

Summer Soul at St. Andrew's

To the Editor,

What is Summer Soul? Well, it's the ministry of the people of St. Andrew's United Church on the Old L'Amable Road.

When I arrived in the Bancroft - Carlow Pastoral Charge in July of 2012, I was given the handbook for disbanding a congregation. St. Andrew's had celebrated their last regular Sunday morning worship service in the fall of 2011. My job now was to 'disband' the congregation and do things like desecralize the building, see that another group would oversee the work of the cemetery board and disperse any resources to the courts of the wider church. In other words wipe our hands clean and walk away!

But I didn't want to do that. You see, there was still an active women's group and there was this absolutely beautiful building with its own spirit that I just couldn't see mothballing.

So I went to the congregation and asked them, 'Is your ministry done? Have you said and did everything that God has asked your ancestors and you to do?'

Their answer was, 'No!'

I then asked if they would give me a few years to try some things in the space that could be described as 'alternative.'

And they said, 'Yes!'

Since then we have pulled up the centre pews in order to have gatherings in the round. We have offered courses on walking and teaching the labyrinth under the leadership of Rev. Liz Inglis. We now possess an 18-foot labyrinth painted on canvas that we can use in that space. We have held a number of services of blessing the animals with Br. Allan Gaebel, a Franciscan Friar and a descendant of the original builder. We have had strawberry socials and a couple of old fashioned gospel hymn-sings.

We are just about on the threshold of another summer with its ripe fruits and easy ways. Summer Soul is well in the works.

Our first event will take place on June 22 at 7 p.m. We'll be having a Multi-Faith Summer Solstice Celebration considering one of the two following questions: 'Why I have chosen to embrace _____?' or '50 ways to love your giver.' We've invited Urpi Pine, Joey Shulman, Rory McRandall and Reverends Marilyn Zehr and Svinda Heinrichs.

Pine is a member of our Indigenous community. Shulman will speak about his Jewish faith, Rory is Ba'hai and Marilyn and Svinda are part of the Wild Church Network.

Join us and your soul will be inspired.

Rev. Lynn Watson