."



It occurred to me that day as I watched the students getting their diplomas that the overwhelming narrative is that the world is a terrible place where terrible things happen. But, that day, I felt surrounded by goodness and positive energy. The students were so excited and their teachers were so proud. There were a thousand people there cheering them on. Different cultures were represented. So many people were entering careers in the caring professions. I saw a lot of good. One of the staff members knew and had recently spoken with former Moderator, the Very Rev. Lois Wilson who was the first female Moderator of The United Church of Canada.

On my way out of the venue, I felt like Moses parting the waters. A few people beelined for me and I had to endure the one thing I have tried to relax about: hugs. A gentleman came to speak to me as I was talking to the school President, Darcie Reidpath, and he said, "I can't believe you're from Cape Breton! Some of us got out!" I told him the old line that I had heard that there were only two ways out of Cape Breton: Dorchester or the ministry. He burst out laughing. He was from Sydney. While it was nice to speak to so many students, I mentally noted how many old guys came up to shake my hand. I know clergy are a dying breed these days and people don't have many opportunities to see us out in the field but I made sure to give each and every one a few moments and eye contact and a handshake. I can always tell when that moment means a lot to someone.

I drove down to the church after the ceremony and opened my mail and made some calls. There were two emails from church members excited that I had spoken at the graduation as they have family members who were graduating that day from Oultons. I tried to focus on the next tasks when my phone rang. It was Trina Perkins from Fergusons (formerly Tuttlles) Funeral Home.

Lloyd Mallory, the former owner of Tuttles, had just died. I did Lloyd's wife Janet's funeral back in 2012. Janet was the Tuttle and the business had been in the family for generations. Ian Ferguson bought the business the year before and Lloyd was pleased to know that the Tuttles families would be cared for. The family wanted me and asked if they could have the service on Sunday. I said to Trina, "God bless Lloyd. He knew it was the day before I went on vacation and didn't want to bother me. A funeral home director until the end!" Lloyd and I always got along well.



When I go on vacation this summer, it doesn't mean I'm not thinking of the church. In fact, my brain is now wired towards all of you. You know how to find me if need be. I'm excited for the summer as my daughter has music camp at Mount A for a week and we will be going to Cape Breton for a visit. I'm traveling by train to see Dad in Bedford for a few days, which will be good to spend time with him.



My new sister, Jolene MacSween, is getting married and I am performing the ceremony. The whole group of McSweens are descending on Cape Breton for the wedding so I'll get to meet even more of them and spend a few days to visit. Also, I'm excited to be doing my brother's wedding the following weekend in Grand Narrows where our family visited every summer. My uncle had a hotel there that he used as a summer home for his family. There's a long veranda on the front and if I close my eyes I can see all of the people I loved now long gone sitting there and talking on a warm summer evening across the water from the Highland Village in Iona where the Malagawatch proudly stands on the point overlooking the Barra Strait. Jason said that he's considering it a family reunion as it will only be family there. I cannot wait to meet his bride, Maria, and to see my nephew Ethan for the first time since he was the ring bearer at my wedding twenty years ago. Jason's daughter Logan will be there too and we will all be staying at the old hotel for two nights.



Bless you all on these summer days. Thank you for letting me share parts of my life with all of you. As someone said to me recently, "I really love your letters and all of the things you talk about!" I smiled and said, "Just think of the things that happened that I don't include!" She told me that her mother carries the church letter with her and I was deeply moved. I'll mostly be in Moncton during July and hopefully on a beach once in a while too or near a campfire. I return in August to resume my full duties and to finish planning for the Vacation Bible School.




Your friend,  
*The Rev. Aaron Billard*, Minister



*The bulletin and pastoral letter are dedicated  
in Loving Memory of  
**Freda Murray**  
by Daughter, Lynn Murray*

## NOTICES, UPCOMING MEETINGS & EVENTS

Check our website at [www.stjohnsmoncton.ca](http://www.stjohnsmoncton.ca)  
for Sunday online Worship links, calendar, and more.

June 30	Sun.	11:00 a.m.	<b>WORSHIP</b> - Grocery Sunday: last until Sept. (see note)	
July 1				
July 1-31			<b>St. John's UC closed for vacations</b>	
Aug. 4	Sun.	<b>10:00 a.m.</b>	<b>WORSHIP</b> (note time change) - Worship Leader: Cyril "Cy" Edmonds - Emancipation Sunday	
Aug. 12-16	Mon.-Fri.	8:30 am - 12:00 p.m.	<b>Vacation Bible School</b> (see note)	

Announcements from other United Churches, Fundy St. Lawrence Dawning Waters Region 14 and the community are shown on the TV in the Owen Fraser Hall and also located on the bulletin boards located at the Alma St. entrance and outside the Church Office.

**SOBEYS & SUPERSTORE GIFT CARDS** are sold each Sunday in the Sanctuary before and after Worship and at the Church Office M-F, 9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.



*We make 4% on every card sold. Your support is needed and appreciated.*

The **UCW** has been given a **GIFT BASKET** to be used as a fund raiser. The basket will be on display in the Owen Fraser Hall during coffee hour and a UCW member will be on hand to sell tickets. The draw for the basket will take place at coffee hour on **June 30, 2024**. Tickets are \$2.00 each or 3 for \$5.00 and are available from UCW members. The basket contains a variety of items including two \$25.00 gift cards.



