

Minister's Message, Sunday, May 25, 2025

Beyond Sunday: An Invitation to explore Centering Prayer¹

Centering Prayer is so called because the idea is to become more and more acquainted with God as the centre of your life, as well as more and more authentically who you are meant to be at your personal center. We put up many barriers and walls between our being and how we show up in the world (face to face or online). Sometimes it is almost as if we are playing a character with our name.

Centering prayer is an invitation to set aside the world's expectations, our expectations, and discover more about who we are meant to be. It is similar to Jesus invitation to "come as a child" or "to be reborn." Thomas Keating, a key teacher of this method talks about levels of awareness.² We move through the ordinary, to the spiritual, to the true self, and finally to our connection with the divine. A simple outline of the method is presented below. Maybe if you have some time in the garden, your balcony, or the beach, give it a try.

Blessings,
Rev Kirsty

HOW TO "DO" CENTERING PRAYER:

- Find a quiet space where you are unlikely to be disturbed.
- Sit in a way that allows you to be relaxed in body and alert in mind. Use a chair, meditation cushion or prayer rug, according to your own needs and preferences.
- Gently close your eyes.
- "Allow your heart to open toward that invisible but always present Origin of all that exists" (p. 6). Whenever you become aware of a thought, no matter what its nature, let it go.
- Use a "sacred word". This is a word or short phrase that helps you to let go of thoughts. It is a reminder of your intention to remain open to the silence. Generally sacred words fall into one of 2 categories: "God" words/phrases such as "Abba", "Jesu", "Mary", "Reality", "Come Lord" or "state" words/phrases such as "love", "peace", "be still". Sacred words are not used as mantras, as in constantly repeating them, but as a reminder of your intention to remain open.
- Continue this practice for 20 minutes. At the end of the time get up and go about your business, leaving the practice behind, in the same way you let go of your thoughts.
- People who are just beginning, and are particularly restless in mind and body, may find it easier to start off with shorter prayer periods, perhaps only 5 minutes per sit to start. Then after a few days extend the time to 10 minutes and so on until you are able to sit for 20 minutes. Give the practice at least 2 weeks before you decide if it is right for you.

¹ <https://www.contemplative.org/contemplative-practice/centering-prayer/>

² https://youtu.be/5FWvxwfN_CE



<https://youtube.com/live/ZQaiPaz22FE?feature=share>



New Office Hours

The church office is now open Monday thru Friday from 9am to noon.

New Administrator: Our new administrator John Craig is now in the office. John will be job-shadowing with Louise to the end of May.

Pastoral care

For Pastoral Care, please contact Rev Kirsty Hunter at 705 717-1918. She wants to know if you are in hospital and seeking a visit from her. You can email her at revkirsty@gmail.com. **Please use Rev. Kirsty's direct phone number at all times to reach her**, as there isn't always someone in the church office to answer the regular phone line.

Covenanting service for Rev. Kirsty Hunter June 12, 2025

Dinner will be at 5:30 p.m. followed by the service at 6:30 p.m. If you want to volunteer to help prepare dinner, greet or serve communion, please send an e-mail to Rev. Kirsty at revkirsty@gmail.com. Dinner is by free will donation.

The Connections Group meets **every Thursday** at 2:00 p.m. in the Atrium. Anyone wishing coffee and informal conversation is welcome to drop in!

Coffee Hour

Our next coffee hour is **Sunday, June 1st** following worship.

Volunteer needed

We are looking for a volunteer to do coverage for our Custodian while he is on vacation. This would be light duty work and would be for the periods of June 19 and 20th, June 30th to July 4th and August 5th to August 8th. Please contact Bruce Wilcox at 705-529-6728 if you can lend a hand.

Congregational Life

We offer our condolences to Marie and Cam Bonner, on the death of Marie's brother, Richard Picotte, who passed away at the beginning of this week. Please keep this family in your thoughts and prayers. A private family funeral will be held sometime in the future.

St. Paul's will be hosting a bowling evening on Friday, May 30, from 6:00 to 7:00 p.m. at the Knight Haven Bowling lanes in Penetanguishene. The Congregational Life committee will cover the costs of bowling and shoes and there is a snack bar available for refreshments (cash only). Please arrive

about 30 minutes early to pick teams and get your shoes. This is an all-ages family event - nobody is too old - nobody too young!! Call Sheila if you have any questions or want to sign up 705-526-2186.

Well, spring seems to have arrived and with it comes the planting of the coleus. We hope your coleus have blossomed under your diligent care. Please bring your plants to church Sunday May 25th as we will be planting them that week. If you are not able to bring them on the 25th please bring them to the church before the 30th. Thank you all for your nurturing care over the winter.

Garden Angels - Carol and Christina



Men's Breakfast

The next Men's Breakfast will be on Saturday, May 31st at 9:00 a.m. at Mom's Restaurant. Gather with the guys for some food, fellowship and interesting conversations. All men are welcome.

