



New Aberdeen Neighbourhood Newsletter

The Historic "No. 2" Issue 7, Winter 2022

*Brought to you by the New Aberdeen Revitalization Society,
Warden United Church, and the Tompkins Institute (CBU)*



Warden United Church's New Aberdeen Neighbourhood Help Table

We meet once a month to try to support neighbours who might need help with some items, services, or connections.

If we can help, we will. If we can't, we'll try our best to connect you with someone who can.

Would you like to access our Neighbourhood Help Table? Call 902-849-6973 and leave a message on our confidential voicemail. Please leave your name, phone number, and a few details about the kind of help you need.

Want to offer help? We'll be looking for volunteers to provide donations and offer practical assistance. Send us an email: wardenunitedchurch@gmail.com.

Thank you to the CBU Tompkins Institute for sponsoring this issue of the newsletter. *The Tompkins Institute does demonstration projects in community development. For more information, please email tom_urbaniak@cbu.ca*

Are you able to sponsor a future issue? We would greatly appreciate your generosity. Please email Laurie: russ4@hotmail.com

Santa Claus is coming to town

Friday, December 16, starting at 5:00 pm at Warden United Church United Church, 44 Fifth St.



- *Games for all ages!*
- *Treats!*
- *Fun!*

Save the Date: #2 John Bernard Croak Days Summer Festival. August 17 to 19, 2023.

Plans are in the works for a three-day summer festival featuring a dance, barbeque, pancake breakfast, music, and games for all ages. Want more information? Want to help out? Call Frances MacDougall at 902-304-8009.

Neighbourhood Handyperson Project Continues

We have now helped a dozen residents with minor repairs and renovations to make their homes safer, warmer, or more accessible, at no charge. We've also helped several residents apply for grant opportunities or access other local projects – like help with food garden boxes.

This is a grassroots initiative. It's a partnership of Warden United Church, the Affordable Housing Renovation Partnership, and the Cape Breton Tompkins Affordable Housing Fund. We're not using public funds for this. It's about helping neighbours. We've worked with local contractors and tradespeople.

If you would like to enquire about a minor repair or renovation to make your home safer, warmer, or more accessible, please contact Rita at 902-539-0451 or ritamacdonald02@gmail.com



NEW FLOOR RECENTLY INSTALLED BY THE NEIGHBOURHOOD HANDYPERSON PROJECT

From Warden United Church

Proud to be the church in the No. 2!

It's always a delight to welcome friends and neighbours to our church for celebrations and activities, and we've been thrilled to be able to do that this fall. **Chair yoga** classes are up and running, Tuesdays at 10:00 am (starting up again in January). Our **youth group** has been having fun baking, playing games, doing crafts, and even Christmas Carolling. Meanwhile, we have installed a threshold ramp at our side entrance to make our building more accessible.

We'd love to celebrate Christmas with you! We'll have our annual Christmas Eve service on December 24 at 4:00 pm. Everyone is welcome to this special time of singing and celebration. We'll tell the story of Christmas and then we'll light candles and share some carols together. All ages are very welcome.

Check our Facebook page for updates on our various activities.
[facebook.com/wardenunitedchurch](https://www.facebook.com/wardenunitedchurch)

We want to wish the whole community a safe, peaceful, and joyful Christmas.

Rev. Alison Etter

902-849-6565

alisonlouissetter@gmail.com



Memories of Christmases Past

By Warna Fraser

'Tis the season to be Jolly and to remember Christmas days of old. When I was a child, I did not realize in the late 1940's and 50's that my family did not have much money. My favourite Christmas memories include my mother and the Christmas Catalogue. The excitement of Christmas began each year when the Sears Wish Book and the Eaton's Catalogues arrived at the door. Mum would take the time to sit down and look at the catalogues with us. She explained we were allowed to pick out three things we would like from Santa and to put them in the order of importance. She also explained to us in a loving voice, "Now you may not get everything you hope for because Santa has a lot of kids he needs to deliver gifts to, as well." After these discussions, the catalogues were all ours to delight in the pages of possibilities.

Christmas was something that extended beyond December as Mum would start her knitting in the summer months. Knitted gifts included mittens, scarf, and hats.



As November and December approached, she would change gears and begin her wonderful Christmas baking. When the first day of baking began, it was special. We would come home from school to a house full of beautiful smells consisting of fragrant spices in the air. It was fruit cake time! Oh what a delightful smell that would make our mouths water but, sadly, tasting would have to wait. My Dad would come home from work begging for a piece of dark fruit cake, which was his favourite. Dad would beg for days, something that happened every year, before Mum would relent and finally

give in. She would cut her sample cake, but the rest had to wait until Christmas. Mum would also make light fruit cake, gumdrop cake, and cherry cake.

Everything was so good! What a baker!



Decorations were hung the week before Christmas. One tradition in our house was to hang up our Christmas socks on Christmas Eve. They weren't fancy, not that many were in those days. Actually, they were pit socks bought special for Christmas time. Christmas Eve also included putting up the tree. It would go in the corner, but it would not be decorated. This job was for Santa and he would magically decorate it while we were tucked in our beds.

Christmas morning brought its own magic. We would awake to the smell of turkey cooking, the tree lit up with toys underneath. We didn't always get the three toys we wanted but our surprises were sometimes better. One particular year I had asked for a fancy doll, but I received a baby doll with clothes Mum made. However, I did get a special doll. It was a little Dutch doll that walked and, boy, was he beautiful. I did learn a lesson that Christmas and it was that it wasn't enough for something to simply be beautiful, it also had to be functional.

