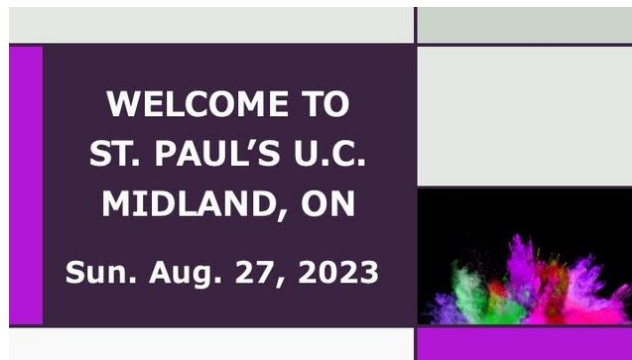


### From the Minister

St. Paul's needs your help in visualizing our way forward coming out of the pandemic. In this weekly update, you'll find information on our Outreach Programs and a survey that we are urgently asking people to fill out so that we have your input. There is more information below including an update on what we currently do. We know we might not continue everything and might even get ideas and volunteers to start something new. So please share your responses with us.

### Worship

**Worship with us in person** at 10:00 a.m. or online. Click on the link below to go directly to the service, or visit our website at [www.stpaulsmidland.org](http://www.stpaulsmidland.org)



[https://youtube.com/live/YY\\_k57JS71g?feature=share](https://youtube.com/live/YY_k57JS71g?feature=share)

### Information on St. Paul's Outreach Work 2023

*Jesus said, "I was hungry and you gave me food.  
I was thirsty and you gave me drink.  
I was a stranger and you welcomed me.  
I was naked and you clothed me.  
I was sick and you visited me.  
I was in prison and you came to see me.  
Whatever you do the least of these, you do unto me.  
Matthew 26:35-40*

Mission and Service Fund: Every year, besides raising money for its own budget needs, St. Paul's raises between \$27,000 - \$28,000 for the United Church Mission and Service Fund, which assists in ministry both here in Canada and around the world. This fund for example enables Christian Island to have a United Church minister and helps pay for the costs of the United Church there. It helps with special projects that assist the most vulnerable people in society, both here and around the world. It also helps with special projects for congregations that enables them to carry out their ministry. The United Church Women (U.C.W.) give a substantial gift each year toward this fund. (see U.C.C. website at <https://united-church.ca/>)

Pastoral Care Volunteers: St. Paul's has a team of committed volunteers who visit and/or call those who find it difficult to get out and feel isolated from their church and community.

Supporting Families in Grief: Karen works closely with grieving families and the U.C.W. offer support in providing funeral/memorial service luncheons when requested. Many different volunteers are part of this important work.

Grief Groups: St. Paul's has run both a Women's and a Men's Grief Group. Karen and co-leader John McCullough plan to start up a Men's Grief Group in September 2023. Karen is exploring the possibility of a Women's Grief Group if there is interest and leaders.

Connections: Pre-pandemic, St. Paul's hosted gatherings three afternoons a week from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. for people to pop by the church and have a coffee and a chat. They also assisted the office staff when anyone came in because they forgot the office was closed. Most importantly, this was a group where families could gather with a family member with dementia.

The Benevolent Fund: This fund helps those who are in need. We have helped people with food vouchers, food, assistance paying first and last month's rent so that they don't become homeless, help with the cost of electricity if people get behind in their bills, clothing, shelter, a child's program that assists with building self-esteem, counselling and transportation. Our Christmas Eve offering and some other donations help with this fund. The fund is confidential and our Minister is responsible for its administration.

Newcomer/Refugees: St. Paul's has a long history of working with refugees. This started years ago with the sponsoring of some Vietnam refugees. We then sponsored Karen refugees who fled what was at the time Burma. We sponsored a United Nations Urgent Action family from Africa, assisted St. Mark's Anglican Lutheran Church with the sponsorship of a family of eight from Syria, sponsored another family of six from Afghanistan and are now working on assisting St. Mark's Anglican Lutheran Church with another refugee from Syria.

Feeding the hungry - Monday Morning Drop-In: For over 26 years and until the pandemic, St. Paul's was running this program. People who were hungry, homeless or just lonely were always welcome to join us for breakfast and some fellowship time every Monday morning. We served anywhere from 30-60 people. This is a program ended with the pandemic. The Guest House provides breakfast for its clients so there is no longer a need.

Meals on Wheels: The U.C.W. have been doing this every year since 1973 – a total of 50 years! They deliver meals every Tuesday.

Gift of Grace Kitchen: The U.C.W. provide the meals for them every Tuesday in August. They provide ten to twelve loaves of sandwiches each week for the month.

Foodgrains Bank: Every fall, St. Paul's has a special appeal for this Canadian charity, which provides food and agricultural support to nations around the world that struggle with feeding their own people.

