

Minister's Ponderings

This past week has been another one of those weeks where I have had such a heavy heart. We have just come off the heels of the occupation of Ottawa, which pales in significance to the Russian invasion of Ukraine, a sovereign nation. With the 40 km long convoy of Russians soldiers and weapons snaking its way across the countryside, I cannot begin to imagine the fear of the people. Seeing citizens fleeing with their children and elderly, while their men and boys and some women too, stay behind to fight a David vs. Goliath war, breaks the heart. The courage and determination of the Ukrainian people is a powerful symbol of hope. So too, are the Russian people in the thousands who have come out to protest their own government. Unlike Canada, for those people arrest means not only fines, but often beatings and imprisonment.

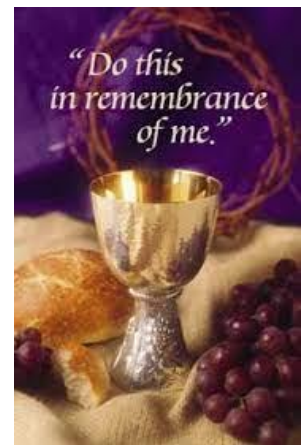
Nations around the world have responded with resources and sanctions as we try to work together for peace. Sanctions will hurt the poorest of the poor in Russia, but it is an attempt to target Putin and the Russian leadership that directs this invasion. The sanctions will be felt here too – a small price to pay for Canadians.

I invite you to say this prayer for the Ukraine/Russian situation. It is written by the Moderator of the United Church of Canada, Richard Bott

God of all Creation, God of the heights and the depths, and everything in-between,
God of this blue-green bauble, spinning in space,
a place of such wondrous creatures, and abundant life...
we are praying for a miracle,
one of the smallest of changes, one that would have immense consequence.
As people around the world seek the end of the war that Russia has perpetrated on Ukraine,
seek to end the death, seek to make a peace,
what I am praying for is a change of mind, a change of heart, a change of worldview,
in the Russian leadership, who brought this into being.
Help them, God of all hope, to see that this is the chance to step back from the war,
to pull back the escalation, to let go of whatever it is that made them choose the path that has led to the
chaos, the destruction, the death, in Ukraine.
We need a miracle that will help them to not only pull back, their forces to within their borders,
their rhetoric of nuclear option; but to be part of the rebuilding of the nation they sought to overtake...in the
midst of the grief and tears and anger and rage, of the parents and grandparents, of the siblings and children,
of the friends and neighbours, of those who have been killed in this act of aggression.
Help us to bring this to an end, God, one that will allow the sunflowers of Ukraine
to reach their growth, sprouting in the soil of peace, under a hope-filled sky.
Help us to make that miracle, God, for it is truly needed.
In Christ's name, in the Spirit's power, in the Creator's love, I pray. Amen.

Worship

This Sunday, March 6th, is the beginning of Lent and it is a Communion Sunday. Journey with us through this time for the next six weeks. This week, please have bread or a cracker and juice/beverage available to partake in the Lord's Supper. 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.



World Day of Prayer



World Day of Prayer will take place **this Friday March 4th** at 2:00 p.m. in person at Midland Alliance Church, 829 Yonge Street in Midland with COVID protocols in place. It will also be available on-line at <https://machurch.ca>. Guest speaker will be Lois Belsey, a retired Missionary.

Faith Formation and Discovery Kids news

Great news! The Discovery Kids will be starting back in person on Sunday, March 13th in the Room of Requirement in the church. We're excited to have them join us.

The Bible Study group is starting up again on Tuesday, March 8th at 1:00 p.m. All are welcome. Let Karen know if you plan to attend. Her phone number and email are at the close of this newsletter. The Theological Studies Group is continuing to meet by Zoom.

Congregational Life **Easter Sunday:** The Congregational Life Committee is once again inviting folks who reside in our Personal Care Homes and Seniors' Residences to register for transportation to and from Sunday services. Dates will be March 13th through April 17th. Please call Colleen at 705-427-9630 by noon on Friday March 11th to register for the first Sunday. Looking forward to seeing many of you back in person!

Congregational Life will be hosting a **bowling event** on Friday, March 25, from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. at Knight Haven Bowling Lanes in Penetanguishene. All ages are invited. There will be no cost for the bowling or for the shoes and refreshments will be available for you to purchase. Masks will be required and there will be no vaccination checks. For further information or to sign up, please contact Sheila Thompson at 705-526-2186 or by e-mail at rmsmt@rogers.com.

Broadview subscriptions: Just a reminder to those of you who wish to continue your Broadview subscriptions, please let Louise know by March 15th if you wish to renew your subscription for another year. **If so, we need a cheque from you in the amount of \$25.00, no later than March 15th. Please make your cheque payable to St. Paul's United Church.** If you prefer, you can also pay by e-transfer.

St. Paul's Refugee Campaign

As we watch with disbelief a war waging in the Ukraine and over 600,000 being displaced in under one week fleeing the bombs, we appreciate the greater need that exists to welcome refugees. Our faith calls us to respond and through this ministry, we try to answer this call.

Our Lenten Project for this year is our St. Paul's Refugee Campaign, to raise funds for our work with refugees. As you know, we are working with St. Mark's Anglican/Lutheran Church to sponsor a family from Syria who just last week arrived here in Canada. We are also working with a local Afghani family in co-sponsoring six members of their family who have fled Afghanistan and are now waiting to be approved by the government of Canada to resettle here. With the invasion of Ukraine, we know that there are now many more refugees who have fled their homes and we have no idea if they will be able to safely return to their own country or not.

To donate to our Refugee fund, please make your cheque payable to St. Paul's United Church and clearly mark on the memo line of the cheque that is for the Refugee Fund. If you are making an e-transfer or donation online through our website, then please indicate that it is for this fund. Thank you.

St. Paul's Zoom Coffee Hour:

The next ZOOM Coffee Hour will be **Sunday March 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>



Save the Date – March 20th:

In recognition of World Water Day, the United Churches of North Simcoe Rural Cluster are sponsoring a Zoom educational event on Sunday, March 20th at 7:00 p.m. It is called "Save our Water". More information to come next week.

Blessings everyone,

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