

St John's United Church

Neighbourhood Newsletter

Issue No. 1
December 2008



Looking Forward to the Next Ninety Years on Windsor and Willow

Special points of interest:

- * In the New Year, St John's congregation will temporarily relocate to the Maritime Conservatory.
- * We are hoping to redevelop a smaller, "greener" church at the corner of Windsor and Willow, together with seniors' apartments.
- * We want to remain a positive presence in the neighbourhood.

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Proud of Our History, Excited About Our Future

St John's United Church was built in two stages in 1917 and 1920, and has been the church home for many people over the last 90 years.

Our congregation today is smaller, but still committed to trying "to live Christ's message of love, peace, compassion and justice, in harmony with the natural world".

Unfortunately our building is now too big, too drafty and in need of too many repairs. We are spending money on fuel oil that we would rather spend on community outreach.

After two years of study, discussion and reflection, our congregation has decided that we want to (a) stay together, and (b) have a revitalized

presence on the corner of Windsor and Willow.

Our vision is to redevelop the site to include a smaller church facility and a housing complex that will enable seniors to continue living independent lives in the community.

We are still in the planning stages; no final decisions have been taken. It is very important to us that we discuss our vision with our neighbours and ask you for your opinions and suggestions.



The Sanctuary was built in 1921 for 1200 people. Average Sunday attendance now is 175.

We Want To Hear From You — Neighbourhood Meetings in December

We hope you will be able to find a little time in this busy season to meet with us so we can answer some of your questions and hear your views and ideas.

All meetings in our hall on Willow St

Coffee and Conversation

Please join us after our Sunday morning service for coffee, muffins and informal discussion.

Sunday, December 7, 12 pm

Sunday, December 14, 12 pm

Design Charrettes

Workshops to address how a new building might fit into the neighbourhood. No experience required!

Saturday, December 13, 10-12 pm

Wednesday, December 17, 7-9 pm

Our Roots



The land at the corner of Windsor and Willow was originally purchased by St John's Presbyterian Church, to replace an aging building on Brunswick. Plans to start construction were delayed by the aftermath of the Halifax Explosion but in 1918 the new church was opened. But in those boom years of church attendance, it was already too small.

Almost unbelievably the congregation turned around and laid the cornerstone for an expansion. The original church became what is now our church hall and the new sanctuary and

bell tower opened just two years later in 1921. Unfortunately, post war challenges meant that inferior materials were used and some construction shortcuts were taken. This is one of the reasons why we have struggled to maintain the church.

In 1925 the Presbyterian, Methodist and Congregational churches joined forces to form the United Church of Canada.

Today we have a very active congregation of all ages. Our music program supports three choirs, a handbell

ensemble, and various instrumental groups. We are very active in social outreach, including a breakfast club for students at Oxford School. And we are proud to be an Affirming Church, welcoming people of all sexual orientations and gender identities.



Please Get In Touch

We really want to hear from you.

Drop us a line at stjohnsunity@hfx.eastlink.ca

Or call Reverend Linda Yates at 423-8498.

Learn more about us on our website www.stjohnsunity.com.

Five Questions

Is St John's going to sell the land?

No. We don't yet know how we will proceed to redevelop the property, but we will retain ownership.

What will HRM allow?

The land is currently zoned as R2 which allows low density residential uses up to four units. In order to develop seniors housing we will therefore need to negotiate a development agreement.

What is the timing?

We are moving out of the current building and into a temporary home at the Maritime Conservatory next month (January). We hope to be able to move back in to a new church facility by 2011.

Are you planning a tall building?

The existing church is equivalent to five storeys high. We may want to build something a little taller, but not a

skyscraper. But we are still at the earliest stages — no designs, no decisions. This is why we want to talk to the community

Seniors' Independent Living?

There is a real need for "enriched independent living" options for seniors, modestly sized and priced apartments with optional services such as laundry, some housekeeping, help with errands.

