



St. Paul's Weekly Update – March 16th, 2023

From the Minister

I was sent the following story from a parishioner via email. Did it really happen? Is it a “made-up feel-good” story that has little truth in it? I don’t know, however it touched my heart and I have decided to share it with you hoping it will do the same. As you read the story, I challenge you to ask yourself “would I have made the same choice?”

At a fundraising dinner for a school that serves children with learning disabilities, the father of one of the students delivered a speech that would never be forgotten by all who attended. After extolling the school and its dedicated staff, he offered a question: 'When not interfered with by outside influences, everything nature does is done with perfection. Yet my son, Shay, cannot learn things as other children do. He cannot understand things as other children do. Where is the natural order of things in my son?' The audience was stilled by the query.

The father continued. 'I believe that when a child like Shay, who was mentally and physically disabled comes into the world, an opportunity to realize true human nature presents itself, and it comes in the way other people treat that child.'

Then he told the following story:

Shay and I had walked past a park where some boys Shay knew were playing baseball. Shay asked, 'do you think they'll let me play?' I knew that most of the boys would not want someone like Shay on their team, but as a father I also understood that if my son were allowed to play, it would give him a much-needed sense of belonging and some confidence to be accepted by others in spite of his handicaps.

I approached one of the boys on the field and asked (not expecting much) if Shay could play. The boy looked around for guidance and said, 'we're losing by six runs and the game is in the eighth inning. I guess he can be on our team and we'll try to put him in to bat in the ninth inning.'

Shay struggled over to the team's bench and, with a broad smile, put on a team shirt... I watched with a small tear in my eye and warmth in my heart. The boys saw my joy at my son being accepted.

In the bottom of the eighth inning, Shay's team scored a few runs but was still behind by three. In the top of the ninth inning, Shay put on a glove and played in the right field. Even though no hits came his way, he was obviously ecstatic just to be in the game and on the field, grinning from ear to ear as I waved to him from the stands. In the bottom of the ninth inning, Shay's team scored again.

Now, with two outs and the bases loaded, the potential winning run was on base and Shay was scheduled to be next at bat. At this juncture, do they let Shay bat and give away their chance to win the game?

Surprisingly, Shay was given the bat. Everyone knew that a hit was all but impossible because

Shay didn't even know how to hold the bat properly, much less connect with the ball.

However, as Shay stepped up to the plate, the pitcher, recognizing that the other team was putting winning aside for this moment in Shay's life, moved in a few steps to lob the ball in softly so Shay could at least make contact.

The first pitch came and Shay swung clumsily and missed. The pitcher again took a few steps forward to toss the ball softly towards Shay. As the pitch came in, Shay swung at the ball and hit a slow ground ball right back to the pitcher. The game would now be over.

The pitcher picked up the soft grounder and could have easily thrown the ball to the first baseman. Shay would have been out and that would have been the end of the game. Instead, the pitcher threw the ball right over the first baseman's head, out of reach of all teammates.

Everyone from the stands and both teams started yelling, 'Shay, run to first! Run to first!' Never in his life had Shay ever run that far, but he made it to first base. He scampered down the baseline, wide-eyed and startled. Everyone yelled, 'run to second, run to second!' Catching his breath, Shay awkwardly ran towards second, gleaming and struggling to make it to the base.

By the time Shay rounded towards second base, the right fielder had the ball. The smallest guy on their team now had his first chance to be the hero for his team. He could have thrown the ball to the second-baseman for the tag, but he understood the pitcher's intentions so he, too, intentionally threw the ball high and far over the third-baseman's head.

Shay ran toward third base deliriously as the runners ahead of him circled the bases toward home. All were screaming, 'Shay, Shay, Shay, all the way Shay'. Shay reached third base because the opposing shortstop ran to help him by turning him in the direction of third base, and shouted, 'run to third! Shay, run to third!' As Shay rounded third, the boys from both teams and the spectators were on their feet screaming, 'Shay, run home! Run home!' Shay ran to home, stepped on the plate, and was cheered as the hero who hit the grand slam and won the game for his team.

'That day', said the father softly with tears now rolling down his face, 'the boys from both teams helped bring a piece of true love and humanity into this world'.

Shay didn't make it to another summer. He died that winter, having never forgotten being the hero and making me so happy, and coming home and seeing his Mother tearfully embrace her little hero of the day!

Worship

This Sunday we are reminded that sometimes we do not see the presence of God in our lives and are not open to the very things that God is about in our world. We continue on the journey of Lent knowing God is with us and guides us even in the darkest valleys.



Sun. Mar. 19/23
Lent 4

St. Paul's United Church
Midland, On

<https://youtube.com/live/DlijvmNL4Ro?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.



Lent/Holy Week/Easter Services

Sun. April 2nd - 10:00 a.m. – Palm Sunday worship

Thurs. April 6th – Maundy Thursday communion –
Online only

Fri. April 7th - 10:00 a.m. Good Friday Service

Sun. April 9th - 7:00 a.m. Easter Sunrise Service – Little
Lake Park followed by breakfast at St. Paul's. Join us

for the service and/or breakfast!

