

# St. Paul's Weekly Update – Nov. 11, 2021



## Minister's Ponderings:

Today, November 11<sup>th</sup> is Remembrance Day. It is a day to remember the cost of war and lives sacrificed. It is a day to remember the importance of working for peace "lest we forget" and for those who went before us. I invite you, if you have not done so already, to watch last week's Remembrance Day Service. It is part of a long tradition at St. Paul's to stand with our faith community to not only remember but to renew our commitment to walk the path of peace. It includes a video, "Highway of Heroes" that many found to be very touching as Canadians showed respect to the grieving families who lost loved ones in the Afghanistan war, Canada's longest running war in our history. Today of all days, let us wear our poppies, and long after they have been put away, may we continue to remember.



## Worship:

Last Sunday, as we alerted the congregation, we had a technical glitch with the cameras. Although they were working, they were not connecting to our system to allow us to record or broadcast the service through the internet. Glenn is working on it. We are grateful that we can use our new camera that was purchased through the generous donations given to our Memorial Fund.



The feedback that we are receiving from those who are attending in-person worship is that people feel very safe. We are all wearing masks, socially distancing and are quite separated from one another in the pews. We have not yet reached the number we can accommodate and if we do, there will be additional spaces in the balcony. If you are wondering about coming back, I invite you to come out for a service and see for yourself. You just need to pre-register every week. That way we have your name on a list and you are checked in quickly. Below is further information on this process.

**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!

As announced previously, you can now **pre-register simply by emailing that you're planning to attend and the number in your party to [stpaulsunited@rogers.com](mailto:stpaulsunited@rogers.com) or you can call Louise Therrien at 705- 526-1640, by Thursday afternoon.** Please review the health self

assessment questionnaire that is attached to this update so that you are prepared for the ushers to ask about your current health status and if you are feeling well. You will then only need to sign in, attesting to your vaccination status and your good health. **PLEASE NOTE:** The process will be changing next week, so please review the Transition Steering Team update below.

Visit our website at [www.stpaulsmidland.org](http://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.

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

Our next ZOOM Coffee Hour is this **Sunday November 14<sup>th</sup> at 1:00 p.m.** We invite you all to join. You can use the same link as before: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89969004401>



## Foodgrains Campaign:

Our Canadian Foodgrains Campaign continues until **November 30<sup>th</sup>**. **So far, we have raised \$5,920** through your generous donations. Every dollar you donate will be matched by St. Paul's Special Project Fund, up to a maximum of \$2,500. As well, the Canadian Government matches our donation 4:1. Please make your **cheques payable to St. Paul's United Church**. **You can also donate via e-transfer.** Thank you for your support in helping to reduce world hunger.



## Transition Steering Team (TST) Update

The TST met on Tuesday November 9, 2021, to review progress in reopening our sanctuary to in-person church services. We have been welcoming approximately 40 people per Sunday to in-person worship over the past three weeks.

Those who have been attending have been asked to pre-register by email or phone by Thursday afternoon. After arriving at the church Sunday morning before 10 AM, participants are **asked about their current health and then sign in, attesting to their full vaccination status**. After hand sanitizing and wearing masks, they are ushered into the sanctuary and seated at a six feet distance from other worshippers. Singing is not allowed. Everyone is requested to remain their assigned seats which are physically distanced from their neighbours. At the end of the service, ushers escort people out, maintaining the required distance.

The TST reviewed our recent attendance numbers, noting that we have room for significantly more worshippers while maintaining the six feet distance. We also reviewed Covid-19 numbers for Ontario and our own Health Unit and noted that the numbers are steadily climbing again. We also learned of at least two church outbreaks within our Health Unit – all these suggesting that our conservative approach to reopening remains the sensible course.

We did decide to make two significant changes in our reception for worshippers, **beginning the week of Sunday November 21. Beginning that Sunday, pre-registration will not be**

**required; however, proof of vaccination must be shown at the door for entry and one member of the party will complete contact information for those attending with them. Masking, physical distancing and hand sanitizing will still be required and singing will not resume.**

The TST is pleased to report that the **Faith Formation Committee** has developed an excellent plan for the resumption of Discovery Kids later this month, with well thought-out safety protocols. The plan will allow both in-person and zoom programming according to a schedule they have developed.

**Victoria and Karen** reported on exciting plans for the Christmas season, including resumption of in-person Communion on the first Sunday of Advent.

Our Custodian, Sonya, returns to work on Monday November 21 from 10 am – 1pm – Mondays through Thursdays. We are very happy for her return, none happier than Bruce Wilcox who has been doing much of the cleaning himself as well as organizing volunteers to assist with some tasks. **Welcome back, Sonya; and thank you, Bruce!**

## **Congregational News/Updates:**

**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 join us for in-person worship, we are looking for the following:

- **Readers** of the Scriptures/Prayers of the People: Please call Julianna Shaw at 705-534-7082
  - **Ushers:** Please call Sheila Thompson 705-526-2186
  - **Drivers:** We now have almost 20 “At Home Faithfuls” who 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. Unfortunately, we have had very few people volunteer to drive. We will 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.
  - **Prayer Shawl Ministry:** Thank you to everyone who makes Prayer Shawls on behalf of St. Paul's. We appreciate your work. Without you, many people would not have a tangible cloak of God to surround them in time of need. This Ministry was started by Karen in 2014 and exists using donated yarn from our congregants and friends of St. Paul's. The supply of shawls at the church is getting low and donations are welcome. If you are interested in knitting or crocheting, the size for these shawls is 24" X 60". Please contact Cathy Metzgar at 705-527-5784 if you have any questions.
- The Salvation Army's** kettle campaign is starting up and they're looking for volunteers to help for two-hour shifts, indoors or outdoors. If you can help, please call their office directly at 705-526-5683 to arrange.

## **This Week's Minute for Mission:**

**GOD'S MISSION  
OUR GIFTS**



Obaida was on his way to the store when he was arrested.

Military violence exposes children to unimaginable brutality.

"I was on my way to the store when they arrested me," Obaida, a Palestinian child from Al-Aroub refugee camp, says to the camera. "When they took me for interrogation, they bound my hands in plastic cords. They used two of them so that I couldn't move my hands at all. My eyes were covered in a thick blindfold that also covered my nose and made it hard to breathe." He is talking about the first time he was detained by Israeli military forces. Obaida was only 14.

Palestinians in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip have lived under Israeli occupation since 1967. Anyone—including children—can be arrested without a warrant if there is suspicion that a "security offence" has been committed.

According to The United Church of Canada's mission partner Defense for Children International-Palestine (DCIP), Israeli forces detain and prosecute around 700 Palestinian children every year. Thirteen thousand Palestinian children have been detained by Israeli forces and held in military detention facilities since 2000. Israel is the only country in the world that routinely convicts children in military courts—which are known to lack fair trial guarantees. On May 17, 2021, just a month shy of his 18th birthday, Obaida was tragically killed. He was one of the 67 children who were killed by Israeli forces during an 11-day military assault on the Gaza Strip.

Palestinian children, like all children, deserve a childhood that is free of violence. Your Mission & Service gifts support DCIP in defending and promoting the rights of children living in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip.

Thank you for helping to provide a safe and just future for all children.

Blessings everyone. Till next week. Karen

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

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