St. Croix Presbytery

St. Croix Presbytery held five regular meetings during 2016. Executive meetings were held when necessary. Here are some highlights of the past year and some current projects:

The Maatouk family arrived as refugees from Syria at the end of 2015. All congregations within Presbytery did their part to make the family feel welcomed by generously donating furniture, household appliances, clothing, money, etc. - all things which are necessary to set up housekeeping. Others gave of their time and energy to make sure the rented house was cleaned, painted, repaired and made ready to welcome them after a long and tiring journey. Some of the older children obtained summer employment and the family sold food and embroidery at the local farmer's market during the summer. The eldest son worked at our local Canadian Tire store. Sadly, the family decided to move to Saint John in October, where they hope to find more employment, social services, and a Syrian community. We continue to assist the family from time to time.

Rev. Mark Hatfield retired from Kirk-McColl Church at the end of June, and Rev. Lesley Hamilton began her pastoral relationship with their congregation in July. She has become a very valuable addition to our Presbytery. Her covenanting service was held on September 11th with good attendance.

St. Croix Presbytery formally recognized Emma Hebb Seamone as a candidate for ordained ministry within the United Church of Canada. In October, she was hired by Presbytery to provide Youth and Family Ministry Activities. Emma has also been hired as a student minister to conduct worship services for our newly approved Learning Site which includes three churches: Bocabec, Upper Mills and St. Paul's United in McAdam.

The St. Croix Wellness and Renewal Centre just completed a very successful weekly Seniors Program with approximately 100 participants. Plans are in the works to try something similar again.

Our Worship Committee held three Presbytery Wide services in 2016. At the October Service we were privileged to have the Moderator, Rev. Jordan Cantwell, join us and deliver an inspiring sermon. She and David Hewitt, Conference Executive Secretary, joined Presbytery members for a delicious supper at the home of the Maatouk Family.

In March of 2017, Rev. Roger Janes, Conference Stewardship and Gifts Officer, visited St. Croix Presbytery and held sessions at three churches for those who were interested in learning about bequests to the church, investing in GICs, etc. Valuable information was provided.

Rev. Bob Johnson is currently undertaking a workshop on Church Growth with approximately 40 participants.

At the April meeting of Presbytery we were fortunate to have Rev. Catherine Stuart, President of Conference join us. She delivered an inspiring message, reminding us both to keep changing and growing spiritually, and to embrace who we are, even though we may be a small Presbytery.
We continue to educate ourselves concerning Truth and Reconciliation.

In conclusion, we must remember these words from an Avery/Marsh Hymn: *The Church is not a building, the Church is not a steeple, the Church is not a resting place, the Church is the people.*

Submitted by: B. Spires, Presbytery Secretary