



PENTECOST NEWSLETTER

“Come, Holy Spirit!”

Dear Faith-Filled Friends of Gower,

As we sit here writing this newsletter article, we are in the last stretch of preparing for the National Centennial Celebrations to be held here at Gower Street United! It is an exciting time for our congregation. We have had a year or two of planning, a month full of activities centered around the 100th anniversary and many, many, many planning meetings with National Staff.

As we enter the vibrant and spirit-filled season of Pentecost, we are reminded again of the power of God’s presence in our lives and in our community. Pentecost is often called the birthday of the Church, and just like a birthday, it is a time of celebration, reflection, and hopeful anticipation of what is yet to come.

In Acts 2, we read of the Holy Spirit descending upon the disciples like tongues of fire—filling them with courage, clarity, and a new sense of purpose. That same Spirit continues to move among us here at Gower Street United Church. We see it in the laughter of children at Gower Learners, in the faithful hands of those preparing meals for meetings and clubs, and in the quiet prayers lifted during worship. The Spirit is not just something we remember—it is something we experience together, week by week, breath by breath.

Somewhere in cyberspace this week I discovered the theme, “Empowered to Serve.”

We are inviting our whole congregation to lean into the Spirit’s call to live out our faith in action. Whether it is through volunteering in our ministries, singing in the choir, making space for newcomers, or simply offering a listening ear, each act of love becomes a flame that lights the way for others.

In the weeks ahead, we will be exploring stories of transformation and call—from the first disciples to the ways God continues to call us.

As always, we are so grateful for the gifts you bring to our shared life at Gower Street United. This Pentecost, may we all be stirred by that ancient yet ever-new wind of the Spirit—bold, unpredictable, and full of grace. And may we be bold enough to live out our vision of open minds, open hearts and open arms!

Come, Holy Spirit. Fall afresh on us.

With Pentecost joy,
Rev. Pamela and Rev. Rebecca



FDEE REGIONAL COUNCIL MEETING

This year, Gower Street was represented well at the FDEE Regional Council held in Corner Brook from May 02 to 04, 2025. Ken Slaney and Jonathan Stevenson served as your District Representatives, Rev. Pamela, Rev. Rebecca and the Very Reverend Dr. Marion Parady were in attendance. Rev. Rebecca led a group of youth delegates which included several from Gower, Naomi Addison, Sadie Butt, Jasmine Gill and Callie Zahariadis. Some of the highlights of the meeting were:

100th Anniversary Vignettes and Music:

As this regional council fell within the United Church of Canada (UCC) 100th year anniversary (1925-2025) the meeting featured a celebration of our unique history here in Newfoundland. A series of "Historical Vignettes" occurred throughout the first two days. Exactly 10 vignettes of 10 minutes duration each – a clever detail of the planning that we only learned of at the end. The vignettes celebrated various aspects of the history of the UCC, which included a liberal dose of humour but also contemplation, especially regarding some of the errors along the way (i.e. residential schools which included several here in NL). A noteworthy Vignette celebrated the "Saints of the UCC in NL" this included such legendary figures as Rev. Coughan and Stella Burry – but also including our own living saint – the Right Reverend Dr. Marion Parady who was able to participate without any special historical costume or props and gave her speech live! Also sprinkled into the meeting agenda were many "Musical Moments" where the most popular hymns from the various UCC (and former Methodist) hymnals throughout the past 100 years were used to lift our spirits.

Community Building:

There was a lively discussion on the question "How do we improve outreach and our involvement in the community?" Amongst the ideas were: supporting local groups, having a strong AV system for airing services, and continuing to support local establishments (Stella's Circle, Bridges of Hope, Gathering place) and across the island.

General Council:

Rev. Faith March-MacCuish spoke. Noteworthy is the fact that FDEE is not operating in the red. It's position financially at this present time is good. It places us in a strong position going forward. The contrast between the strong financial position of FDEE versus the existential struggle many communities of faith around NL was startling.

Ministry for Children, Youth and young Adults

Our own Rev. Rebecca spoke about youth ministry within the UCC. This is a growing ministry with youth and young families involvement in all aspects of Worship. Youth from across our province attended and did the vespers for our meeting. It was Awesome!! Nothing can lift Spirits like youth singing and involvement. The youth did plan and run one of the workshops.

Guaranteed Livable Basic Income (GLI) and Women's Suffrage:

The Very Reverend Dr. Marion Parady spoke to the assembly on Women's rights and equality and on the Guaranteed Livable Basic Income. The GLI could be key to eliminating poverty and unifying the sometimes disjointed public support programs and policies now in Canada.

