



St. Paul's Weekly Update—February 23rd, 2023

From the Minister

Yesterday was Ash Wednesday and the beginning of Lent. This time of year is always a time of reflection and allowing yourself quiet space to ponder where you are at spiritually. It is a time to remember that even in the wilderness when we are not always sure of the way forward, God is with us and is a light unto our path. Many see Lent as giving up something and do not see it as so much more. I encourage you to take this time to have quiet space to ponder and pray, to read your bible and devote some of this time to listen to the Spirit within you and in our world. Come join us on the Lenten journey in our worship and in our time together at St. Paul's.

Worship



Sun. Feb. 26/23  St. Paul's
Lent 1 LENT United Church
Midland, On

<https://youtube.com/live/a26SjDvACik?feature=share>

Worship with us in person on Sundays at 10:00 a.m. or online. Click the link above to go directly to the service or visit our website at www.stpaulsmidland.org and use the direct YouTube link at the top of the page. Or you can simply go to YouTube and subscribe to our channel. Just type in "St. Paul's Midland" and you will find us.

Annual Congregational Meeting

Our Annual Congregational meeting is scheduled for this Sunday, February 26th following the worship service. This year the meeting will be in-person. The 2022 Annual Report was emailed out to you a few weeks ago. We encourage you to read it prior to the AGM. For those of you without internet, there are some hard copies printed that can be picked up at the church. We realize that not everyone will have printed off the report. In anticipation of the meeting, we have photocopied a few extra financial statements for those attending the meeting for the discussion before the approval of these statements.

Men's Breakfast Gathering

Our next men's breakfast gathering is **this Saturday February 25th at 9:00 a.m.** at Mom's Restaurant. Gather with the guys for some food, fellowship and interesting conversation. All men are welcome to join.

In-Person Coffee Hour

Join us on **Sunday March 5th** after the worship service for our in-person coffee hour. We now gather in-person on the 1st and 3rd Sundays of the month.



St. Paul's ZOOM Coffee Hour

There will be **NO ZOOM coffee hour** on Sunday, February 26th as we will be having our Annual General Meeting. Our next ZOOM coffee hour will be Sunday March 12th.

Welcome to Jim Lamers, our new Custodian



As reported last week, the Official Board is happy to announce that we have hired **Jim Lamers** as **our new custodian**. Jim begins work on March 1st. He brings a wealth of experience as a church custodian and is excited to be part of the St. Paul's staff team. If you see him at the church, please be sure to welcome him. During February, he will be working a few hours a week to get oriented. Thank you to our Search Committee, Carolyn Hendry and Marilyn Broome from the Ministry and Personnel Committee and Bruce Wilcox from the Property Committee.

Bruce Wilcox has been our lead volunteer custodian for the past two and half years and has given us endless hours working at the church. We are so blessed to have him and are so grateful for all he has done. The church also wants to thank Larry Brockelbank, Sue Dorion, Louise Leck, and Zena Pendlebury for their weekly commitment to come in and clean various parts of the church. We are so appreciative of all that these folks have done. Thanks as well to those who came in and helped on specific projects.

Congregational News

We send our sincerest condolences to the family of Barb Pakulak, who sadly passed away earlier this month. She was a member of our congregation, and we are very sorry to see her go. Please keep her family in your thoughts and prayers.

Accommodation Needed

There is a **Ukrainian family** that is hoping to come and settle in Canada. The Lions Club in Penetanguishene is working to assist them. This family of five lived in Mariupol which was overtaken by the Russians. After some harrowing weeks, they were able to flee and eventually found themselves in Poland. There is a need to find housing for them. If we cannot find accommodation for them to rent and someone has space in their home and would be willing to share it that would be great. The family would be willing to assist around the house with snow shovelling, cutting grass, maintenance etc. Our understanding is that the Lions Club will be looking at all options in order to get them here. If you are interested or know of someone who might be willing to assist, please contact Karen and we can get you further information.

Discovery Kids Update

Faith Formation is excited to announce that we have expanded to welcome in some volunteer teachers to help teach the Sunday Discovery Kids lessons. All of our teachers have been approved by and welcomed onto our St. Paul's Faith Formation Committee. Our current group of teachers include Rebecca Amadei, Heather McDonald, Kim Belfry, Kait Byrick and Lynne Angus. If anyone is interested in learning more about how to become a volunteer teacher, please reach out to Rebecca Amadei. Phone: 226-339-8218 Email: rebeccaamadei@gmail.com.

Take Out Dinner

We would like to thank everyone who purchased our take-out dinner on Wednesday and to all those who helped to prepare the delicious meal. We hope to see you again on March 22 for lasagna.

Outreach: Coldest Night of the Year: St. Paul's is supporting our Guest House

The Coldest Night of the Year event (February 25th, 2023) is an amazing family-friendly walk to help raise money for the Guest House Shelter, which serves people experiencing hurt, hunger and homelessness. We are so privileged to be able to participate in an event like this and we hope you will jump in too!

We are looking for **donations** from our congregation to support our St. Paul's walkers and this very important organization at work in our community. Come and be part of the solution to homelessness and lack of affordable housing in our community. **You can also register for the event by just showing up at the church on February 25th at 4:00 p.m.**

To donate you can go to the link that follows, which will take you directly to the St. Paul's Team page or you can send an e-transfer or cheque to the church with a note that is for the Benevolent Fund for the Coldest Night of the Year - St. Paul's team.



