



St. John's Presbyterian Church
28 2nd Street East
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Rev. K Johnston
Interim Minister
(613) 932-8693



***"Knowing, Enjoying
and Sharing
Christ's Love
With All"***

Newsletter

Susan MacDonald
Cynthia Seguin
Carol Esdale
John Adams
Martha Woods

St. John's Newsletter

January 2017



Plan to participate
on February 5th
10:00 a.m.

You've Got Mail



The Season of Epiphany

From the Pastor's Desk

Life has its share of challenges, annoyances and hassles. Standing in a long line up at the grocery store with only a few things to pay for; sitting at a traffic light that stays red forever and there are no vehicles going the other way; the farm wagon that blocks the road and you can walk faster, etc. Times of unpleasantness seem parcelled out to us at regular intervals. Such irritations are difficult to avoid and they seem to accompany us throughout our lives.

How do we respond to these uninvited interventions and hassles? That is the important question, the test of our metal and our faith. Do we let our blood pressure rise and our heart rate pass the speed limit? How pitiful to let negative circumstances rule us. How sad to let petty annoyances become the dominant agenda of our lives. God has a better way. He has plans for us that are filled with peace and a future that is complete with joy. As our daily Companion, He helps us to see beyond the irritations of what life can be.

When we meet as a congregation on Sunday mornings and worship together, we set our sights on greater things. As we sing hymns of praise and bow in the simplicity of prayer, we relax in the peace and love of God. We cultivate our relationship with God, drawing near to Him so that He may draw close to us, whatever may happen in the week ahead. He is our peace which passes worldly understanding. And because this is true, you and I can take seriously and appropriate to ourselves the words of Jesus, *"My peace I leave with you. My peace I give unto you."* [Jn. 14:27].

Drop Thy still dews of quietness,
Till all our striving cease;
Take from our souls the strain and stress,
And let our ordered lives confess
The beauty of Thy peace. — John Greenleaf Whittier

In His service (Rev.) Ian K. Johnston,
Pastor and friend

**Kindness is difficult to give away
because it keeps coming back**

**If you can't sleep
Don't count sheep
Talk to the Shepherd**

The Madagascar School Project

I'm very excited about my trip to Madagascar this winter! It starts tomorrow and we have a lot to accomplish this time. With your help, and God willing, within the next year we may be able to move into offering trade school to those students who would prosper from being empowered with the skills and tools to make a living for their families in their own home villages.

This year our hopes are:

1) It takes a lot of rice and veggies to feed 750 students and the staff at our Tenaquip School in Madagascar, and so, this year, we are going to focus on improving our agricultural practices. We garden on the side of a mountain on land that we terrace. We must stop the torrential rains from taking away the nutrients in the soil, which we have so painstakingly added through animal manure, organic, vegetative compost and worm compost. To do this, we will dig big, long ditches, called 'swales' on a contour on the mountainside. This will stop the rainwater running down to the stream, will hold that water and its nutrients over time, lengthening our growing season, and supplying tree roots with water all year round.

This is work that feels like we are moving a mountain - long and hard hours with slow progress. But, we have a plan to get it done quickly so that the land can be planted right away. On February 15th, 16th and 17th we will have up to 400 parents coming, with their tools to dig with us. They will dig all day and we will serve a big lunch to all workers.

On the third and final day, we hope that the students will perform song and dance numbers for their parents as celebration after a final lunch enjoyed by all. After the swales are dug, we will plant trees, bushes, and annuals hoping to hold the soil in place through vine type vegetation, produce humus, keep the soil moist, and thus extend the growing season and producing more fruits and vegetables.

2) The second large endeavor is teacher training. We have two instructors from France coming for two weeks to work with the teachers in creative pedagogy. During this time our teachers will spend one week in full day instruction and one week in which the instructors will work in the classrooms alongside the teachers as they interact with their students.

3) Thirdly, we hope to buy a small rice field, dig a moat-type channel around the periphery in which to raise fish, and grow vegetables in the middle section. We hope that spawning, raising and selling fish may be a big part of the solution to self-sustainability for the project. Many families cannot afford to eat meat, but fish can be a plentiful, economical and nutritious solution.

