

Minister's Ponderings:

So much can happen in one day. You wake up thinking the day will be "same old, same old" and then, something happens that you weren't expecting and life takes a twist. Just Tuesday night, Zena Pendlebury informed the Official Board that there were no updates on our refugee sponsorships. The next morning, as you will read further below, there was news about our family that has fled Afghanistan. Then less than a half hour later we learned that our other family who fled Syria and are refugees in Turkey, have also been cleared. We await news on arrival dates for both families. The Syrian family is the sponsorship that we are assisting St. Mark's Anglican/Lutheran Church with. There is a lot in place for that already. The second sponsorship, we were told, might take years but it may now be sooner. This week I ask for your prayers not only for our two families but for refugees all over the world. The Refugee Committee under Zena's leadership will provide updates in the weekly updates as we hear more news.

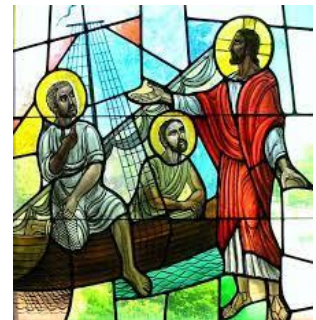
Worship:



This Sunday we are celebrating communion. I invite you to have a piece of bread or cracker ready as well as a beverage for the worship service. It can be grape juice, orange juice, coffee, tea. Then, we can partake together in the Lord's Supper. The scripture reading is Jesus calling Simon (Peter), James and John. It invites us to ponder how God is calling us. Please let others know about the

service and come join us.

To worship with us, 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. Check us out on both our new website and FaceBook.



Official Board Report:

The Official Board met on February 1, at 7:00 pm by Zoom, with excellent attendance from the members. Our main focus was preparations for the **Annual General Meeting which we have called for Sunday, February 27th at 1:00 pm, during the regular coffee hour.** This meeting will be held by Zoom. Those who do not have the technology to participate will be provided with the Annual Report, the Agenda and paper voting materials in advance. Members on Zoom will be reminded how to vote electronically as we did in June 2021.

The Board reviewed and approved for presentation to the congregation the Nominations Report for 2022, 2021 Financial Statements, 2021 Trustees' Financial Statements and the proposed 2022 Budget for St. Paul's.

Please mark your calendars and join us on Sunday February 27 at 1:00 pm. Your Annual Report and the meeting agenda will be available to you the week before the meeting. We encourage you to read the whole annual report carefully – much has happened this past year, even though the church building was closed much of the time. You will be amazed and encouraged by the continuing ministry of St. Paul's United Church Midland!

Update from our Refugee Committee:

Good news from the Refugee committee! We were just informed yesterday that following interviews by Canadian Embassy staff, the three applications to sponsor an Afghani family of six for settlement in Canada have been approved. The next steps will be medicals, further security screening and visas. We are very excited with the news and hope our family will be able to travel to Canada in the near future. Our Syrian family have also been approved and we await more information on their arrival.

Zena Pendlebury, Chair of the Refugee Committee.

St. Paul's Zoom Coffee Hour:

The next ZOOM Coffee Hour will be on **Sunday February 13, 2022, at 1:00 p.m.** We invite you all to join. You can use the same link as before:

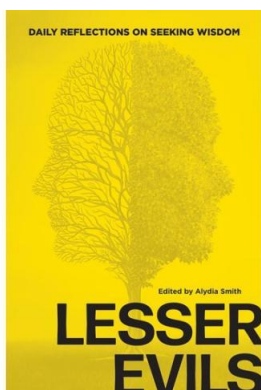
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89969004401>



This Week's Minute for Mission:

**GOD'S MISSION
OUR GIFTS**

"This book is about being faithful while wrestling
with what's best."



Have you ever had to make a decision knowing that all the choices in front of you felt wrong somehow - as if you were caught between a rock and a hard place? Regardless of how righteous we might feel about our decisions, we choose evils every day, hoping that we are choosing the lesser ones.

The United Church's Lenten book and study guide *Lesser Evils*, published by United Church Publishing House, explores

everyday dilemmas of seeking the good while choosing the lesser evil from a Christian perspective. This collection of devotions challenges all followers of Jesus to faithfully attempt to do and seek good in our actions and choices.

"We confront dilemmas every day: Do I wear this mask? Do we close in-person gatherings? Do I take this parking space? People are trying to work for good. There are a lot of holier than thou judgements going on these days. We wanted to write about making tough decisions. What's hopeful about this book is the faithfulness of the struggle," says editor Alydia Smith.

Your generosity through [Mission & Service](#) helps deepen faith by lowering the cost of important faith resources such as *Lesser Evils* and the accompanying book study webinar. Hosted online through [United In Learning](#) (<https://united-in-learning.com/index.php/webinars/426-lesser-evils-lenten-study>), the study runs every Tuesday at 1 pm ET from March 8 to April 12, 2022.

"What does it mean to be Christian in this time when we don't always feel good about the many choices before us?" says Smith. "When systems are broken and we are in those systems, how do we deal with it? [Lesser Evils](#) is really for all of us coping with uncertainty. This book is about being faithful while wrestling with what's best."

Blessings everyone,

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