

Minister's Ponderings

We continue to walk this Lenten Road and this year has been particularly difficult with war and suffering on the news. Yet, I hope that there have been opportunities for you to reflect on your own faith journey. Where have you found God these past few weeks? What has sustained you and kept you going? What is getting you down? How do you open yourself to the gift of the Holy Spirit to find courage and inner peace to live each day, facing whatever comes and holding onto hope? May you find God's strength and love as we take each day at a time

<u>Worship</u>

As part of our Lenten Refugee campaign, this Sunday we have invited Kaw Khee Lar and Lah Eh Shee to share their story of being refugees and then coming to Canada. They were the first Karen family St. Paul's sponsored to come to Canada. The Karen community was persecuted in their own country. They escaped Burma, now Myanmar and lived in a refugee camp for many years before having a chance at a new life. The congregation assisted them and Lah Eh Shee's siblings and mother-in-law, bringing a total of 13 members of this family to Canada. They are members of our congregation and will share their journey with us on Sunday.



To worship with us on-line, visit our website at <u>www.stpaulsmidland.org</u> 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. We start livestreaming at 10:00 a.m. every Sunday.

Congregational Life

Our condolences go out to Doreen and Ken Gunson, on the passing of Doreen's nephew, who was like a brother to her. Please keep this family in your thoughts and prayers.



St. Paul's Zoom Coffee Hour

The next ZOOM Coffee Hour will be **Sunday April 10, 2022 at 1:00 p.m.** We invite you all to join. You can use the same link as before:

Faith Formation and Discovery Kids news

The **Discovery Kids Program** is going **back to Zoom** gatherings every Sunday at 9:30 a.m. until further notice. They will not be meeting in person. Due to a significant increase of COVID

cases in the schools affecting many families, this decision has been made for the safety of our children and our faith family.

Transition Steering Team Update

The Transition Steering Team (TST) met by zoom on March 29, 2022. We reviewed feedback from the congregation **about our current practices re Covid-19** and decided to **maintain them until May 3, 2022** when we will have information about case counts two weeks following Easter.

Our current practices, for St. Paul's services and activities within our property, include:

- Wearing masks when in the building
- Requesting those who enter be vaccinated
- Sanitizing hands on entry
- Maintaining six feet of distance (seating in designated areas in the sanctuary)
- Refraining from congregational singing (but humming along is ok)
- Solos, duets, trios or quartets may provide live singing during services, but choral singing will not return yet
- Coffee hours by zoom only
- Wiping down surfaces in bathrooms and meeting rooms after use
 Note: Participants in St. Paul's activities which are held offsite are encouraged to wear masks when close contact is likely; however, they may choose not to do so if the site permits removing masks

Our Current Expectations of Outside User Groups

• Outside user groups are required to follow Public Health Guidelines or the guidelines of their own governing bodies while in our building

Reviewing our Current Policies/Practices and Latest Covid-19 Data

Our timeline for further review and potential changes will come at our May 3 TST meeting, after which we will again report to you.

Please feel free to comment at any time to members of the team about your perspectives on timelines and conditions for changes. We are very interested in your thoughts.

Louise Leck, Chair TST

St. Paul's Refugee Campaign

As mentioned in previous updates, our **Lenten Project** this year is our St. Paul's Refugee Campaign, to raise funds for our work with refugees.



Through your generous donations, we have raised \$10,045 so far towards this campaign. Great work St. Paul's!! 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.

This Week's Minute for Mission:

GOD'S MISSION OURGIFTS



Acting Together for Ukraine

We are stronger together and what affects one of us affects all of us. These two truths have become even more apparent as the invasion of Ukraine continues to cost precious lives and rapidly create a humanitarian crisis. The United Nations reports that millions of people living in the Ukraine, displaced from their homes, are seeking refuge in neighbouring countries. Many have lost friends, loved ones, and property; struggle to meet their basic needs; and face an uncertain future. In the face of this growing crisis, communities of faith around the world are taking action to offer support.

Spanning 127 countries, the Action by Churches Together (ACT) Alliance is the world's largest network of Protestant and Orthodox churches and agencies, including the United Church. Your generosity through Mission & Service has long supported ACT's humanitarian relief and advocacy efforts.

Right now, your ongoing support through Mission & Service as well as special emergency gifts are helping to provide shelter, clean water, food, and medical attention. What's more, the impacts of war in Ukraine are affecting food security for regions that depend on its agricultural production, including in some areas where global partners are responding.

The *New Humanitarian* news site reports that Yemen imports half of its wheat from Ukraine and Russia, 22 percent of corn imported to Spain comes from Ukraine, and Lebanon relies on Ukraine for up to 60 percent of its wheat and has only about a month's worth of reserves. "Conflict is one of the main reasons that hunger is rising in the world, and Ukraine represents a stark example of how that happens," states Musu Taylor-Lewis, Canadian Foodgrains Bank director of resources and public engagement, in an interview.

Thank you for all the ways you express compassion and care and for faithfully supporting Mission & Service. By acting together, we can be there as a worldwide church community when and where it matters most.

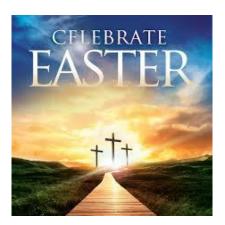




GOOD FRIDAY SERVICE Friday, April 15, 2022 10:00 a.m. St. Paul's United Church



EASTER SUNRISE SERVICE Sunday April 17, 2022 7:00 am Little Lake Park, Midland



EASTER SUNDAY SERVICE Sunday April 17, 2022 10:00 am St. Paul's United Church All are welcome!

Blessings everyone,

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