<https://secure.e2rm.com/registant/TeamFundraisingPage.aspx?teamID=995349&langPref=en-CA>

World Day of Prayer – Volunteers Needed

A World Day of Prayer event is taking place on Friday, March 3rd with a service here at St. Paul's at 1:30 p.m. The host writing country for 2023 is Taiwan. The service is written by the World Day of Prayer Committee of Taiwan and prepared for use in Canada by the Women's Inter-Church Counsel of Canada. Refreshments will follow the service. All are invited. Please note that our UCW is **looking for volunteers** to assist as ushers and greeters for the service as well as we have few people to help serve refreshments afterwards. If you are able to help, please contact Sharon by email at sharonfoster000@gmail.com.

Bowling Night!

Our **all-ages bowling night** has been rescheduled to **Friday, March 31, 2023**. The event will be at the Knight Haven Bowling Lanes, at 17 Poyntz Street in Penetanguishene, where we will

meet at 6:00 p.m. The church will cover the cost of bowling, but if you want to purchase snacks for yourself please bring cash (no debit or credit cards).

United Church of Canada response to the Situation in Türkiye (Turkey) and Northern Syria

On Monday, February 6, a 7.8-magnitude earthquake hit southeastern Türkiye (Turkey) and on the border with Syria. Followed by another tremor registering 7.6, the quakes were felt as far as Lebanon and Cyprus. More than 35,000 people have been killed in Türkiye and northern Syria, and the toll is expected to rise on both sides of the border. The early morning 7.8-magnitude earthquake was centred about 20 miles from Gaziantep, a major city and provincial capital in Türkiye. First responders and the international community are working hard to rescue people trapped under the rubble.

Many homes and community buildings have been destroyed. Hospitals have also been damaged, and acutely injured and traumatized people are struggling to find help. The winter weather, damaged infrastructure due to the prevailing conflict, and previous displacements of people are making an already difficult situation worse. More than 15 million people are affected. In Syria, at least 4,427 people are reported dead as of 13 February with the majority of victims recorded in Aleppo, Hama, Latakia and Tartous. In Türkiye, the authorities count at least 31,643 dead. More than a thousand buildings have completely collapsed, raising fears of even higher human losses".

The Middle East Council of Churches (MECC), which is a partner of The United Church of Canada, and ACT Alliance (of which The United Church of Canada and MECC are members) are responding in some of the hardest-hit areas in Türkiye and northern Syria. The MECC is implementing a rapid response by meeting the needs of people seeking shelter in churches and in public schools with items such as blankets, mattresses, food, water, and hygiene items right now, until the situation becomes more stable and the longer-term needs of people are assessed. ACT Alliance members are active in Türkiye and have initiated a rapid response. Thanks to previous donors to the Global Emergency Response fund, The United Church of Canada has made an immediate grant of \$20,000 to support their efforts.

The impact of the most recent earthquake is all the more devastating because of ongoing conflict that has displaced millions of people and damaged much-needed infrastructure (such as hospitals), a severe economic downturn, and the COVID pandemic. MECC and ACT Alliance continue to assess the immediate and ongoing needs of the communities. The United Church of Canada is committed to working with Mission & Service partners MECC, ACT Alliance, and the Canadian Foodgrains Bank. Through the Canadian Foodgrains Bank, we have joined the Humanitarian Coalition to call on Canadians to show tangible support for the people of Türkiye and Syria.

We will share more information with you as soon as we can. Thank you for your prayers and generous support.

You can be a part of these efforts by donating now. Thank you for your generosity. **You can donate online** via the United Church of Canada's secure donation page at <https://www.gifttool.com/donations/Donate?ID=1955&AID=2274&PID=6564>

You can also **donate by phone** at 416-231-5931 or toll-free 1-800-268-3781 ext. 2738 and use your Visa or MasterCard. You can also **send a cheque or money** order to:

**The United Church of Canada
Philanthropy Unit - Emergency Response
3250 Bloor Street West, Suite 200
Toronto, ON M8X 2Y4**

Please be sure to note "Emergency Response—Türkiye" on the face of your cheque.

Note: As part of the United Church's Emergency Response Fund, 100% of your donation goes directly to emergency relief, with 85% of your donation responding to this designated emergency and 15% responding to future emergencies that do not receive intense media coverage. Donations to Mission & Service enable the United Church to cover all of the costs of emergency response work without deducting any fees from your donation.

This Week's Minute for Mission

**GOD'S MISSION
OUR GIFTS**



Elders teach students the words, phrases, songs, and stories of their ancestors.

Take a moment to think about your favourite story.

Now imagine that story being at risk of disappearing because the language it's written in is endangered. This is something that nine Elders from Haida Gwaii are passionately trying to change.

Once there were over 15,000 fluent speakers of Haida, but because of assimilation tactics like residential schools, today almost all Haida people speak English at home. The nine Elders—with an average age of more than 80—represent about half of the fluent Haida speakers who remain.

With partner support, the work of these Elders in a research-based revitalization project keeps the Haida language alive and growing.

The Elders are teaching students the words, phrases, songs and stories of their ancestors. The response has been empowering, with language learners near and far dedicating themselves to study. Lessons are given through the Longhouse of Skidegate village, but the program reaches much further, with more than 120 online lessons available. The opportunity to connect across the globe has allowed Haida language, stories, and culture to be shared broadly.

The program also gives young people from the Haida Nation the opportunity to connect with the Elders to nurture their cultural pride and understanding. "I appreciate the work the Elders are doing with our language and culture," said one young student. "They work very hard every day so that my generation can remember."

The Haida language is not the only Indigenous language that has been endangered. Your gifts to Mission & Service support programs and partnerships for Indigenous cultural revitalization around the world.

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 stpaulsunited@rogers.com

Louise works at the church office from 8:30 a.m. to noon on Wednesdays only.

Office Secretary – Jane Quigley (Tues. Thurs.) mornings 9:00 a.m.- 12 at the church.
705-526-6077.

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.