Guest House: St. Paul's is an active ally of this shelter for the homeless. Pre-pandemic, there was a small team of St. Paul's volunteers who provided meals to them once a month. We are a sponsor of their fundraising campaign (Coldest Night of the Year) and provide volunteers who walk on our behalf, some assist with registrations while other assist with the meal that is

provided for all involved in our Great Hall. St. Paul's also makes donations to the Guest House as part of our outreach.

15 Local Community Groups: These groups use our space here at the church. We believe that we are in partnership with our community. We have been the sponsor for the Scouts over 60 years now.

Free hot chocolate at the Santa Claus Parade: We do this to keep people warm. We also open our doors so that our washrooms are available to the public. It is also a place, especially for families with young children, to keep warm while they wait for the parade to begin.

## **Have Your Say! St. Paul's Outreach Survey**

St. Paul's United Church has received a grant to support an initiative titled "We Are Not Alone". This project is to support re-development and new volunteer engagement at St. Paul's, to provide programs that support needs within our congregation and within the greater community. Your responses to the following survey will help us with this project. Please share your ideas by September 7<sup>th</sup> by using the link: <https://s.surveypal.com/0a25btfb>

If you prefer not to answer online, paper copies of this survey are available at the church office. Completed paper copies can be dropped in the mailbox at the office. If you are interested in having our Volunteer Co-ordinator, Kathy Stewart, call you to complete the survey, please leave a message at the office 705-526-6077 and she will return your call.

You may also email Kathy with questions at: [volunteerspucmidland@gmail.com](mailto:volunteerspucmidland@gmail.com)  
We appreciate your thoughts and ideas as we chart a path to re-engage our outreach programs. Thank You!

## **In-Person Coffee Hour**

Our next in-person coffee hour will be this **Sunday, August 27<sup>th</sup>**. Barb Carswell's team will be hosting. **Please note** that Joan Lavin is Captain of the Greeters for the month of August.



## **Men's Breakfast Gathering**

Our next men's breakfast gathering will take place this **Saturday, August 26<sup>th</sup>** 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.

## **St. Paul's Choir**

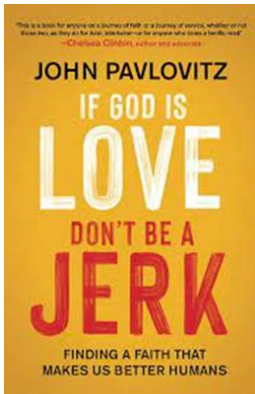
It is that time again when St. Paul's choir resumes after a well-earned summer rest. Victoria looks forward to seeing all choir members back in the loft and so beautifully leading the music during Worship at St. Paul's. Rehearsals will resume Thursday, September 7<sup>th</sup> at 7 p.m. in the sanctuary and the first Sunday back in church will be September 10<sup>th</sup>.

If you are keen to join the choir, please come out that evening and "check us out". We welcome new members and would love to see you there. Should you need a ride to get there and back home, please contact Victoria Warwick at [Victoria.warwick@gmail.com](mailto:Victoria.warwick@gmail.com) and she will make some arrangements.

## Theological Study: "If God is Love, Don't Be a Jerk"

You are invited to join Karen and the Theological Studies Group to study the book by John Pavlovitz entitled "If God is Love, Don't Be a Jerk". We will meet **in-person** on **Monday evenings** at **7:00p.m.** starting on **September 18<sup>th</sup>**. If there is enough interest, we can also meet by ZOOM on Wednesday afternoons at 1:00p.m. Please contact Karen or the church office to let us know if you are interested. The book can be ordered at Georgian Bay Books in Midland for the cost of \$26.00 plus tax. Their phone number is 705-526-4750.

### **Thou shalt not be horrible.**



Imagine for a moment what the world might look like if we as people of faith, morality, and conscience aspired to this mantra. What if we were fully burdened to create a world that was more loving and equitable than when we arrived? What if we invited one another to share in wide-open, fearless, spiritual communities truly marked by compassion and interdependence?

In "If God Is Love, Don't Be a Jerk", John Pavlovitz examines the bedrock ideas of our religion: the existence of hell, the utility of prayer, the way we treat LGBTQ people, the value of anger, and other doctrines to help all of us take a good, honest look at how the beliefs we hold can shape our relationships with God and our fellow humans—and to make sure that love has the last, loudest word.

