

From the Minister

When I walked by the office today and looked at the schedule of all our groups using the church, I found myself smiling and thinking, “wow, we really are coming back as a community”. I love to see our St. Paul's groups gather as well as the various community groups who call St. Paul's their home. Coming out of the pandemic has not been easy but the Spirit of God is here in this place. We are finding our way. For that I am grateful.

If you have not yet found your way back to the church in person, we ask those who are able to consider doing so. In caring for each other, we learn how things are going and this can help take away some of the loneliness that impacted many of us. When you read the announcements in this week's update, I invite you to consider joining us. We have worship, study groups, U.C.W. events, a men's breakfast, dinners and a luncheon coming up as well as our annual Garage Sale. As Christians, we are invited by God to engage the community around us as members of faith who seek to work in partnership with others, to care for those in need, and to care for our earth. So please ponder and pray as you read this weekly update and know that you are missed and are most welcome to join 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



<https://youtube.com/live/qgHmqNxdAfY?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 26th. She will be away on vacation from September 8th to September 24th inclusive. During her absence, the office will remain open on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday mornings. Karen will also be available to answer any enquiries that may arise.

Congregational Life

Our next eat-in/take-out dinner will be on **Wednesday, September 27, 2023.**

The menu will include lasagna, hot vegetables, coleslaw, bread and dessert. Cost is \$20, payable in advance. Please call the office to reserve your meal and arrange payment. Pick-up at the Atrium door or join us in the Great Hall at 4:30 for a sit-down dinner. Thank you for your support of the work of St. Paul's

St. Paul's Outreach Survey 2023 and Luncheon

For the past few weeks, we have included information on our Outreach programs and have asked you to please consider filling out the survey. Today is the last time it will be included in the weekly update. We would so appreciate it if you would share your thoughts with us.

St. Paul's United Church received a grant to support an initiative titled "We Are Not Alone". This grant is funded by the Government of Canada under the Community Services Recovery Fund (CSRF). 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 12th 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 or available Sunday morning when you come to worship with us in person.

On Sunday, Sept. 24th you are invited to join us for a **complimentary working lunch** to learn the results of the survey. We will discuss the results and hear your wisdom on what the priorities might be as we begin to get a sense of our future directions. We promise it will be informative and fun as we engage one another on these ideas. Please mark your calendar and plan to attend.

Volunteers Making the Difference

We would like to thank everyone who took the time to complete the survey that was circulated last week. We appreciate the warm welcome and the excitement around how St. Paul's can revitalize the outreach program. There are already some great programs happening and some programs from the past that will be re-starting. This initiative is not about creating big new projects but rather looking closer to home to see how we can become a more caring and compassionate community through volunteerism.

There are several opportunities that already exist and we encourage any of our volunteers to come out and represent St. Paul's at the Truth and Reconciliation Film Screening "Birth of a Family" at the Midland Cultural Centre on September 26, 2023. Tickets can be purchased through Eventbrite by utilizing the following link: <https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/truth-reconciliation-film-screening-birth-of-a-family-tickets-700351930477?aff=oddtcreator>

Another great opportunity to support the Truth and Reconciliation "Call to Action" is to attend the Artist Talk and Demonstration with Kyle Sauve also at the Cultural Centre on September 20th. If you are interested in attending either of these programs or have ideas that you would like to share, please reach out to our volunteer coordinator Kathy Stewart. She can be reached by email at volunteerspucmidland@gmail.com or by leaving a message at the church office at 705-526-6077.

"Start where you are. Use what you have. Do what you can." - Arthur Ashe

In-Person Coffee Hour

Our next in-person coffee hour will be on **Sunday, September 17th**. Please **note** that Sheila Thompson is Captain of the Greeters for the month of September.



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 12th**. 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 or call (705) 529-1826.



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!

UCW Garage Sale!

UCW's annual Garage Sale will take place on **September 16th 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 15th 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

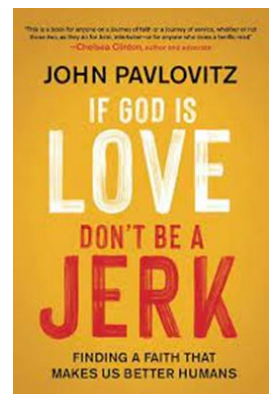
Theological Study: "If God is Love, Don't Be a Jerk"

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 18th**. 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>

This Week’s Minute for Mission

Your support helps remove barriers to education for teenagers like Hamdan.

**GOD’S MISSION
OUR GIFTS**



Hamdan wants to become a doctor someday. As the oldest son, this young teenager dreams big amidst the daily struggles that he and his family face.

Hamdan’s family came to Lebanon several years ago to escape the war in Syria. They can barely afford their monthly rent, food, household expenses, clothing, and medical needs. While his father works in a produce shop, his mother stays at home to care

for the family’s four children and two other family members. This family of eight lives on the father’s pay and a small income supplement they receive from the UN.

Like Hamdan, many children in Lebanon are at risk of losing their education because an economic crisis—intensified by the COVID pandemic and the devastating 2020 explosion in Beirut—has plunged their families into poverty. When parents can’t pay school tuition, children face an unstable future. The Middle East Council of Churches (MECC) assists Lebanese students and Syrian refugees ages 8–13 with tuition and fees to secure their education and prevent them from becoming a lost generation.

One thing Hamdan’s parents don’t have to worry about anymore is his education. With tuition assistance provided by MECC to Hamdan and his siblings, they can continue to study until graduation and gain entrance into a university—giving Hamdan a chance to achieve his dream.

Your support through Mission and Service helps remove barriers for teenagers like Hamdan so they can work toward their dreams. Thank you.

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.**