

From the Minister

As Christmas approaches, we continue in our Advent journey. Some of you have your preparations in place and are looking forward to this special time. Others are unfortunately dreading it, as Christmas is a very difficult time of the year for some. It is associated with many painful memories, and I have known both. Most times I am caught up in the spirit of Christmas and love it, but I also know of the struggle. My grandmother died on Christmas Day many years ago. It was devastating and I was convinced that I would never enjoy Christmas again. It took time and a realization that each Christmas will be different and will not always have the nostalgia of past Christmases. As a Christian, I celebrate the birth of Christ who broke into the brokenness of the world and continues to break into the brokenness of our lives. I celebrate this good news and truly sing my Hallelujahs. As a minister, I don't get to be with my extended family, so each year I am grateful that even though it is just three of us, it is always time spent together. I look forward to our special services because they are part of what makes Christmas for me. Lastly, I cannot imagine not sharing this Advent journey with my faith community. Each of you are a gift to me and we are all gifts to each other.

Advent Services Calendar – 10:00 a.m.

Advent 3 - December 11th - Youth Musical
'A Christmas Yarn'

Advent 4 - December 18th - Choir Cantata
"Have you Heard: A Celtic Christmas Celebration"

Dec 24th - Christmas Eve Service – 7:00 p.m.

Dec 25th - There is no church service on Christmas Sunday. We invite you to watch an earlier service online.

Join our live-stream service at stpaulsmidland.org



Upcoming Advent/Christmas Worship Services

This coming Sunday is our Youth musical, "A Christmas Yarn" which is once again in person. Our children and youth will be singing, dancing and acting! Join us and let others know about this fun Advent service, where we will hear the Good News of the birth of Christ in an entertaining way.

We also invite you to wear your Christmas sweaters, ties, broches, Santa hats etc.

Whether your sweater is beautiful or rather ugly, we don't care. Wear it anyway as we gather this Sunday.

Worship with us in person at 10:00 a.m. or 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.

"A Christmas Yarn"

At Unique Gifts from Luxurious Yarns (U.G.L.Y.), ugly is beautiful! From the factory of the world's leading supplier of ugly Christmas sweaters, founder Sam Ebenezer pulls all the strings to make sure that no stitch is dropped. With a huge order looming to get out the day before Christmas, the team of Bob Cratchit ("that's pronounced Crochet"), Tiny Tom and others weave together a plan of attack, while Sam encounters three mysterious visitors who not only help overcome some ugly obstacles, but bring the beautiful good news of Christmas! With apologies to a well-loved Christmas Carol, don your ugliest Christmas sweater, and have dickens of a good time with A Christmas Yarn! Bring your family and friends for this fun-filled performance!



Have You Heard: A Celtic Christmas Celebration:

Join us for this special Sunday service on **December 18th at 10:00 a.m.**

Our cantata Sunday is the most popular of the year and this event will be no exception. St Paul's choir will be joined by the Bay Sound Singers, instrumentalists and a few "extras" this year as we present this special celebration. All are welcome.



Congregational Life

We would like to wish a wonderful and joyous birthday to Iris Williams! Iris will be turning 95 years old on December 19th. She was a very active member of the St. Paul's community including the UCW for many years before her move into the Villa Care Centre. She is unfortunately unable to celebrate this year as there has been a Covid outbreak at the residence and everyone is forced to isolate. To lift her spirits, her family requests that anyone who can send a birthday card to her room at the Villa is greatly encouraged to do so. It would mean a lot to her and make her day during this difficult time. Thank you so much.

Her address is as follows:

The Villa Care Centre
658 King Street Room #125
Midland, ON
L4R OH1

May the joy that Iris has spread in the past come back to her on this day. Happy Birthday!

St. Paul's ZOOM Coffee Hour

Our next ZOOM Coffee Hour will this **Sunday, December 11th at 1:00pm**. Anyone is welcome to join. You can use the same link as before: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89969004401>.

There will no Zoom coffee hour on Christmas Day.

In-person Coffee Hours are still temporarily cancelled for health and safety reasons and will not resume until the new year.

Update from the Stewardship Committee

As we come out of the pandemic, we have found ourselves in a unique situation – being in a deficit position while at the same time being burdened with the cost of replacing our furnace. Now that the furnace is pretty much paid for, it's time to focus on our deficit.

Sadly, we have lost several members in the last few years. Some have passed away, some have moved out of the area, and some have had their finances impacted and cannot help-out as much anymore or at all. We've also been burdened with higher than anticipated building repair costs this year as well as increased costs of day-to-day operations. Your continued support to St. Paul's ministry is greatly valued and recognized. At this time, we prayerfully ask for your help to reduce the current deficit if you are able. Remember that anything you donate is tax deductible and a tax receipt will be issued before the end of February 2023. All donations will be greatly appreciated.