4) Finally, we have much work to do with our school committee to mentor their transition from being workers/employees to being a self-led administrative body for the whole school and project. They will be the group, with the addition of some community members, who will lead this school forward towards financial and administrative self-sufficiency. This is a daunting task in a culture in which people have never had the opportunity to consider this kind of economic endeavor.

On behalf of the children of Madagascar I thank you for your faith in us, your work, your donations, and your prayers that make all this work possible.

Respectfully submitted,
Kathy Lucking

Outreach: The Madagascar School Project Inc.

Thanks to the generous support of St. John's and St. Michael's, the Madagascar School Project continues to grow and flourish. Our student enrollment is now at 650 children and we are able to continue with the feeding program at lunch, although the price of rice continues to rise. We are able to provide vegetables from our own gardens for lunch. We are very pleased to have successfully raised both meat chickens and laying hens. Some of our new initiatives include permaculture farming to ensure arable land, a biodigester for fueling our cook stoves, solar panels for hot water, expanding our apprenticeship programs and micro-financing of small projects within the village. At the heart of all this, is quality education for the student's deepest appreciation and thanks go out to the congregations in Canada. Their generosity has made a difference in the lives of so many.

Nancy Wilson, Secretary MSP

Sacrament of Baptism for Nathaniel

Rev. Johnston conducted this baptism on Sunday, November 27th, 2016. Pictured from left to right are Stacey Grace, Nathaniel Robert Norman Grace, Robert Grace and in front big sister Raegan Grace. Sarah-Jane Woods, District 16 Elder, is in back.



Syrian Refugee Update

Happy New Year. Please be advised that our refugee applicants have had progress in their files. Nouida DAGHISTANI had her initial immigration interview on Sunday, January 15th at the Abu Dhabi Visa Office. She has a little more info to provide, but is in the process of obtaining it. Her medical examination is forth coming. The NAHHAS family underwent their medical examinations on Monday, January 16th at the Beirut Visa Office and will had their immigration interviews there on Monday, January 23rd. Finally, the lengthy administrative application phase is coming to a close and the support preparation phase is beginning. They could be arriving in the next month or two. As you may know, Rev. Marianne Munroe, the coordinator for the Presbytery, is currently on her honeymoon, but will be in touch with everyone upon her return. Presbytery has received about \$21,000 of the \$35,000 they hope to collect from the various churches in our area. You can make donations to this very worthwhile endeavour through your envelopes on Sunday.

By Garnet Thompson

The Stone

by Richard Gunther

Once there was a little boy who went to his Dad and said :

"Dad? What is God like?"

His Dad said : "Go outside and find a stone."

So away went the boy. When he came back, his Dad said :

"Now, put the stone on the table and try to annoy it."

The boy tried all sorts of ways to annoy that stone. He shouted at it, told it dirty jokes, said swear words . . . he even got some eggs from the fridge and threw them at the walls . . . but the stone didn't get annoyed.

"Now" said his Dad, "Try to make the stone happy."

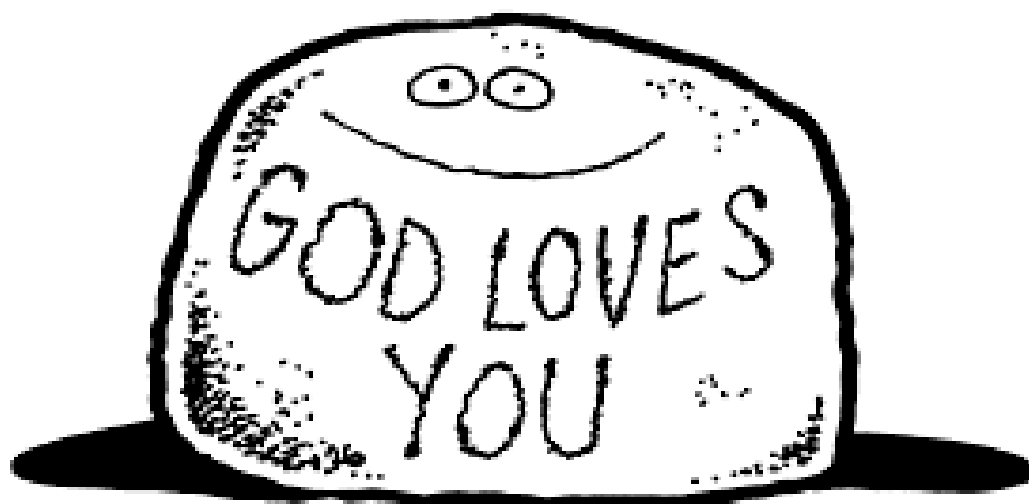
The boy gave the stone lots of compliments, sang it songs, drew some pictures . . . and even offered to help the stone keep clean by giving it a wash . . . but the stone didn't get happy.

