



St. Paul's Weekly Update – April 28, 2022

Minister's Ponderings

There is a lot of information in this week's update. I hope you will read it all. I had several people comment and ask me for copies of Pat File's story about PAR that she told last week. It was a powerful and moving story of how one invitation changed her response to the church. It comes at a time when we are inviting others to join us with PAR. For those of you who missed it or others who want to ponder it, it is in this week's update.

Worship

In worship, we will be looking at the dramatic story of St. Paul and how this ancient story impacts our lives. Our congregation's name comes from the story of Paul. He saw a vision of light, heard a voice and was changed after his encounter with the mystery of God.



To worship with us on-line, 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. We start live-streaming at 10:00 a.m. every Sunday.

Men's Breakfast Gathering

Our next men's breakfast group via Zoom is this **Saturday April 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/89829828219?pwd=WmtONDZKNm91c0svSTNZbzV6aitLUT09>

Meeting ID: 898 2982 8219, Passcode: 995643



St. Paul's Zoom Coffee Hour

The next ZOOM Coffee Hour is **Sunday May 8th, 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>

Congregational Life

A HUGE THANK YOU to everyone who supported our Faith and Fellowship fundraising dinner this week. **We raised \$1,263**, which will go towards church expenses. A special thanks to Zena, Sheila and their team of volunteers (Gail Wilcox, Sue Dorion, Gerry Payne and Peggy Wallace) who made all of this happen.

Welcome to SPRING UCW cupcake sale

UCW is having a cupcake sale and the cost is 6/\$10.00. There will be a variety of flavours available. You can place your order by calling Sharon Foster at 705-526-7181. Pick up date will be May 5th, 2022, at the church, at 1:00 p.m.



UCW meets on Tuesday, May 10th, at 1:00 p.m. in the Parlour.

The **Official Board** will be meeting via ZOOM on Tuesday May 17, 2022, at 7:00 p.m. Board members - please note this date on your calendars.

Discovery Kids – Save the Date!

"Save-the-dates!" **Camp Awesome** for ages 5-12 years will be from August 8-12, 2022, at the church. Stay tuned for more details and instructions on how to register. All are welcome -- you do not need to attend St. Paul's to register. Camp Awesome has been a wonderful week of fun for the participants. We have had our Discovery Kids children, grandchildren of folk and community involved.

Transition Steering Team (TST) Update

The Transition Steering Team met on Monday, April 25 to update its guidance for church and outside groups re the serving of food and beverages at St. Paul's. The guidelines which follow now allow serving food and beverages within these guidelines. We want to keep people as safe as possible while gradually opening up.

Thank you to Sue Dorion, Sue, Sue Sauve and Sharon Penrose for drafting these guidelines which the TST has approved.

ST PAUL'S UNITED CHURCH TRANSITION STEERING TEAM UPDATED POLICY RE GROUP EVENTS EFFECTIVE MAY 2ND, 2022

1. All visitors must have received minimum of two COVID vaccines.
2. All visitors must be masked while inside St. Paul's.
3. All visitors must maintain social distancing.
4. Should a social event occur whereby food or refreshments are served, tables will be spaced apart and visitors may remove masks while eating/drinking **only**. Upon leaving their seat at the table, masks must be worn at all times.
5. All groups must sanitize the area used after each event with items provided in that room. For example, kitchen must be thoroughly disinfected including coffee maker if used.
6. St. Paul's church policy is to discourage single use items such as cutlery, plates and cups, as reminder to all of us re our changing climate.

Louise Leck, Chair TST

Stewardship Committee – Pat File's Story

My name is Patricia File and I am a member of the Stewardship Committee at St. Paul's United Church. For those of you who get the online or email newsletter, you may recall that there was a paragraph recently describing the Pre-Authorized Remittance program (PAR) and how to enrol if

you wish. I am here to tell you a story about my involvement with PAR, in the hopes of inspiring you to become involved too and to deepen your involvement with St. Paul's.

I got involved some years back now – because I was “invited”. There was an announcement on the wall when we would first come into church that said they were seeking ten new PAR members. It was there for a few weeks and I thought maybe I could become one of those ten. At that time, I had been coming to church for a few years, I usually sat in the balcony and I came most weeks. I would bring a cheque for my offering for an amount that I thought I could contribute on a weekly basis. It was an exchange - I received the benefit of an inspiring service and sermon and choral music and fellowship and in return I gave a cheque to the church. But if I missed a Sunday, I didn't double up my cheque the following week – as I wasn't there.

When I signed up for the PAR program, I knew that a certain amount would now come out for every week, whether I came to church or not. I was ready to make that commitment. It was easy - I went into the office at the time and gave a void cheque to Judy and specified a monthly allocation for so much towards St. Paul's for its work and so much for Mission and Service. At first, I noticed a nice change as I was no longer rushing around on Sunday morning looking for my cheque book and running into church late. I am often last minute as some of you may know. Since this was one of the only cheques I still wrote, I haven't had to re-order cheques now for years. At the end of the year, I got a nice letter from the church with my receipt for my annual donation. It was all very convenient. It was very nice.