Being able to pay bills, go back to school and live better lives is the only way to improve dignity. The UCC as a body has been lobbying on behalf of those living at or near the poverty line for a Guaranteed livable basic Income (GLI). We were encouraged to continue to contact our elected officials to continue the pressure to bring about this goal.

Stewardship:

The church accepts donations through PAR, donations, weekly givings, fundraising within the church etc. As well, grants through the district or the national UCC are available pending what is happening at your church (eg. 100th anniversary celebrations at Gower). The Stewardship Team is a guiding light in assisting in the process of support for projects ongoing. Roger Janes just retired and the position of convenor is presently vacant. Thank you Roger for your commitment to this post over the years.

Vision 2035 Presentation:

During this centennial year, the UCC is also looking forward. A presentation was given by Rev. Faith March-MacCuish; who showed some sobering results using Canadian Census data spanning the past three decades (1991-2021). The data shows a steady decline in the overall decline in Canadians who declared themselves as Christian, and a more severe drop in UCC adherents. Against this shift in demographics, the UCC is actively working to adapt to a changing society and continue its work through its Vision 2035 plan.

Affirming Church

How can our church be radical, intentionally welcoming, and inclusive in today's global village? A step in the right direction toward this end is by becoming an affirming congregation. Gower has already chosen to be an affirming congregation. Other congregations are striving towards doing the same. After much discussion, FDEE Regional Council passed a motion to become an affirming region by a majority vote.

Years in Ministry

Ministers with 25 or more years of Ordination were recognized and congratulated for their years of service. Our own Rev. Pamela Jones Fitzgerald was one of the ministers recognized for 25 years of ordination.

Workshops

Workshops focused on key topics for the church. Topics included: - Communion every Sunday - Helping our Community of Faith Grow and Prosper - Selling UC property - Unity in Diversity - Faithful Footprints Grant. The youth group planned and ran their own workshop. It was special to have youth involvement. Jonathan attended the Faithful Footprints session which presented the program offered through the Ecology Action Centre, which offers financial and also project management support for churches seeking to reduce their "ecological footprint" by switching to more efficient energy use in their buildings. This includes switching over from fossil-fuel furnaces to electric heating – a project that Gower has considered in the past few years. Although this idea has been shelved due to more pressing projects (i.e. renovation of the downstairs bathrooms) the heating system switch-over could be re-invigorated through this Faithful Footprints program. Ken Slaney attended the Unity in Diversity which spoke to the benefits of inclusion and becoming affirming in our communities of faith.

Submitted by: Ken Slaney and Jonathon Stevenson

YOUTH AT REGION



FIRST DAWN EASTERN EDGE CELEBRATES 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF ORDINATION OF THE REV. PAMELA JONES-FITZGERALD, MAY 3, 2025

25 is a large number within The United Church of Canada – after 25 years of ministry (and every 5 years thereafter) we celebrate ‘milestones in ministry’.

And, thus, it was that The Rev. Pamela Jones-Fitzgerald was honoured at a banquet (together with others celebrating up to 60 years of ordination) at First Dawn Eastern Edge Regional Council, meeting in Corner Brook, May 2 – 4, 2025.

I was privileged to be Pamela’s guest ‘at table’, joining with the designated seating of The Rev. Allan Hall, General Council representative, and Shreetee Devi Appadu, Ecology Action Centre, Halifax, NS.



After a well-served, delicious catered dinner at the Civic Centre, The Rev. Heather Sandford, FDEE Council Office, emcee’d the program, beginning with those celebrating their 60th anniversary of Ordination, including The Rev. Ralph Moores. We remembered Ralph in prayer because of his serious illness and were saddened to receive the news, two days later, that Ralph had died on Monday, May 6th (Interestingly, Ralph was baptized, confirmed, married and ordained at Gower Street United, with his funeral also at Gower, Saturday, May 10th.)

Pamela received her 25th Ordination Certificate and gift from The Rev. Amanda Barnes, Past President, FDEE Regional Council, who was a student at MUN when Pamela was MUN Chaplain.

Pamela’s ‘bio’, as contained in the Milestones in Ministry booklet reads as follows.

