

From the Minister

This is our first update for the year 2024 - a new year has started with the hope of new beginnings. Time is a human concept in many ways. It enables us to break down how we view the world and live our lives. Yet, God is within time and beyond time. God is the alpha and the omega, the beginning and the end. The universe is so immense that time can be stretched into a length beyond our comprehension. There are other ways to think of time, for there is a time for everything. A time to laugh and a time to cry. A time to forgive and a time to ask for forgiveness. A time to ponder and a time to do. A time to be busy and a time to be still. In all of it is God. And so let us welcome the year 2024!

On a different note, I want to thank all of you who helped to decorate and take down the Advent/Christmas decorations. I also want to thank everyone, who each in their own way, contributed to our Worship services in that special time, as well as in our Outreach projects. Thank you all so much. We had our highest number of people worshipping in person since the beginning of COVID, with a record number of 275 people on Christmas Eve. This does not include our online congregants. It feels like we are finally regrouping and "Growing Together" as we rebuild out of this particular time in history. Rebuilding takes time, commitment and a decision to continue to still be part of the congregation and to share your faith with us. One more thing to name for which I am grateful.

In 2024, we welcome the Gift of Grace Soup Kitchen, which is an outreach project out of Knox Presbyterian Church. As Knox has sold their building and are moving to another smaller location, the soup kitchen is now going to be serving a lunch every Tuesday at St. Paul's. This is one more example of how churches can work together as we seek to meet the needs of others as part of our faith. For years, our U.C.W. provided the meals for them in the month of August and some of our own parishioners are volunteers are there. We hope that their guests also feel welcomed by St. Paul's as well.

Worship

This week join us for worship, as we renew our baptismal vows and join together sharing in communion.



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

<https://youtube.com/live/e-RYaAtsBzk?feature=share>

Our condolences

As announced in church last Sunday, our deepest condolences to **Kim Belfry and family** on the accidental death of her husband James, on Dec. 30th. Kim is a member of our Faith Formation Committee and her children are part of our Discovery Kids. Funeral arrangements are not known at this time. Please keep this family in your thoughts and prayers.



In-Person Coffee Hour

Our next in-person coffee will be **this Sunday, Jan. 7, 2024**, following worship. Joan Lavin's team will be hosting.

Knox Presbyterian Church is having a moving sale on **Fri. Jan. 5, 2024** from noon to 4:00 p.m. and **Jan. 6, 2024** from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Individual items priced at \$6.00 and up or make them an offer they can't refuse. If you have any questions, call 705-526-7421.

St. Paul's Outreach

A group of volunteers has met to put together some ideas for the Guesthouse meal preparation that will be happening the second Wednesday of every month starting on **Jan. 10, 2024**. Stay tuned for information about ways to help with this very important initiative.

Our Connecting Together group will begin again on Thursday Jan. 11th from 2:00 to 3:30 p.m. Join us to connect and enjoy time sharing stories, fun, fellowship and to meet new friends. If anyone is able to display our flyer around town or at your place of work, it would be very much appreciated. Flyers are located on the desk in the atrium.

Volunteers needed

Looking for help with our February event "Take a moment for Peace" This is an opportunity for all ages to become involved in an event to promote peace. We need volunteers to help with greeting visitors, preparing crafts, spreading the word, bulletin boards, baking cookies. **Please join Kathy Stewart for an information session on Jan. 13th** and enjoy coffee/muffins and conversation from 10 -11:30 a.m. For more information, please reach out to Kathy at volunteerspucmidland@gmail.com.

Learning Together - Save the Dates

Join us on Thursday **Jan. 18th** from **2:00 to 4:00 p.m.** when we welcome **Ted Williams, Chief of Rama First Nation**. Please register with Kathy at volunteerspucmidland@gmail.com or by calling the office at 705-526-6077. If anyone is able to display our posters around town or at your place of work, it would be very much appreciated. Copies of the poster are on the table in the Atrium, just below the office window.

How do Art and Spirituality relate? Join us for a **Valentine Art Card Workshop** with Victoria Tovell on Jan. 30th, 2024, from 1:00 – 4:00 p.m.

UCW – next meeting

Please note that there will be no UCW meeting in January. The next meeting will be on Tues., Feb. 13th, 2024.

Office Hours

The office is open on Tues., Wed. and Thurs. mornings from 9:00 a.m. until noon.

This Week's Minute for Mission



Lindsay Vautour, the United Church's Engagement and Stewardship Associate started attending a United Church camp at the tender age of five. There, she not only met lifelong friends and gained job skills as a counsellor, but it also helped chart her course to eventually work for The United Church of Canada.

"Coming from a financially tight background, I'm extremely grateful for the assistance available that let my brother and me attend camp every summer. I met so many different people from different cultures and regions and got to learn their journeys in faith. I still keep in contact with some camp friends over 20 years later," she says.

"One of my most prominent memories was with a fellow 13-year-old camper who told me that she loved camp because she could be herself without any expectations. She said, 'I'm not the weird kid or the foster kid here, I'm just me,'" she recounts. "That's something I resonate with because I wasn't particularly popular in school, but popularity never mattered at camp, and it's beautiful to know that that's a widely shared perception."

Children come together at United Church camps across Canada to learn the gospel in a safe and supportive environment. Through campfire stories, hiking, music, canoeing, and so much more, campers gain confidence while enjoying unique activities and exploring their curiosity. At camp kids learn soft skills like self-confidence, patience, and organization as well as hard skills in sports, crafting, and music.

Without the generosity of supporters, children who attend camp wouldn't be able to continue having such affirming and defining experiences. Your gifts through Mission and Service are deeply appreciated.

Blessings everyone

Minister – Rev. Karen Ptolemy-Stam, **705-433-1224**, minspucmidland@gmail.com

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) officesecretaryspuc@gmail.com 705-526-6077

Music Director - Victoria Warwick – Warwick.victoria130@gmail.com

Children and Youth Co-ordinator – Rebecca Amadei rebeccaamadei@gmail.com

Volunteer Co-Ordinator – Kathy Stewart – volunteerspucmidland@gmail.com

Student Minister - Shaun McIntosh spuc.studentminister@gmail.com

Technical Services Co-ordinator - Glenn Erwin glerwin@live.ca

Custodian – Jim Lamers – contact church office