But over time, I came to realize that a much more important change was happening in my relationship to St. Paul's. I began to deepen my connection to the church as I realized that in making the PAR commitment to St. Paul's, I had made a more formal choice for it to be one of my key organizations to donate to on an annual basis. They could count on me - now and into the future.

I began to be more involved in the work of the church. I used to see some of the members names and faces on various committees and I admired their dedication but I wasn't sure I wanted to get involved in that capacity. But when we were challenged to think about how we could Elevate Accessibility, I thought I could step up and join that committee as this was something important to me. I had made a commitment to St. Paul's when I signed up for the PAR program after all – so they could count on me. I got to be involved with the most wonderful group of people and it was such a joyful experience to see our church accomplish the fundraising for that project and the decisions to get to the final renovations being completed. After that, I got involved in other committees and endeavours with St. Paul's and had the same joyful experiences. Many of you were involved too as we helped host the Toronto Conference, did accessibility training for dozens of church members, did Faith Formation activities for the children and youth as well as other programs and activities. I get so much more out of my increased involvement and faith journey with St. Paul's – I feel blessed.

During this pandemic, I came to understand how important the PAR program has been, as we no longer had the weekly services for people to be here in person to put their offering into the plate of cash or cheques or envelopes. Although my income went down, I kept to my monthly amount as I knew that I could manage it and I knew that St. Paul's was counting on me - because I had made that commitment.

The continuation of the services online has been a small miracle to me. Karen, Victoria, Glen and the Tech Team have been able to produce such inspiring services for us to watch on YouTube

and this kept me going many times during these last few years. And more than ever, I came to understand that the work of the church is more than the Sunday service – as Karen provides pastoral spiritual guidance and support to families for new births, weddings, funerals as well as the many other needs for families in our community. All the other committees and groups involved with the church continued even during the pandemic.

The donations from all of you have helped to keep that all happening. The PAR program helps provide a foundation for the church to continue its work day-to-day and week-to-week and to budget for the future year. We then build on that work and that foundation for special and extra needs as we continue to help meet the needs of others in our community and around the world through the work of our Refugee Committee, the fall Foodgrains Campaign, the Guesthouse and others.

The stronger our foundation – the more we can do. It is a vision for abundance! As our gardens and new life come forth again this spring, I think of the PAR program like the bulbs and perennials in the garden – something that comes up every year that you can count on. Or perhaps it is more like a juniper bush that gives some greenery through the whole year – in winter and in summer.

Everyone chooses to give how and when they are able to. As a member of the Stewardship Committee, we certainly appreciate the large and small annual donations that come from time to time and all the smaller weekly ones that add up. They all make our church garden flourish and thrive.

We are inviting you to please consider the PAR program and to deepen and elevate your commitment to St. Paul's in participating in the work of the church and to find your place in our garden. It is easy to do – just call Louise at the church office and she will tell you how.

This Week's Minute for Mission

Can you imagine military breaking into your home in the middle of the night, arresting and detaining your child, and then taking them away to be interrogated? This happens nightly in Palestine.



It happened to Khalil, a teenager who lives in the Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhood of occupied East Jerusalem. Last June, Khalil was simply standing with his mother outside their home when he says he was attacked and assaulted by Israeli police passing by and then detained for two days before being released on bail and placed on house arrest. Even though house arrest has been lifted, he lives in constant fear.

"When I go to school, I'm constantly worried about my family. When I pass through the checkpoints at the entrances to the neighbourhood, whether on my way to school or on my return, I feel as if I am in a big prison," he says in a brave photo essay he shares about his experience.

https://www.dci-palestine.org/sheikh_jarrah_from_a_palestinian_child_s_perspective?utm_campaign=sheikh_jarrah_feature&utm_medium=email&utm_source=dcipalestine

Khalil's essay was just released by Defence for Children International (DCIP). Your generosity through Mission & Service supports this advocacy organization in defending children's rights by

offering free legal aid, documenting violations of international law, and advocating for greater protections. Although Israel ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1991, DCIP says that Palestinian children like Khalil continue to be systematically denied protections. Last year, 78 children were killed as a result of Israeli military and settler presence in the Occupied Palestinian territory.

On May 5 to 8, 2022, the United Network for Justice and Peace in Palestine and Israel is hosting a conference in London, Ontario. Called "Responding to a Cry for Hope", the event will be largely led by Palestinian speakers sharing their own experiences. Thursday evening will focus on the Israeli military treatment of Palestinian children. The Rev. Marianna Harris, a United Church minister, is one of the organizers of the event. "I have been involved in this work since 2002 when I heard what was going on in Palestine, and it completely shocked me. Since then, I've been to Palestine three times. I have friends there. What's happening just isn't right."

Harris encourages Mission & Service supporters to take the next step and connect with UNJPPI. "I would encourage people to learn more about what is happening and what we are doing by visiting **unjppei.org** she says. "Join Canadians who are standing up for the rights of Palestinians. The hurting has to stop. I believe good can happen, and we are called to help make it happen. We are called."

Blessings everyone,

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