Pamela grew up in Torbay, NL and attended Holy Trinity, an all-grade school under the denominational school system while attending St. James United Church on Sundays with her family. Fully immersing herself in Roman Catholicism while attending school, her love of ecumenism was born at an early age. Upon completion of a Bachelor of Primary Education Degree at Memorial University in 1993, her call to ministry came as a Worship Volunteer during visits to Her Majesty’s Penitentiary.

Pamela graduated from the Atlantic School of Theology in 2000. She spent a year in London, Ontario serving at White Oaks United Church under the supervision of the Rev. Dr. Nancy Hardy.

Pamela was settled on a six-point pastoral charge in rural NL, where she spent two years. She then moved into a full-time chaplaincy position at Memorial University in November 2000. Her 15 years of work there culminated in the Spirituality Centre becoming a Multi-Faith Centre.

Pamela spent four years as Spiritual Director at Stella's Circle. Her work in outreach ministry there was life-changing. She spent a number of years as Minister of Visitation and also Lead Minister at St. James United.

Pamela has a certification of Pastoral Care and Counseling from the Clinical Association of Pastoral Education (CAPPE) with a recommendation to advanced level. She has experience working with people of all walks and ages of life both inside and outside of the church. She has extensive experience in program development, especially working with those who are on the margins of society as well as young adults and seniors.

She is a strong advocate of mental health wellness. Pamela is a liturgical and sacred circle dancer and has studied dance under the direction of Anna Douthwright, a pioneer of Liturgical Dance in Canada. Pamela loves sailing, fishing, motorcycling, gardening, baking, knitting and interior design. She sings with Stella's Circle Inclusion Choir. She lives in St. John's with her husband and three children; Sophie, Nathan and Julia and her dog, Max.

Pamela's call includes ministry to Bedford United Church, Bedford, Nova Scotia, St. Andrew's United Church, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Coverdale Court Work Services, Halifax, Nova Scotia, White Oaks United Church, London, Ontario, Hillview Pastoral Charge, (Hillview, St. Jones' Within, Hatchet Cove, Adeytown, North West Brook, Queen's Cove), Anglican/United Chaplain, Memorial University of Newfoundland, St. James United Church, St. John's, NL, Stella's Circle (Spiritual Director), Gower Street United Church, St. John's, NL.

Gower's official delegates to FDEE Regional Council are Jonathan Stevenson and Ken Slaney (in addition to Pamela and Rebecca Pike-Winter). Youth at Council 2025 also included: Naomi Addison, Sadie Butt, Jasmine Gill and Callie Zahariadis.

All of us from Gower joined in our congratulations and appreciation of Pamela with this photo.



Plans are for Gower Board and congregation, through the Ministry and Personnel Committee, to celebrate with Pamela at a later date. Here is my opportunity to record the First Dawn Eastern Edge Regional Council celebration of the 25th Ordination Anniversary of The Rev. Pamela Jones-Fitzgerald.

Marion
Marion Parry (The Very Rev. Dr.)
Ministry Personnel (Retired) Delegate, FDEE

CENNETNAIL CELEBRATIONS AT GOWER

Throughout May, we joined with communities of faith across the country to celebrate the 100th anniversary of The United Church of Canada—a century of shared worship, witness, and faithful service.

Here at Gower, our centennial celebrations brought us together in wonderful ways. From laughter and connection at our Games Night, hosted by the Gower UCW, to talent and creativity shared at the Coffee House; from the warmth and fellowship of our Centennial Banquet, featuring a moving and educational presentation by Rob Pitt, to the joy of music at the Gower Community Band Downtown Pops Concert – Music of the 70s, with the Stella’s Circle Inclusion Choir; from the spirit-filled Rainbow Melodies worship and social, held in partnership with Canadian Parents for French and Stella’s Circle, to the engaging Gower Service and Social Club dinner meeting with Judy Foote—each event reflected the spirit of our church family—past, present, and future.

We offer heartfelt thanks to all who made these celebrations possible—planners, performers, bakers, decorators, servers, and supporters of every kind. We gratefully acknowledge the generous support from The Centennial Granting Fund at The United Church of Canada Foundation, which helped bring these celebrations to life.

We have more events to come the fall, mark your calendars now!

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 26

WORSHIP AND WOMEN’S SUFFRAGE LUNCH AND LEARN AT 11:00 A.M.

OCTOBER 2025

**BOOK STUDY ON *HOW WE LEARN TO BE BRAVE: DECISIVE MOMENTS
IN LIFE AND FAITH* BY MARIANN EDGAR BUDDE**

If you know now you want to join the Book Study, please contact Rev. Pamela or Rev. Rebecca. We will be looking into group ordering books.