An update on our Income and Expenses as of November 30, 2022:

Income: \$216,545

Expenses: \$236,653

Deficit: (\$20,108)



Salvation Army Food Drive:

We are currently accepting **food items donations to give to the Midland Salvation Army Food Bank**. If you are attending in person service and would like to contribute, we thank you in advance. You can leave your donations near the door by the organ.

Office Hours

The office is open on **Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday mornings** from **9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon**. Jane is in the office on Tuesday and Thursday mornings. You can reach her by email at officesecretaryspuc@gmail.com or by phone at 705-526-6077. Louise is in the office on Wednesday mornings. The remainder of the time (between Tuesday and Thursday until 4:00 p.m.) Louise can be reached at stpaulsunited@rogers.com or at her home phone number 705-526-1640.

The office will be closed between Christmas and New Year's, and re-opens on Tuesday January 3, 2023.

UCW

The UCW is once again selling Christmas Goodie boxes! The price this year is \$20 per box and all orders can be called in to Marlis Dupuis at 705-549-2018. **The deadline to order has been extended to December 11th**. The pick-up date will be on December 14th between 12:00 p.m.-2:00 p.m. **Order yours today!**



Please note that the UCW potluck scheduled for December 13th has been cancelled. The meeting will go forward as originally planned however on **Tuesday December 13th at 11:30 a.m.** in the Parlour. All women of the congregation are welcome.

Faith Formation

Discovery Kids are wanting to let families know that we are inviting all children attending our Christmas Eve service to be part of our mini pageant. There are no rehearsals, just come a bit early to allow time for a costume change and to get ready for the service. Grandchildren and great grandchildren are welcome!

Furnace Update

We are getting close to our fundraising goal of \$85,000! To date, we have raised \$62,260. We have also been approved for a \$20,000 grant of which we have now received \$19,000. This leaves us a **balance of \$2,740 yet to raise. GREAT JOB ST. PAUL'S – WE'RE ALMOST THERE!** We are truly grateful for all the donations already received.

Upcoming concert at St. Paul's

Vox Community Choir: Come to the Music

Come and join us for this this uplifting Christmas concert on **Saturday, December 17th at 4:00 p.m.** It will be held at St. Paul's and doors open at 3:30 p.m. Tickets are \$15 for adults, plus a non-perishable food item donation for the Midland Salvation Army Food Bank. Students aged 16 and under have free admission. Tickets can be purchased at Johnstone's Musicland, from the VOX Choir members or at the door. This is a mask friendly event and our choir will be masked. Please wear yours, we don't want anyone's Christmas to be ruined! We hope to see everyone who can make it there.

This Week's Minute for Mission

**GOD'S MISSION
OUR GIFTS**



The heartbreaking murder of George Floyd has had a profound effect on Jonisha Lewinson, a college student and member of North Bramalea United Church. She states, "although I have experienced racism, I haven't been interested in exploring it, but after what happened to George Floyd, I want to get involved," she says. "I've decided I want to not just have a quiet voice but an active voice in making information about anti-racism available to people."

Shortly after she made that internal commitment, a friend told Lewinson that the United Church was inviting young people to apply to the Young Black Scholarship Program project, part of the church's commitment to the United Nations International Decade for People of African Descent. Each of the participants was tasked to research and report on various aspects of Black experiences in Canadian churches and received a scholarship supported through your Mission & Service gifts for their work.

From there, the idea for an app-based curriculum that would inspire teens aged 12–18 to become anti-racist was born.

Jonisha landed the contract to develop the curriculum for the app and is currently one of four young adults leading the project. Through the app, teens learn about topics like the history of racism in Canada, White privilege and how to get involved in anti-racism work. Each of the units includes audio, video, and chat features. Called ar4yt (short for "Anti-Racism for Youth Training"), the app is set to launch January 1, 2023, and will be freely available on Google Play and the App Store.

"I've never written a curriculum before, so there was a lot of research in the beginning. It was a big learning curve not just in creating the curriculum but learning about how racism affects different people in Canada other than myself," reflects Jonisha.

What does she hope young people will take from the experience with the app?

Jonisha says "part of dismantling racism means having conversations on a smaller scale with friends and family. That means just as much as being part of huge organizations. I hope that young people engaging with the app realize that making change is not as difficult as it seems."

Your generosity through Mission & Service supports the leadership of young adults like Jonisha who are actively using their talent and skill to change our world for the better. Thank you!

Blessings everyone,

Rev. Karen Ptolemy-Stam, Minister, St. Paul's United Church 705-433-1224
minspucmidland@gmail.com

Church Administrator – Louise Therrien, (Tues. Wed. Thurs.) 705-526-1640
e-mail stpaulsunity@rogers.com
Louise works at the church office from 8:30 a.m. to noon on Wednesdays only.