

From Our Minister – Karen Ptolemy-Stam

Our Lenten journey continues. As we sang on our first Sunday of Lent, "we are pilgrims on a journey, fellow travellers on the road; we are here to help others walk the mile and bear the load". This song resonates with me as it reminds me that we are to be there for one another, not just those we know but also the stranger in our midst. Lent is certainly a time when we are reminded of the struggles that we and others have. It is a time for reflection. It is also a time to pick up the phone, make a visit, reach out so others are less alone.

Worship

Join us this Sunday as we continue our Lenten journey. This week is a Communion Sunday so we invite you to come and join us. If you are not able to join us in person on Sunday mornings at 10 a.m., just click on the link below and you can join us on-line anytime.



<https://youtube.com/live/2ewpCakUv20?feature=share>



In-Person Coffee Hour

Our next in-person coffee is **this Sunday, March 3rd**, following worship. Joan Lavin's team will be hosting, and Sheila Thompson is Captain of the Greeters for the month of March.

St. Paul's website

Want to know what's going on St. Paul's? Visit our **website** at <https://www.stpaulsmidland.org/> There is lots of information and worth the look. You can also follow us on **Facebook** at <https://www.facebook.com/search/top?q=st.%20paul%27s%20united%20church>

Connecting Together

Join our group **every Thurs.** from **2:00 to 3:00 p.m.** to connect and enjoy time sharing stories, fun, fellowship and to meet new friends. If anyone can 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. Thank you to our volunteers headed by Louise Leck who are there to support others and enjoy just connecting.

Take a Moment for Peace

In the stillness of the sanctuary with lit candles and doves with messages of peace hanging from a tree, we gathered to pray for peace, ponder how we might make a difference and shared refreshments in the atrium with each other. Thank you to all of those who made this happen - Kathy Stewart, Carol MacDonald, Diane Marr, Bruce and Linda Wilcox, Marina, Gail Wilcox, Larry and Jean Brockelbank, our minister Karen, our custodian Jim as well to those who made cookies for these events. May we all continue to pray and work for inner and world peace.

World Day of Prayer is this Friday March 1st at 2:00 p.m. at St Margaret's Church, Hugel Avenue in Midland. This service is prepared by the Word Day of Prayer committee of Palestine. All are invited to attend.

"Open Gym" Drop-In

Children, families and their friends are invited to an "Open Gym" drop-in in the Great Hall of St. Paul's on **March 16th from 6:00 -8:00 p.m.** A small snack, beverage and gym activities will be provided. There is no need to RSVP. Contact Rebecca by email for any questions at dkspumidland@gmail.com. Childcare is not provided so children need to be accompanied by an adult. Come in your best St. Patrick's Day spirit and we hope to see you there!

Coldest Night of the Year

Thank you to everyone who volunteered, walked or donated to the Coldest Night of the Year, in support of the Guesthouse Shelter. With everyone's help, the St. Paul's team raised a total of \$7,140. The Guesthouse Shelter raised \$31,561 and donations are still coming in. **Great job, St. Paul's!**



Have a Concern?

Sometimes things come up that raise a concern. If this happens to you, we would like to remind you that there is a process to enable your question or concern to be addressed. First of all, please speak to the person or persons involved directly. Please do not gripe about it without having the courtesy to openly talk to those involved. Secondly, speak the Chair of the committee that oversees the area of which you have concerns. Thirdly, remember that things can be sorted out by honest conversation. We are in this together. Kindness and grace are effective tools to enable things to move forward in the positive spirit of St. Paul's. Gripping and not coming forward divides and creates tension where it need not happen.

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



In the Rift Valley of Kenya, 7 percent of the people who live there are HIV positive—nearly 900,000—and many will not survive. **Grandmothers whose children have died of AIDS are often left alone to care for their grandchildren** and to add insult to injury, their church community condemns them, leaving them without support as they raise their grandchildren.

Some pastors in the Rift Valley, as in many other places, believe and teach that faithful Christians cannot contract the disease and that it is a judgment from God—a disease for sexual sinners.

“The pastors had little information about HIV and AIDS; to them, and others in the community, it was a strange disease. They believed HIV was a result of sexual sin and was a judgement from God for the sexually immoral,” writes Esther Mombo of the World Council of Churches.

In partnership with the United Church, Mombo and Pauline Wanjuru of St. Paul’s University in Limuru, Kenya, led a series of workshops in one Rift Valley community that has been hit especially hard by HIV/AIDS. They invited grandmothers and pastors to connect and learn from each other.

One grandmother who attended the workshops was 70 years old. She had lost both her daughter and her son and was left to raise three grandchildren on her own. Instead of stepping up to help, her neighbours refused to visit her because they said her daughter and son had been sexually immoral. Her pastor wouldn’t even attend her children’s funerals because he didn’t want to be seen associating with her family. When she went to church, the pastor preached about the punishment for sexual immorality.

At the workshops, this woman bravely told her story to the pastors who attended. She also shared with them how it felt to be shamed for loving her children and grandchildren. Another grandmother explained that her grandchildren were born with the virus and couldn’t have been involved in any sexual immorality. Yet another spoke of God’s love for everyone. Pastors listened and learned and ended by making a commitment to extend compassion and offer pastoral care to the grandmothers.

All of us know from our own life experience that when we know better, we do better. Your [Mission and Service](#) gifts gave these grandmothers the opportunity to help their pastors learn to do better by connecting their love for their grandchildren to God’s love for all. Thank you.

Blessings everyone

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