We share on these coming pages photos taken at some of the events over the past month. We extend our thanks to Ken Butt for the Banquet photos.



THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA
FOUNDATION



GAMES NIGHT

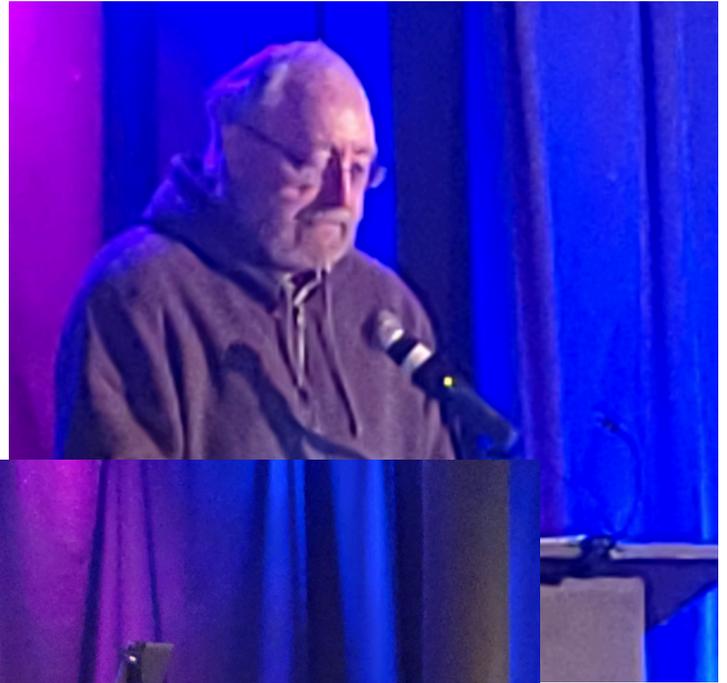


TRIVIA



BINGO

COFFEE HOUSE



Show
your
Talent



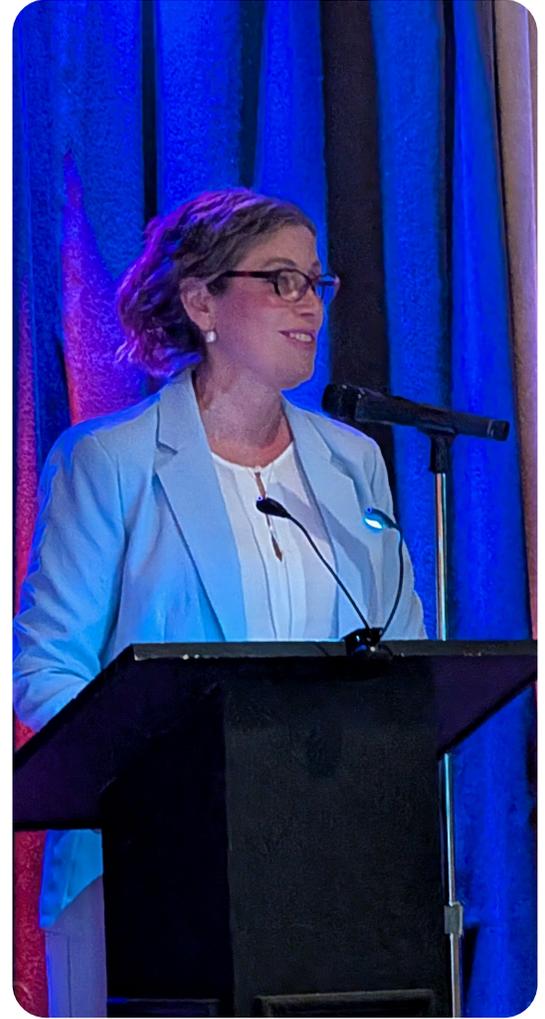
GCB POPS CONCERT



Stella's Circle



CENNENTIAL BANQUET



CENNENTIAL BANQUET



CENNENTIAL BANQUET



PYSANKY WORKSHOP

The Children, Education, and Families Committee hosted a Pysanky workshop again this year on Good Friday, April 18, 2025. We welcomed thirty people to the lecture hall to learn and create together. Pysanky means to write, in this case, the word refers to the writing on the eggs. Ukrainian Easter eggs often feature complex geometric and floral designs.

Again for this event this year, the committee partnered with artist Hanna Furs and the Ukrainian National Federation-Avalon.

We look forward to hopefully sharing more events together in the future.