### **GROCERIES FOR KARING KITCHEN**

(**June 30** – last Sunday of the month)

The Outreach Committee would like to bring your attention to the Karing Kitchen's need for these groceries: cream of chicken soup, cream of celery soup, flakes of ham.

*White baskets will be at the main entrance for your donations. Thank you*



### **VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL**

\*St. John's United Church's\* Vacation Bible School (VBS) is back! Children from grades 1-6 are invited to join us for a week of morning (**August 12-16, 8:30am-noon**) fun and community. Registration forms are available at the church main entrances and on the table outside the church office as well as on our church website and Facebook group.



We need adults to volunteer to help each morning; 1-2 per morning. Email the church office at [sjuc@nb.aibn.com](mailto:sjuc@nb.aibn.com) to sign up!

**SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHERS NEEDED FOR FALL**

The Sunday School needs two volunteers to share leadership of our Ages 3-6 group starting in Sept. and continuing until May 2025. If you can help or need more information, speak with Nancy Black or Sonja Webster or email the church office.



**SJUC CLOSED FOR VACATIONS, JULY 1-31**

This includes Sundays (no Worship), July 7, 14, 21 & 28.



During the month of the July, there will be no in-person or online worship services offered. We recommend that you visit local churches or churches across Canada and the world online.

The church telephone and mail will be checked regularly.

The church office and building re-opens on August 1, 2024.

Summer Sunday Worship will resume on August 4. Worship begins at 10:00 a.m. during the month of August and continues until after the Labour Day weekend in September.

For emergency pastoral care during Aaron’s vacation, please listen to the message on the church telephone. Rev. Aaron will be away; however, he will be on call for any requirement for care such as hospitalizations or deaths. If you need to be in touch with him, please contact him directly by text or calling at 506-850-2621. This is only for emergencies

Worship will return to regular start time of 11:00 a.m. on Sept. 8.

Many of our expenses don’t take a vacation during the summer months, so please REMEMBER TO CONTINUE TO MAKE YOUR DONATIONS REGULARLY THROUGHOUT THE SUMMER MONTHS. You may do this through PAR, e-transfer or cheques (may be post-dated) left at the office or drop your donation in the church mail slot. Many thanks to you who do contribute regularly.

**Local Church’s Summer Worship**

Name	July	August
Central United	CLOSED June 30	Open Aug 18 at 10:30 am
Hillsborough	Open 10 am	CLOSED
Mountain View	Open 10 am	Open 10 am
Mount Royal	Open 10 :30 am/ Closed July 31	CLOSED until Sept 4
St. John’s	CLOSED	Open 10 am
St. Paul’s	No Worship/Special Events	Open Aug 11 at 10 am
Trinity United	CLOSED June 30	CLOSED until Sept 8
Visions United	CLOSED June 30	Open Aug 11 at 10:30
Bethel Riverview	Open 10:30 am	Open 10:30 am

**DIME BLITZ**



Don't spend a dime this summer - save them for the UCW summer fundraiser. Plastic pill bottles have been placed at the Church entrances for your convenience. Deposit in the offering box on a Sunday morning or drop off in the mail slot located on the Victoria St. entrance door.



Thank you for your continued support of UCW projects.  
Please ensure each container is labelled with your name.

**STEWARDSHIP SECOND** – In an economic system full of sin, we are called to do our best to help redistribute God's abundance so that all can thrive.

**ST. JOHN'S UNITED CHURCH CARES...** To notify the Minister of personal concerns, anxieties, illnesses, hospitalizations or deaths, or to pass along a prayer request, contact Rev. Aaron Billard at 506-858-8289 or [sjucrev@gmail.com](mailto:sjucrev@gmail.com)



### **CHURCH MINISTRY PERSONNEL AND STAFF**



Rev. Aaron Billard, *Minister*  
[sjucrev@gmail.com](mailto:sjucrev@gmail.com)



Karen Geldart  
*Office Administrator*  
[sjuc@nb.aibn.com](mailto:sjuc@nb.aibn.com)



Rev. Dr. Douglas MacEachern  
*Minister Emeritus*  
[douglasimaceachern@gmail.com](mailto:douglasimaceachern@gmail.com)



Rev. Melvin G. Fawcett  
*Music Director*  
[melvinfawcett7@gmail.com](mailto:melvinfawcett7@gmail.com)



Pat Arsenault, *Custodian*

### **Church Council**

Chair: Roland Gallant  
Secretary: Karen Teed  
Treasurer: Kimberley Buck de Jesus  
Board of Trustees: Graham McCrea  
Christian Development: Nancy Black; Sunday School: Sonja Webster  
Finance & Property Management: Marlene Godfrey  
Fundy-St. Lawrence Dawning Waters Region reps.: Rev. Aaron Billard,  
Kimberley Buck de Jesus and Karen Geldart  
Ministry & Personnel: Kimberley Buck de Jesus  
Pastoral Care & Membership: Valerie Roy  
UCW: Brenda McFarlane  
Worship & Music: Sheri Brooks



*Staff holidays & church/office closure: July 1-31, 2024  
Have a memorable and safe summer!*