

From the Minister

We have journeyed together through Advent with that sense of expectation, waiting and longing. We have been reminded that in Christ Jesus, we find hope, peace, joy and love. We will soon be gathering to celebrate the one who came into the darkness to show us the light of God's presence for ourselves and our world. We will never know what really happened so long ago. Angels whispering messages then singing out Glorias? Shepherds leaving sheep to find the Holy One? Wise ones travelling by light of a star? Some ask, "did this really happen?". Maybe it did, maybe not. But that is the wrong question to be asking. The true questions is "How do I name for myself the presence of God in my life and in the world?" Long ago people's lives were transformed as they caught sight of who God is for them and for others in the person of Jesus? The path from cradle to cross had many teachings and much heartache. It changed people's lives back then, and even now. How does the birth of Christ change your life? Like the angels, do you sing your glorias now because of your faith? Like the shepherds, do you leave things behind to follow Christ? Do you see the light of God like wise ones of old? Merry Christmas for Christ is born!



Upcoming Advent/Christmas Worship Services

Advent Services Calendar – 10:00 a.m.

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.



Jan 1st – Join us for Sunday morning worship to bring in the New Year with warm hearts of gratitude and a look at new beginnings.

Join our live-stream service at stpaulsmidland.org

We want to warn everyone that at this time, **we are unsure if we will be able to worship together in person on Christmas Eve due to the extreme storm warnings.**

It is being referred to as the "Storm of the Decade". There are two storms hitting our area at once starting sometime on December 22nd. They are predicting from 3-4 feet of snow in the next few days as well as 80-100km winds. There is an advisory not to travel if the storm is bad.

We are worried for your safety. Being stuck in the snow with your car is bad enough but hitting another car and possibly being injured is worse. With such strong winds being predicted there is also the possibility of a power

outage. A decision will be made in the next few days on how we are to proceed. Please check

your email for an update regarding this situation. **We will have made the decision by 2:00 p.m. on Saturday December 24th and notify everyone via email if we are going ahead for in-person worship or having to cancel it due to the storm.** If we have to cancel we will have last year's Christmas Eve service online so we still have the opportunity to worship from home on this most sacred and holiest of nights.

If we have to cancel and **you know of anyone who does not get our email** but you think that they were planning on coming on the 24th, please give them a call and let them know. That would be greatly appreciated by them and us.

Once again, stay tuned and please check your email December 24th before coming to the church! If we don't see you Christmas Eve, we look forward to worshipping with you in person or online on January 1st, 2023 to welcome in the new year.

A reminder that the office will be closed between Christmas and New Years and will re-open on Tuesday January 3, 2023. There is no Christmas Day service.

Please note that there will be no weekly update between Christmas and New Year. There will be two bulletins distributed however, one for Christmas Eve and the other for January 1st.

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.

Congregational Life



Donald (Don) Eugene Edwards:
(June 15th 1930-December 15, 2022)

It is with great sadness that we announce the death of Don Edwards. Don was a long-time active and committed member of the St. Paul's community. He passed away peacefully at home on Thursday, December 15th, 2022 at 93 years old. A memorial service was held for him on Wednesday December 21st at St. Paul's. He will be greatly missed. Please keep joy and the Edwards' family in your thoughts and prayers during this difficult time. Thank you.

For those of you who have ordered **church photos**, we have been advised that the pictures are being sent out last week. Please keep in mind that the Photo Directory booklet will not be ready for a few more weeks, as it is still in the first draft stage.

St. Paul's ZOOM Coffee Hour

In-person Coffee Hours are still temporarily cancelled for health and safety reasons and will not resume until the new year. Our ZOOM coffee hours will continue on the second and fourth Sundays of the month.

Please note that there will be no ZOOM coffee hour on Christmas Day.

Message from the Stewardship Committee

A HUGE THANK YOU to those who have made donations to help us with the deficit. Your help is so very much appreciated. **Any further year-end donations for 2022 must be received no later than noon on December 30th.** Although there will be no one working at the church between Christmas and New Year, the mailbox is checked daily.

Men's Breakfast Gathering

Our regular Men's breakfast gathering will not be taking place in December, as it falls on New Years Eve, Saturday December 31st. **The next gathering will be on January 28, 2023.**

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.

UCW

There will be no regular UCW meeting in January. Only the UCW executive will be meeting. The regular monthly meetings will resume on Tuesday, February 10th, 2023.

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!

This Week's Minute for Mission



After Mary, Joseph, the shepherds, and the angel have been placed just so, Jesus is finally laid gingerly in the manger. There's always a sacred pause at that moment, the moment when we are reminded that the power of all creation became one with us and changed the world through the most vulnerable among us.

The story of Jesus' birth serves as a reminder that the Spirit speaks to us through the voices of those who are on the margins—those without power, privilege, and influence.

Through Mission & Service, we as a United Church commit to support those on the margins. Whether in our advocacy work, emergency response, or justice programming, your generosity helps us collectively act in the way of Jesus.

**GOD'S MISSION
OUR GIFTS**

As a church, we are transformed in the process, learning from our partners and growing in our call. As our Creed says, "We believe in God, who has created and is creating...the Word made flesh, to reconcile and make new, who works in us and others by the Spirit."

At its heart, Christmas is a celebration of new life through the birth of a child, the most vulnerable of beings. It's ultimately a story about hope; hope that the Spirit will come to life in even the most challenging of times, and hope that something sacred will be born anew because of it.

"I have hope that what Jesus promised us is true. Hope that wherever two or three of us are gathered in the name of Creator that our prayers will be heard...When we stay in the place of hope, we are creative and can solve problems very well. We have the Creator to thank for that, because together we have some work to do," says Moderator Carmen Lansdowne.

If you haven't already, please consider giving to our Christmas appeal. Thank you for your generosity through Mission & Service—and for all the work that can be done and all the hope that is born as a result.

May God's wonder and grace enfold you and those you love this Christmas season.

Blessings everyone,

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



We would like to wish a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to our wonderful community here at St. Paul's!

Each and every one of you make being a member of this church and celebrating our faith together a remarkable experience. We are so lucky to have such amazing group here at St. Paul's. Thank you to everyone for your generosity and for another great year. May we all have a Happy Holidays. God Bless.