**The Moderator of the United Church is also launching a separate book club with fiction, non-fiction and poetry.** The link below sends you to a trailer which is both fun and informative on this new endeavour. It looks like it will be a very interesting monthly conversation. For more information, please follow the link below:

<https://united-church.ca/community-and-faith/organization-and-governance/moderator/right-rev-dr-carmen-lansdowne-44th-moderator/flourishing-project/mods-book-squad>

## United Church Women

Our monthly meetings are on the second Tuesday of each month at 1:30 p.m. in the Parlour. Meetings will resume in September, with our first meeting being on **Tuesday, September 12<sup>th</sup>**. Our guest speaker in September will be Nathan Sykes from the Guesthouse Shelter. All women in the church are invited to join us for a short meeting, a guest speaker, tea and goodies. If you have any questions or need more information, please contact Judy McConnell at [itsally58@gmail.com](mailto:itsally58@gmail.com) or call (705) 529-1826.

### **UCW Garage Sale!**

UCW's annual Garage Sale will take place on **September 16<sup>th</sup> from 8:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.** Please set aside any items in your home that you no longer need or want and we will pass them on for someone else to enjoy, while raising needed funds for our work. Please note that we cannot accept large items of furniture, baby furnishings, sports equipment or pet accessories.



St. Paul's United Church Women

Saturday Sept. 16, 2023  
8:30 – 1:00

St. Paul's United Church  
308 King Street, Midland  
(next door to the library)

Clothing Boutique, tools, toys, books,  
new and old items, small furniture pieces.  
Something for everyone!

**Drop off of donations will be on Friday, September 15<sup>th</sup> from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Donations may be arranged for a different day by contacting Zena.**

If you have any questions, Zena can be reached by phone at (705) 527-6789 or by email at [zenapendlebury@gmail.com](mailto:zenapendlebury@gmail.com)

## **Summer Office Hours**

The office is open on Tuesday, Wednesday and mornings from 9 a.m. until noon. Jane will be in the office Tuesday and Thursday mornings and Louise will be in on Wednesday mornings. The remainder of the time Louise will be working from home. You can reach her on her home number at (705) 526-1640 or by e-mail at [stpaulsunited@rogers.com](mailto:stpaulsunited@rogers.com).

**Please note that Louise works Wednesdays and Thursdays only and will resume her regular hours (Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursdays) on Tuesday, September 26<sup>th</sup>**

## **Community Choirs**

Rehearsals of Bay Sound Choirs will resume Wednesday, September 6<sup>th</sup> at St. Paul's, upstairs in the Upper Room. There is an age category for all - Little Treble Makers ages 5 to 7 will rehearse 4:30 to 5:15 p.m., Children's Choir ages 8 to 14 will rehearse 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. and the adult group, Bay Sound Singers, will rehearse from 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. We hope to see you there!

Should you know of someone who may wish to join any of the groups, please put them in touch with Victoria Warwick at [Victoria.warwick130@gmail.com](mailto:Victoria.warwick130@gmail.com). They can also visit our website for more information – [www.baysound.ca](http://www.baysound.ca).

## **This Week's Minute for Mission**

**"There's this huge misconception that refugees choose to be refugees."**

**GOD'S MISSION  
OUR GIFTS**



Imagine being forced to leave your home. Set adrift, hoping to find a place to land, somewhere safe so you can rebuild your life.

"There's this huge misconception that refugees choose to be refugees," says ChrisAnn Alvarez, Refugee Support at The United Church of Canada. "It's not a choice. It's something they're forced into."

It's a reality that is faced by millions of refugees, and it's a reality that is becoming more and more prominent. More people are displaced today than ever before: 117.2 million, says the UN Refugee Agency. That's the population equivalent of three Canadas.

There are many causes: human conflict, climate change, human rights violations, and more. We can help.

Your gifts provide food, water, sanitation, and social support to people forced to flee their homes. Mission and Service creates educational and confidence-building programs in refugee camps. Mission and Service also helps refugees find new homes. "Congregations form sponsorship groups together to sponsor the refugee," Alvarez explains. "What Mission and Service allows is for them to sponsor through their own congregation."

She tells one story of a sponsor who renovated their basement after it flooded and immediately planned to sponsor a refugee in the new space. "Who thinks like that?!" Alvarez exclaims with wonder and awe. "It's just so beautiful!"

The refugee stayed with his sponsors for years, and they became an adopted family to one another. "The sponsor told me, 'We have no kids, so this was an unexpected blessing,'" Alvarez recalls, tearing up. "That's one example of someone opening their home in their home, in their heart, and allowing themselves to be transformed."

When we help protect one refugee from persecution, death, or years in a refugee camp, we save the world for that one person—and just maybe for ourselves, too.

More detailed videos, A Deeper Look: Making a Home for Refugees, are available on YouTube. Part 1: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U0fMT20iQRg> Part 2: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M\\_52-kR\\_k50](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M_52-kR_k50)

## **Blessings everyone,**

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

**Church Administrator** – Louise Therrien, (Wednesday) mornings 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 at the church **705-526-1640**, stpaulsunited@rogers.com

**Office Secretary** – Jane Quigley (Tuesday and Thursday) mornings 9:00 a.m. - 12 at the church.  
**705-526-6077.**