By 1PM, the veggies were cooked and dinner was ready to eat. Wrapped gifts from relatives and neighbours were opened after the dinner clean up. Why the wait? you might ask. These were special gifts from loved ones and they

needed to be treated as special to ensure we remembered who they came from.

It was then back to our toys. While we played, Mum would lay on the couch and fall asleep. I could not understand this until 1963 when I was the Mum so busy with all of the Christmas preparations.

Surely, Christmas was not only about Santa, the baking, cooking, and cleaning. Mum also made sure we celebrated the reason for Christmas: the birth of our saviour, Jesus Christ. During this time of year, the churches in town had special services. In my church, we had two special church services. I remember that in the 1950's and 60's, there were CGIT Groups for teenage girls at Knox, St. Paul's, Epworth, Newsom, United Baptist, and Warden Church. Each of these churches had CGIT groups and took turns hosting the CGIT Vesper Service. This service was always held on the second Sunday of Advent and all CGIT groups in Canada celebrated this Vesper service on the same night. It was always a memorable service where the Girls would wear middies and

parade in to their reserved seats. At the end of the service, the guests and CGIT girls would form a friendship circle around the church with candles. The lights were dimmed and the light of the candle was passed from one person to the next person while singing "Silent Night." Finally, we would end with "taps." What a moving service!

The Christmas Eve service at Warden always held a pageant including all the children of the church. It began with the Soloist singing "Once in Royal David's City" with the children filing in beginning with the Angel, Mary, Joseph, the Shepherds, the Kings, and the remaining children forming the choir. This was another service that had great meaning.

In the 1960's, I was the Mum preparing Christmas with all of the love and challenges that came with it. I tried to keep Christmas just like the way Mum did, but it was not always easy. I tried to follow her traditions as best I could.

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How to Make Dark Fruit Cake

Ingredients:

2 ½ cups flour
 ½ tsp salt
 1 tsp baking soda
 2 eggs slightly beaten
 3 cups mincemeat
 1 can of eagle brand milk
 1 cup mixed fruit
 ½ cup red cherries
 1 cup green cherries

Directions:

- Preheat oven to 325 F
- Mix 2 cups flour with salt and baking soda.
- Add beaten eggs, mincemeat and Eagle brand milk together.
- Add the egg mixture to the flour mixture. Stir.
- Stir in the mixed fruit and cut cherries.
- Grease the bottom of a bundt pan or round pan and pour the batter in.
- Cook at 325 F for 1 ½ hours.

[*Continued: Memories of Christmases Past by Warna Fraser*]

Part of my memories of the past include our wonderful neighbours on Fifth St. Across the street from our house lived Leonard Shaw, who sadly passed away in 1959. His wife, Sadie, and family, Joe, Tom, Lenny, Shelly, Mary and Ava Marie were left to mourn him. In 1960, Sadie and Leonard's second son Tommy took on the job of making a Nativity Scene to place in front of their house. It must have been a big job, but it was certainly a labour of love.

A large picture of the Nativity was placed on plywood and was cut out using a circular saw. This Nativity scene was intended to celebrate the Christian faith. God was so good, He came to be among us and to brighten the neighbourhood for all. To my knowledge, these would have been the first outdoor lights in Number 2. What made it really special was that it was made in memory of his Dad. People came from near and far to see the Nativity scene and it was a joyful time. It was the Shaw family's gift to the neighbourhood!

Over the years, Tommy added a star on the chimney, which was lit with a pit lamp. So, if one went out, they all went out. Tommy also bought an old amplifier from the Glace Bay Forum and hooked up a record player, which played Christmas songs from the bathroom. The music was added in 1964 or 65. I remember this well! I loved the music, but it prevented the kids from settling when it was time for them to go to bed. It was a big dilemma for me. I finally called Mrs. Shaw to ask her if she would turn down the music until the kids settled. She apologized in her own sweet way and she turned it off. I felt so badly. Once the kids went to sleep, I called her again and asked her to turn the music back on, however, she told me no. She did not want to

wake the children. I convinced her to turned it on and from then on, the music was turned off at 6:00PM and then turned back on at 6:30PM. She was such a wonderful, understanding lady, neighbour and friend.

Each year the Nativity scene was up until January 6, which some referred to as Little Christmas or Old Christmas. This was a gift of love from one family to our Neighbourhood.

I would like to thank Sister Mary Shaw for helping to jar my memory, and the Shaw family for always being good neighbours. God Bless!



A few photos from the Polish Heritage Colouring Contest Party hosted in New Aberdeen by Warden United Church, the Glace Bay Library, the CBU Tompkins Institute, and Cape Breton's Polish Community, November 26. It was a great day for all ages. Thanks to those who took part!

Photo credit: Beth Sheppard



We'd love to hear from you!

Please send ideas, notes, photos, articles, or any interesting facts for the **New Aberdeen Neighbourhood Newsletter** to wardenunitedchurch@gmail.com.

Or by mail to:

New Aberdeen Neighbourhood Newsletter, c/o Warden United Church, PO Box 401, Glace Bay NS B1A 4J3

Colouring Masterpieces!

Colouring from participants in the Colouring Contest Party, November 26, 2022. Participants received a copy of *The Polish Cape Bretoners Colouring Book* (provided by the CBU Tompkins Institute; sketches by Jeff Wilson) and a prize provided by the Glace Bay Library. More photos appear on page 7.