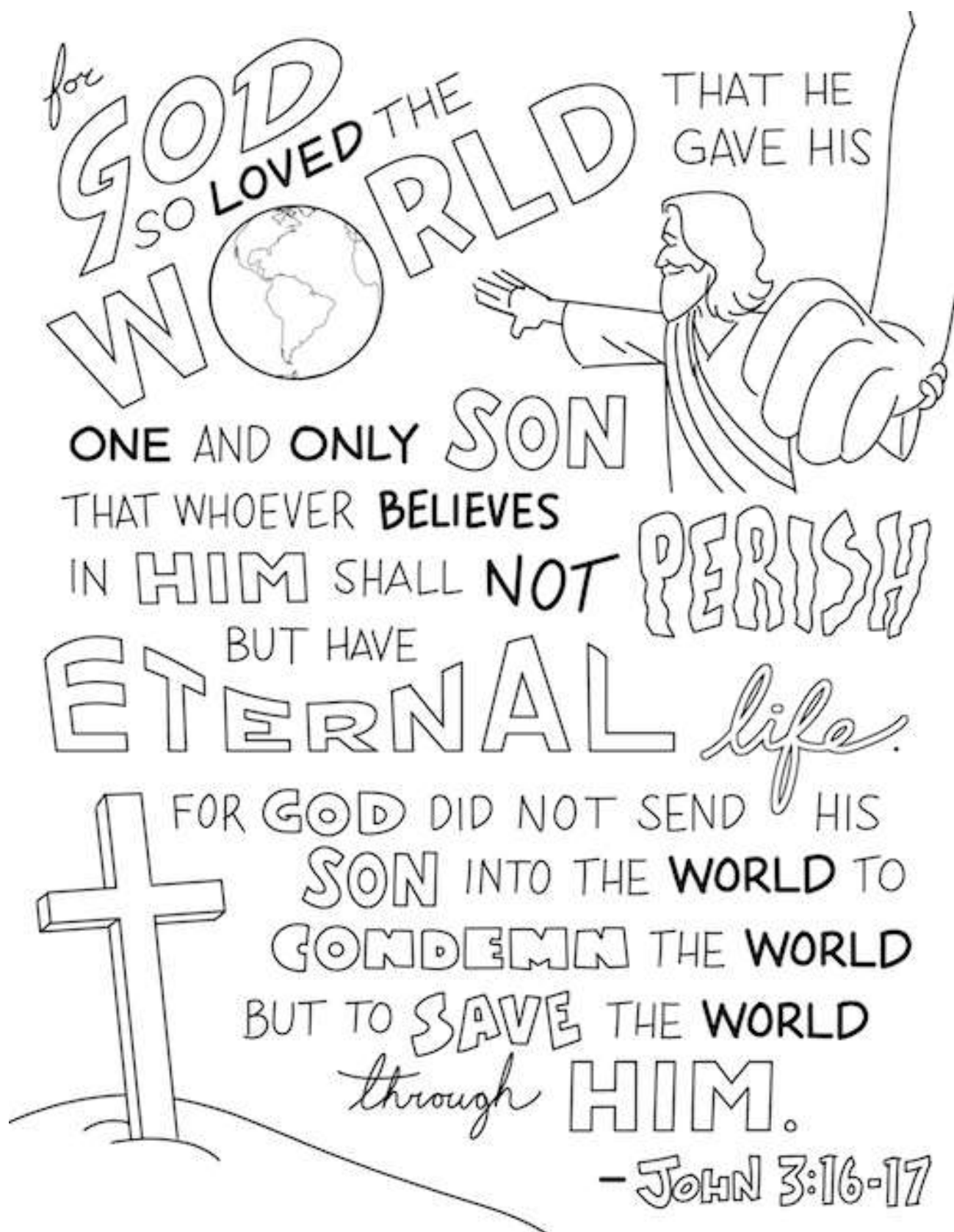
"God is like that stone" said the boy's Dad, "God is always the same. He never changes. It doesn't matter how GOOD you are, or how BAD you are. God never changes."

