



St. Paul's Weekly Update – October 21, 2021

Minister's Ponderings:

I am sitting in my study here at the church. It has been awhile. There are children's voices and little feet hitting the floor above me. Slowly, each week more of our committees and groups are starting to come back. It feels like old times, yet strange at the same time. I remind myself that once again we are transitioning.

This pandemic has taught me a lot about transitioning. It has pushed me to be open to new ways of doing things even if I am "grrrring" under my breath. Some of the new things I have learned (like the new computer - once I get used to it), I actually appreciate. I didn't feel that way at first. I was pushing back against having to learn so many things. I missed seeing people but found ways to connect in different ways. I have come to value and appreciate the people, including you, who are in my life. For that I am grateful. Jesus had a way of being in the midst of whatever was going on and finding ways to be true to himself and God. He models that for me. When the crowds overwhelmed him, he stretched his compassion. When life overwhelmed him, he took time to be alone to pray. He laughed and struggled with his followers and was genuine. That is the one I seek to follow. When I make mistakes and am not my best, I have to learn humility and reach out to begin again. Walking the path of Christ, no matter what comes my way, that is part of the faith journey.

Worship:

Welcome back! This Sunday is our first official in-person worship service in 81 weeks since the church building was closed due to the pandemic. We are so excited that some people are able to come back. We have arranged for a piper to pipe you in and remind us that we have something to celebrate. We are aware that it will not be quite the same, but together we will work to create a new normal and a sense of oneness and community for both our in-person and our on-line worshippers. The presence and spirit of God is with us wherever, however, we worship together.

Please note that you are no longer able to join us online for worship before **10.00 a.m.** This means that if you come in between 10:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m., you will join us midway through the livestreamed service. At 11:00 a.m., we need to upload the service so it may not be available until after 12:00 noon. It takes about an hour to upload it, then you can **watch it anytime** on our St. Paul's Midland YouTube channel.

St. Paul's policy requires that all eligible congregants, volunteers, user groups and visitors be fully vaccinated against Covid-19 before entering the building. Those who wish to claim a Human Rights-Code exemption (such as a medical exemption), should notify the office of their accommodation request and guidance will be provided about how to proceed. Children not eligible for vaccination are welcome to attend!

Everyone who plans to return to in-person worship will need to pre-register each week by phone with Louise Therrien through the church office by calling 705-526-1640 between **Tuesday and Thursday** prior to the Sunday service you wish to attend. For now, we are limiting participation to 40 people. When you call, Louise will ask you to voluntarily disclose your vaccination status and answer some health screening questions before putting you on the registration list.

I invite you to join us each week for worship. Visit our website at www.stpaulsmidland.org and use the direct YouTube link at the top of the page, or simply go to YouTube and subscribe to our channel. Just type in "St. Paul's Midland" and you will find us. If you are on Facebook, you can get St. Paul's updates that way as well.

Congregational News/Updates:

CALLING ALL GARDENERS: Can you help? We need to find more foster parents for our coleus cuttings over the winter. While indoors for the winter, the cuttings require bright, indirect light and enough water to keep the soil evenly moist (you can talk to them too which will make both of you happier!). For those of you registered to attend church on Sunday, Oct. 24th, you'll have an opportunity to pick up a pot (or two) and care instructions. We simply ask that you register your name before you leave so we'll know who has plants to return in May 2022. If you won't be in church on Sunday and are interested in fostering a plant or two, Carol MacDonald can deliver. Please call her at 705-828-2158 to make arrangements.

Food and Fellowship dinner: Thank you to everyone who purchased Ham and Scalloped Potatoes dinners in support of the work of St. Paul's. **We are sold out!** For those of you who will be paying at the door next Wednesday, please make sure you have the correct change available (\$20 per meal). You will receive a call from one of the organizers about your pick-up time.

