

From the Minister

This past Sunday was delightful watching the children and adults decorate our new 12-foot Christmas tree in the Great Hall. Our youngest ones were enthralled with the decorations and anxious to help the rest of us put them up. Three kind volunteers rerouted a very long extension cord to reach the kitchen plugs when the breaker took out the one nearest the tree. Many men arrived this past Wednesday and helped us set up this tree and other trees around the church as well as putting up the garlands. A much smaller group of volunteers arrived to decorate them and set up our nativity sets.

In the bustle and utter disorganization, there was such a spirit of quiet joy and anticipation. It is so worth it when you enter the church and see the beauty. It all reminds us that Christ is coming and we await his birth. In the midst of the chaos and confusion of this season, there is the quiet reminder that this is a place where wonder and joy and spiritual awakening happens every week, not just in the Advent/Christmas season. For this I am grateful. Are you?

Worship:

Click on the link below to join us virtually for this service if you are unable to attend in person.

<https://youtube.com/live/Zli2MS160Vw?feature=share>

Assisting Those in Need

Until Dec. 14th, we are asking for donations of new gloves/hats, socks, lip chap, toothbrushes, toothpaste or other personal hygiene items **to be dropped off at the church** either on Sundays or during office hours. We are assisting two organizations. One is working with impoverished youth and the other is the Guesthouse. Thank you for considering bringing in some of these items. Look for the box in the atrium to drop off your donations.

St. Paul's is also looking to stock our own shelves with donations of food items (dry goods) so that the office can hand out food to those who drop by the church for assistance. If you're able to help, please drop by the church during office hours with your donations or bring them to church on Sunday.

Special Advent Christmas Worship Calendar

10:00 a.m.

Advent 2 – Dec. 10th – Children & Youth Musical
"Dude, do you hear what I hear." Santa's visit.

Advent 3 – Dec. 17th – Choir Cantata
"Lead me back to Bethlehem."

Dec 24th – No morning service.

Christmas Eve Service – **7:00 p.m.**

Dec 25th – There is no church service on Christmas Day.

We invite you to watch an earlier service online.
Join our live-stream service at
stpaulsmidland.org.



Food and Fellowship Dinner

A big **THANK YOU** to everyone who purchased meals last week and to our dedicated team of volunteers who prepared an amazing dinner. With everyone's contributions, **we raised a total of \$855**, that will go towards the church's operating expenses.

A Message from your Stewardship Committee

Your Stewardship Committee needs your help with the deficit. A presentation was made to the congregation on Sunday, November 26th - the deficit was then over \$10,000. We are happy to report that as of the end of November, the deficit was down to \$6,943. We are asking the congregation for a one-time donation to help us meet our expenses to the end of the year. We truly appreciate the extra financial contributions from our congregation – large and small, on PAR or in the plate – as they will all help us get to our year end on budget. We also thank the many user groups for the increases to their donations for the use of space at St. Paul's to help us meet our increased expenses.

Faithful Footprints update: We also reported that we completed the year of energy reporting to the Faithful Footprints Grant Program of the United Church of Canada, which had provided us with a \$19,000 grant last year towards our energy efficient furnace. Our energy savings over the 2019 baseline year was a reduction of 4.9 GHG emissions or -8%. We have now received the \$1,000 holdback. Although the amount of energy used has gone down, the annual cost has still gone up due to increases in the cost of electricity and natural gas. We also applied for and are expecting a rebate from Enbridge due to the purchase of an energy efficient furnace. We express our appreciation for this extra funding and encourage everyone to continue doing what they can to reduce greenhouse gases for the planet.

Connecting Together- Come Join Us!

Come join us and make connections with others as we take time for conversation, storytelling, tea/treats, fun and fellowship. Our Connections Team will continue **every Thursday** until Dec. 14th. Everyone is welcome to join us in the Atrium at St. Paul's from **2:00 to 3:30 p.m.** Pop in, have a seat and touch base with others.

Our Condolences

Our condolences to Bill Sheffield on the loss of his son this week. Please keep Bill and Pat and the Sheffield family in your thoughts and prayers.

Advent and Christmas events

"Dude, You Hear What I Hear?" is scheduled **for this Sunday, December 10th at 10:00 a.m.** during our morning Worship Service.

Christmas time is filled with sound! Sometimes so much sound and noise that we can hardly hear the real message of Christmas.

In the hustle and bustle at a crowded "Mondo-Mart" filled with shoppers, shy Taylor and the rest of her youth group have stopped for some last-minute snacks on their way to a fun Christmas camp. Taylor – not much for talking, but a great hide and seek player – has found the perfect hiding place. So perfect, in fact, that she doesn't notice when the rest of the group boards the bus and the store is closed for the night! Hard to tell who is more surprised – Taylor, when



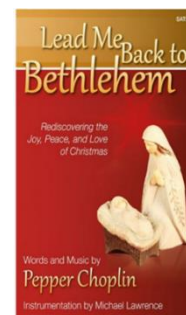
she emerges from her hiding place or the fun-loving store mannequins who break their silence assuming that once again, the store is theirs for the night.

