

### From the Minister

Labour Day weekend is almost upon us. For many, this is the last weekend before the start of a new school year. I hope that those of you who are gathering with family or friends have a time of laughter and renewal. September marks new beginnings. Like always, here at the church many of our activities are starting to gear up again. We are hoping you will join us in many of our upcoming events.

Last week and again this week, we are sharing information on our current outreach work as well as an invitation for you to please answer our survey, as we seek **your wisdom and guidance** in visioning our future direction and ways to revitalize our congregation. We are the church together and experience has shown us that your ideas, evaluations, hopes and dreams as well as very practical suggestions make a difference. Please review the information and complete the survey. For those who have done so already, we thank you!

### **Grandpa's Face**

A little girl was sitting next to her grandfather as he read her a bedtime story. From time to time, she would take her eyes off the book and reach up and touch his wrinkled cheek. She touched her own cheek after she touched his.

After a little while of thinking she asked, "Grandpa, did God make you?" He looked at her and said, "yes, sweetheart, God made me a long time ago." She paused for a few seconds and then asked, "Grandpa, did God make me too?" He replied, "yes, indeed pumpkin, God made you just a little while ago." Feeling their respective faces again, she whispered to him, "God's getting better at it, isn't he?"

### 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)

Sept. 3/23

St. Paul's  
United  
Church,  
Midland,  
ON



<https://youtube.com/live/p8OF2ATIIKw?feature=share>

### Office Hours

The office is open on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday mornings from 9 a.m. until noon.

**Please note** that Louise will resume her regular working days and hours (Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday) on Tuesday, September 26<sup>th</sup>. She will be away on vacation from September 8<sup>th</sup> to September 24<sup>th</sup> inclusive. During her absence, Jane will be in the office on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday mornings. Karen will also be available to answer any enquiries that may arise.

## **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.surveymonkey.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 left 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, September 3<sup>rd</sup>**. Joan Lavin's team will be hosting. **Please note** that Sheila Thompson is Captain of the Greeters for the month of September.



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

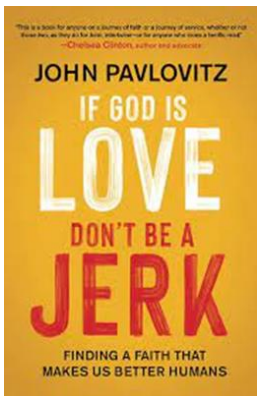
It is that time again when St. Paul's choir resumes after a well-earned summer rest. Victoria looks forward to seeing all choir members back in the loft and so beautifully leading the music during Worship at St. Paul's. Rehearsals will resume Thursday, September 7<sup>th</sup> at 7 p.m. in the sanctuary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

**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. She can be reached by phone at (705) 527-6789 or by email at [zenapendlebury@gmail.com](mailto:zenapendlebury@gmail.com)

## 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



**"When children can't go to school, society suffers."**

How do you make the world a better place? You can start by taking kids to school. Around the world, 57 million children are not able to attend school. As a result, they may never learn to read or write, to add or subtract, or many other skills that they need to succeed. Even more importantly, they never learn about their basic human rights.

It's a complicated problem, says Patti Talbot, the United Church's Global Partnership Team Leader. "The work we do isn't going to lead to immediate societal change," she says, "but it will make a big difference down the road."

When children can't go to school, society suffers. And that is why Mission & Service is in partnership with 85 organizations that work to increase access to education across the globe.



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!

**GOD'S MISSION  
OUR GIFTS**



Each partner has their own approach to education and skills training, each supported by your gifts to Mission & Service.

Colombia's Center for Communication uses arts and media to teach children about their rights. Women for Change in Zambia creates educational groups where participants share agricultural knowledge and awareness of their rights. At Japan's Asian Rural Institute, local leaders gather to learn sustainable agriculture techniques that they can take home and transform their communities.

"How can we make the world a better place?" asks Talbot before responding, "We can't do that by ourselves; our partners know best what the challenges are."

Talbot, a child of missionaries who was raised in Japan and Korea, knows that educational partnerships are critical. "In our partnerships, we learn from and teach each other," she says. "The United Church's focus is more than just sharing resources, but really sharing life together."

It's an approach that Talbot knows works, even if results take time. "Our partners are very grateful that the United Church of Canada has demonstrated over and over again that we are there for the long term," Talbot says.

A more detailed video, A Deeper Look: Sending People to School – Together, is available on YouTube via the link below:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cstlkR1e3EU>

## **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**, stpaulsunity@rogers.com

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