WOMEN'S GRIEF SUPPORT GROUP meets Tuesday, October 26th at 2:30 p.m. in the Parlour. Please contact Colleen at 705-427-9630 or cgareau02@gmail.com to confirm your attendance and to complete the COVID screening questionnaire. Thank you!

Volunteers Needed: We are looking for volunteers to assist us in the ongoing work and ministry of the church. On Sundays, for those who can to join us for in-person worship, we are looking for the following:

- **Readers** of the Scriptures/Prayers of the People: Please call Julianna Shaw 705-534-7082
- **Ushers:** Please call Sheila Thompson 705-526-2186
- **Counters:** Please call Ria Gerritsen 705-730-4238
- **Drivers:** A number of our "At Home Faithfuls" have asked if we might assist them to find a volunteer to pick them up and drive them to and from church. They would really like to be part of worship. We work hard to arrange drivers who live close to them and can pick

them up on their way to church. Please consider this important ministry. Please call Sheila Thompson 705-526-2186 if you can assist.

The UWC would like to thank everyone who baked and purchased pies for the pie sale on October 19th. You helped us to make it another successful fundraising event!

The UCW are doing a Christmas Goodie box sale again this year. They are looking for donations of squares and cookies – squares need to be on parchment paper and uncut. Please call Barb Carswell with your donations, which are due on Thursday December 9th by 10:00 a.m. For those of you who want to place orders for a Christmas goodie box at a cost of \$15, please contact Barb at 705-526-5957.

St. Paul's Zoom Coffee Hour – please note change in time:

Our next ZOOM Coffee Hour is **this Sunday October 24th.** Due to in-person worship starting this Sunday, we will be **changing the coffee hour to 1:00 p.m. from this point forward.** We invite you all to join. You can use the same link as before, which is <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89969004401>



Men's Breakfast Gathering:

Our next men's breakfast group via Zoom will be on Saturday October 30th at 9:30 a.m. The Zoom link is included below. Gather with the guys while having your coffee or breakfast at home. All men are welcome to join.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83289106842?pwd=Y2RvRjg5WTkyR2gwVWxGQ0cwQlFWZz09>

Meeting ID: 832 8910 6842

Passcode: 354660

This Week's Minute for Mission:

GOD'S MISSION
OUR GIFTS

The Association of Strong Women Alone made all the difference for Maina.



Maina Bai can now read and write and is empowering others to become literate.

Maina Bai's mother died when she was a baby and Maina never went to school. When she was just 10 years old, her father married her off to an older man. By 16, she had a child. A few years after the birth of her daughter, her husband died. When she returned to her maternal home, Maina was married off—again. After a few years of marriage, Maina became a widow again. Single, she faced extraordinary stigma.

Approximately 2.18 million single women like Maina live in the state of Rajasthan, India. Whether they are widowed, divorced, or have never been married, these women are deemed "incomplete" and a disgrace to their families. As a result, many live lives marked by stigma, fear, and violence—simply for not being married.

In 1986, The United Church of Canada partnered with Astha Sansthan, an organization that empowers marginalized individuals to advocate for their needs. In 1999, Astha Sansthan launched the Association of Strong Women Alone (ASWA), which your Mission & Service gifts support. Immediately, 450 single women joined. Today, there are more than 70,000 members.

ASWA's approach is simple: Create a safe space for single women to come together and get the knowledge and skills necessary to improve their lives.

The association has made all the difference for Maina. She can now read and write and is empowering other women to become literate. Because of her leadership, 35 women have enrolled in adult learning. All of them now have grade eight certificates. What's more, the generational cycle of illiteracy has been broken. Maina's daughter can not only read and write but is also teaching others to do the same.

Your *[Mission & Service](#)* gifts empower women like Maina to be agents of change within their communities. Thank you for your generosity.

Blessings everyone. Till next week. Karen

Rev. Karen Ptolemy-Stam, Minister, St. Paul's United Church

minspucmidland@gmail.com 705-433-1224

Church Administrator – Louise Therrien 705-526-1640 stpaulsunited@rogers.com