Taylor quickly discovers that everything store mannequins know about Christmas is what they've heard over the PA system during the Christmas season and boy are they misinformed! And the not-so-high-tech night watchmen listening in from outside the store are nearly as confused as the mannequins.

"Dude, You Hear What I Hear?" is a rollicking adventure for kids that ensures that nobody will miss out on hearing the REAL Christmas story! Don't miss the hippest music you'll hear in a kids' musical this season, a fun story and a Biblical message that you've got to experience!

"Lead Me Back to Bethlehem" by Pepper Choplin

Join us for this special Sunday service on **Dec. 17th at 10:00 a.m.** Our Cantata Sunday is the most popular of the year and this event will be no exception. As last year, St Paul's choir will be joined by the Bay Sound Singers, instrumentalists and a few "extras" as we present this special celebration. All are welcome.



UCW Christmas Luncheon is **next Tuesday Dec. 12th** at noon in the Atrium, with lunch being catered. All ladies of the UCW and congregation are welcome. If you are planning to attend, please let us know by either calling the church office on Tuesday or Thursday mornings between 9:00 a.m. and noon or by calling Judy McConnell at 705-529-1826 or by email to officesecretaryspuc@gmail.com

UCW Goodie Boxes

The **baking donations for the UCW goodie boxes** should be brought to the church between 9:00 and 10:00 a.m. on **Wed. Dec. 13th**. For those who placed an order, the cost is \$20 each, payable when you pick up your order at the church on Dec. 13th between 1:00 and 3:00 p.m. that day.

Upcoming concert at St. Paul's

VOX Huronia Community Choir presents "The Sounds of Christmas" **on Saturday, Dec. 16th at 4:00 p.m.**, with special guests St. Paul's Bell A'Peal Handbell Choir. Tickets are \$20 and are available at Johnstone's Music Land, VOX choir members, Hear Well Be Well Inc. (at 483 King Street) and at the door.

In-Person Coffee Hour

Our next in-person coffee will be on **Sunday, Dec. 17th**, following worship. Barb Carswell's team will be hosting, and Sheila is also Captain of the Greeters for the month of December.



St. Paul's Volunteers

Another week has passed with amazing activity from the St. Paul's Volunteer team. The church has been beautifully decorated, and you can't help but feel some peace and comfort when you step inside the doors. Thanks to everyone who helped to create this place of inclusion and warmth. It is so much more than decorating. Various group activities have been going on this

week and we thank the leadership that has been provided by so many. St. Paul's had a booth at the Volunteer Fair and a few of the visitors to the fair have expressed interest in helping at St. Paul's.

Thanks to the forward-thinking leadership volunteers who applied for the grant from the Community Services Recovery Fund (Government of Canada). We are so grateful to have this volunteer coordinator position.

St. Paul's Outreach

Shaun McIntosh and Kathy Stewart presented a donation from our Benevolent Fund to the Georgian Bay District Secondary School, to provide support for impoverished students. As mentioned earlier in this update, there is also a box in the Atrium in at the church to collect donations for the Guesthouse and the needy youth in our community.

Learning Together - Save the Date

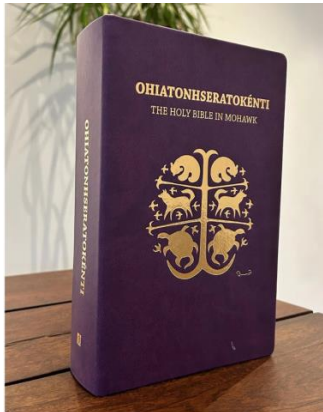
On Thurs. Jan. 18, 2024, our next guest will be Chief Ted Williams from Rama First Nation. A recognized and sought after motivational speaker, Chief Williams will join us to share his "If you dream it, if you believe it, you can do it" message.

Office Hours

The office is open on Tues., Wed. and Thurs. mornings from 9 a.m. until noon.

This Week's Minute for Mission

Devotion, knowledge, and artistry



Ohiaonhseratokénti: The Holy Bible in Mohawk is now available for purchase.

Preserving language enables future generations to engage in their rich culture in a rounded and essential way. Without understanding dialect-specific phrases and expressions, the vital wisdom of a culture can be lost. As part of the ongoing work of preserving the Mohawk language, a Mohawk translation of the Bible was developed, and it is now ready to use.

This complete translation of the Bible into the Mohawk language has been made possible through the devotion, knowledge, and artistry of Harvey Satewas Gabriel, supported by generations of women in the Gabriel family and the communities of Kanesatake and Kahnawake. Those partnering on the Mohawk Language Bible have taken great care and effort in ensuring proper language interpretation and translation. Working in agreement with the Mohawk Nation, collaborators have taken the time to listen to each other and learn in order to move the project forward.

Your gifts to [Mission and Service](#) allow projects that preserve language and culture to flourish. Thank you.

Blessings everyone,

Minister – Rev. Karen Ptolemy-Stam, St. Paul's United Church **705-433-1224**,
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Church Administrator – Louise Therrien, (Wednesday mornings 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 at the church),
stpaulsunited@rogers.com **705-526-1640 (home office)**

Administrative Assistant – Judy McConnell (Tuesday and Thursday mornings, 9:00 a.m. to 12:00)

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