Easter Sunday - 10:00 a.m. Invite others to join you. Welcome back to those who are returning in person. All Services will also be online.

In-Person Coffee Hour

Join us **this Sunday March 19th** after the worship service for our next in-person coffee hour. Our host this week is Marlis Dupuis. We will continue to gather in-person on the 1st and 3rd Sundays of the month.



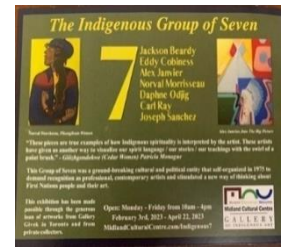
St. Paul's ZOOM Coffee Hour

Our next ZOOM coffee hour will take place on **Sunday March 26th**. Join us virtually for coffee, fellowship, and interesting conversation. You can continue to use the same link as before:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89969004401>. Please note that there will be no ZOOM coffee hour on Sunday, April 9th as this falls on Easter Sunday.

Path of Reconciliation

The United Church of Canada has urged congregations to walk the path of reconciliation with our First Nations and Metis people. The Theological Studies Group have arranged for a guided tour of the Indigenous Group of Seven artwork at the Midland Cultural Centre First Floor Gallery on **Tuesday March 21st at 3:00 p.m.** All are welcome to join us.



Take Out Dinner

Our next take-out dinner is next Wednesday March 22nd. Treat yourself to a delicious meal of meat lasagna with a hot vegetable and coleslaw side, bread and dessert. Pick-up will be in the Atrium between 4:30-5:00 p.m. Please make payments in advance to the church office. **Don't be disappointed – place your order as soon as possible.**

Message from the Stewardship Committee

An update on our Income and Expenses as of February 28, 2023

Income: \$27,177

Expenses: \$47,589

Deficit: (\$20,412)

Men's Breakfast Gathering

Our next men's breakfast gathering will take place on **Saturday March 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.

Official Board Meeting

The Official Board meets on **Tuesday, March 28th at 7:00 p.m. via ZOOM.** All board members please plan to attend.

Bowling Night!



Our **all-ages bowling night** is on **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). If you're interested in signing up, please contact Sheila Thompson at 705-526-2186 or email rmsmt@rogers.com or Sue Sauve at 705-433-1611 or email suemsauve@gmail.com.

Congregational News

Volunteer Opportunities: Are you looking for a new challenge or something interesting to do? How about a chance to meet new folks and support St. Paul's with your gift of time? We are looking for people who can join our Greeters Team and the Social Hour Team. Greeting involves being on a team that will serve one month at a time. You would greet people at the door,

welcome them to St. Paul's, offer them a bulletin and demonstrate our hospitality. The more volunteers we have the less often you would need to help. Social Hour involves being part of a team that hosts refreshments following worship two Sundays a month. There are four teams so the commitment would only be once every two months. Please consider how you can help St. Paul's. For further information, please contact Sheila via email at rmsmt@rogers.com, by phone at 705-526-2186, or at church on Sunday.

Mission and Service Givings Report – 2022

M&S Congregation:	\$20,324
M&S – World Development:	\$900
M&S – UCW:	\$5,000
Total 2022 M&S donations:	\$26,224

This Week's Minute for Mission



"The care of people who are strangers to one another—the importance and impact of that can't be overstated."

You may think Mission & Service just happens far away from your church, but the effects of Mission & Service may be as close as your local pulpit. Mission & Service does a surprising amount of development in your local church, recruiting new ministers and funding theological schools. It even shapes the hymn books you sing from every service.

Another important way that Mission & Service supports local ministry is by providing academic bursaries for students studying to become ministers and theological leaders.

Janzen-Ball knows there's more to a bursary than just the financial gift. She goes on to say "the money is really helpful, but the other thing that is so important to students is realizing that people throughout the church cared enough to donate to Mission & Service." The Rev. Alexa Gilmour received one of these bursaries when she was still a ministry candidate. "I was a single parent, and I knew I couldn't get through without support," Gilmour says. "I felt blessed by God through people who donated and who, by giving, encouraged me on my journey. I have tremendous gratitude for that important role the church played in my life at that time." Janzen-Ball wants you to know that your gifts do matter.

"They matter both tangibly in peoples' lives in a real way but also in intangible ways because they signal the support of the wider community," she says. "The care of people who are strangers to one another—the importance and impact of that can't be overstated. Giving to Mission & Service is an opportunity to support future and current leaders. Those gifts make a significant difference."

A more detailed video, A Deeper Look: Educating the Ministers of Tomorrow is available on YouTube. Link: <https://youtu.be/l8Eqi4hFqZQ>

Blessings everyone,

Minister – Rev. Karen Ptolemy-Stam, St. Paul's United Church **705-433-1224**
minsputcmidland@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.