The Bible says three things about God :

1. God is real,
2. God is love,
3. God loves you.

If you can remember these three things,
you will know a lot about God.







Pics from St. John's Christmas Pageant

NOTICE TO OUR ST. JOHN'S FAMILY

YOU ARE ALL INVITED

to a

POT LUCK LUNCHEON

Bring your favourite dish to share!

12 NOON

Wednesday, February 1, 2017

MCLELLAN ROOM

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ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

WOMEN OF THE CHURCH

1:00 P. M.

AGENDA WILL INCLUDE:

Update on Finances

Reports from Conveners

Review of Spring Events

Any suggestions for agenda should be made to a member of the executive
committee

by January 25, 2017

ALL ARE WELCOME!

Upcoming Events



Communion Sunday
February 5th,
10:00 am.

Children's Youth Choir

Communion Sunday
February 5th
Practice at 9:15 a.m.
In the choir room

Winterlude 2017

The Presbytery of Ottawa invites

YOU

to Winterlude 2017.

Theme: The warmth of God's Love

February 14, 2017

2:00 pm

Knox Presbyterian Church, Manotick

Cost \$5.00

Soup and Sandwich Lunch

Tuesday February 7, 2017

11:30 am—1:00 pm

St. Andrews—St. Mark's United Church

Johnson Cr., Long Sault

Homemade soup, sandwich, dessert & beverage:

\$6.00

Take-Out Available. Everyone Welcome!

W.O.C.

Shop and Support Sales

Sundays

After Worship

ST. JOHN'S IS
CELEBRATING

230 YEARS

1787 - 2017

ANNIVERSARY SUNDAY
JUNE 11TH

Introducing Danielle Vaillancourt



On January 15th St. John's was proud to welcome back as guest soloist, the distinguished mezzo-soprano, Danielle Vaillancourt to our Sunday morning worship. She has deep roots in the Cornwall area and in SD&G. Her accompanist was Dorothy Sullivan, our Organist Emeritus at St. John's, and Danielle's grandmother. Her grandfather, Ron Sullivan, has been a pillar of our church for over sixty years! Danielle's mother, Ronda Vaillancourt, was born and raised as Ronda Sullivan in our church.

Danielle has completed her Masters Degree in Opera Performance at the Conservatoire de Musique de Montreal. She has performed in many operas in and outside of Canada, has worked with world renowned artists, and won and placed in many different prestigious competitions in Canada and abroad. She is currently in the midst of completing a Business Degree at Concordia University in Montreal that will compliment her musical background and interests!

This summer, stay tuned for a Canada Day Celebration that Danielle is preparing with her artistic collective at the St. Raphaels's Ruins called, Classiqu' Arts SDG 150. In this festival there will be classical music performances, art exhibitions, as well as ballet, highland, and First Nation dancers.

Danielle contributed to our worship with beautiful renditions of "I Walked Today Where Jesus Walked", a favourite of her grandmother because she played the same song for Everett Rush in years gone by. Danielle's second solo, "O Rest in the Lord" was equally effective. Her voice echoes throughout the sanctuary and into the soul. Her music is always heartfelt at St. John's, but especially so, when she is accompanied on the organ, or piano by her grandmother. Congratulations to both Danielle and Dorothy!

We eagerly await a return engagement this coming spring!

Revised from the Jan. 15th bulletin by John Adams