

Through the windows of St. Paul's

By Chris Drost

On the morning of Nov. 13, on the steps of St. Paul's United Church, reverend Lynn Watson launched the sale of a new calendar, "Through the Windows of St. Paul's" just as the annual Christmas bazaar got underway. Individual cards depicting the windows in the church will also be available for purchase.

What started out as a booklet depicting 14 stained-glass windows in St. Paul's United Church in Bancroft, turned into a labour of love for reverend Lynn Watson. Watson had planned to include both a spiritual reflection and a brief biography of the individuals for whom the windows pay tribute, but then decided, at least for now, that a calendar would be a better idea. The task of connecting so many people and putting so many pieces together was too much to complete during Watson's recent sabbatical, although she says "don't write the book idea off, because I think it is important to record the stories before they are lost."

With St. Paul's facing financial challenges, Watson intends the calendar to be a fundraiser for the church. At the moment she estimates that only about 25 per cent of the congregation are back attending in-church services on Sundays.

Watson worked diligently to complete the pencil sketches of the windows, finally completing them this year. With the help of Hannah Lithographers, each page of the calendar includes a different window, along with Watson's reflection on it. She shares information about the individuals and families who dedicated the windows and has chosen a complementary scripture to go along with each.

"Some were really hard to find out about," says Watson. The window for the month of February, entitled "The Good Shepherd," is dedicated to the memory of Kay and Ralph Walker. "Unfortunately, I have been unable to track down anyone who knew the Walkers, or can share information about them," says Watson.

The window for the month of June on the other hand, is one for which Watson was able to find out a great deal. "This is one of three windows dedicated to members of the Davy family. William Davy was the architect and builder of St. Paul's, and his skills were enlisted in the late 1890s while he was only in his twenties. His family members have a long heritage of support and care for this community. Of note for me is the late, Don Davy, who was my dear friend, and who I miss every week. What I wouldn't do to have him visit my office again and tell me where he put the keys," says Watson in her reflections on this window.

Throughout the calendar, Watson is able to offer her own personal connection to the context of the windows, what they mean to her from a spiritual perspective. She has sprinkled light-hearted anecdotes throughout the calendar, often relating the content of the windows back to her own personal experiences in her role with the church.

Although not yet confirmed, Watson is hoping to feature a different window each Sunday and invite the family members of those to whom the windows were dedicated. "I would also like to present them with an original sketch of the window," says Watson.

For those who have not had an opportunity to view the windows, Watson says "there is nothing more powerful than St. Paul's at night when the lights are on. The windows shining out into the darkness, especially in the winter nights. There's a welcome and goodness in the windows. It's my prayer that this calendar highlights the goodness and welcome of this historic building which is a landmark—a beacon on the hill."

The calendars are now on sale for \$20 and individual cards can be purchased for \$2 through the church.