Outreach

Guesthouse Meal Preparation- Did you know that teams of St. Paul's Volunteers create a meal for the guesthouse twice a month? In addition to that, we also have another team that prepares meals that can be frozen and served "as needed" by the Guesthouse staff. This is such important work by our Outreach Committee and we thank all the Volunteers. There are a couple of ways to get involved including donating to the Benevolent Fund, offering to make a meal or even one piece of the meal such as dessert. Let Zena (zenapendlebury@hotmail.com) or Kathy Stewart (kathystewart2025@gmail.com) know if you would like more information.

United Church Women

The United Church Women is having their **Spring Garage Sale this Saturday, May 24th.**

Please drop off your items on Friday, May 23rd between 11:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. in the Great Hall. Sale starts bright and early on Saturday, at 8:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. Proceeds go to support the work of the UCW, which supports St. Paul's Mission & Service Fund and a variety of organizations who support people in the community and beyond. For more information, please contact Zena at 705-527-6789 or zenapendlebury@gmail.com.

United Church of Canada 100-year anniversary



Join us for a celebration picnic on Sunday June 8 at the pavilion in Little Lake Park after the worship service. You can pre-order a boxed lunch (\$10 for adults and \$5 for children) through the church office or after Sunday worship until June 1st. **See attachment with this weekly update for all the delicious food choices available.** If anyone interested in helping out with the June 8th picnic, please meet in atrium meeting room after church on Sunday, May 25th or contact pat@patricia.ca

We are looking for your memories of songs from camp or other church activities over the years for a song sheet which will be shared at the picnic. Please send along the name of the songs and the lyrics if you have them. Please also lend us copies of photos over the last 100 years of church related activities that we hope to put on display closer to the picnic date. Plan to join us for games, Sunday hats, food and fellowship.

Butter Tart Festival

Once again St. Paul's will be running their annual "Loonie Raffle" during the June 14th Butter Tart Festival. We will be selling raffle tickets on the church lawn and the winners will be picked that afternoon. If you are able to donate a couple of hours to help with this fundraiser, please contact Sheila at 705-526-2186. Thank you!!



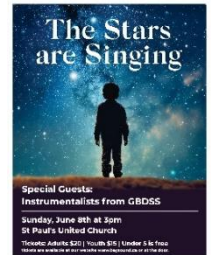
Faith Formation

SAVE THE DATE! St. Paul's Discovery Kids Camp will be held August 11-15, 2025. It will be a FULL DAY program running from 9-3. Details soon...

Community News and events

VOX Huronia Community Choir presents "Over the Sea and Back Again", on **Saturday May 31st at 7:00 p.m.** at St. Paul's. Tickets available at Johnstone's Music Land, from choir members and at the door.

The Bay Sound Choir concert will take place at St Paul's on **Sunday, June 8 at 3:00 p.m.** This year's concert will, of course, include all the Bay Sound Choirs: Little Treble Makers, Children's Choir, VIVO and the Bay Sound Singers and our special guests will be young musicians from Georgian Bay District Secondary School. Tickets are \$20 for adults, \$15 for youth and under age five is free. Tickets are available on our website at www.baysound.ca or at the door.



Sing It Women's Choir presents "Singing from the Heart", on Monday, June 9th at 7:00 p.m. at St. Paul's. Tickets are \$20 for adults, \$10 for youth between ages 13 to 16, kids under 12 are free. Tickets will be available at the door or by calling 705-875-5438.

St. Paul's website

Want to know what's going on at 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>

This Week's Minute for Mission

Storytelling has always been a powerful way to preserve history, share experiences, and shape understanding. The theatre production *Bunk #7* did just that, leaving significant impact on both the cast and the audiences who witnessed its profound narrative.

Bunk #7 tells the true story of six boys who, in the early 1960s, stood up against the systemic mistreatment and abuse they endured at Edmonton Indian Residential School in St. Albert, Alberta. Written by the late Nisga'a MLA Larry Guno, the play drew from his own experience as a student at the residential school. *Bunk #7* was named after Guno's bunk number—a personal touch that connected the story to the heart of the playwright's lived truth.

The play was brought to life by an exceptional cast of Indigenous youth and young adults, creating a space for both performers and audiences to learn, reflect, and share the story of cultural resilience. The production premiered at Raven Theatre in British Columbia in November 2021, where it was met with overwhelming support. This response led to a transformative tour throughout northwestern BC in the fall of 2023. Each performance continued to resonate deeply with audiences, showing the lasting impact of this remarkable piece of theatre.

Your gifts to *Mission and Service* helped create opportunities for stories like *Bunk #7* to be shared, heard, and honored in a way that fosters healing and transformation. Thank you for your continued support in keeping these important stories alive.

Blessings everyone

Minister: Rev. Kirsty Hunter, **705-717-1918** revkirsty@gmail.com

Church Administrator – John Craig (New) office hours are Monday thru Friday 9am to 12pm Noon stpaulsunited@rogers.com