



St. Paul's United Church
Christmas Advent
Newsletter

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November 2018

Advent Services 10 am

Advent 1 – Dec. 2 - Communion

Advent 2 - Dec. 9 - Children's Community Choir

Advent 3 - Dec. 16 - Children's Musical -

A Play in a Manger and Pot Luck Luncheon

Advent 4 – Dec. 23 - Choir Cantata

Dec. 24 - Christmas Eve Service - 7 pm.

Come join us with your friends!



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Minister's Message:

The Reverend Karen Ptolemy-Stam

With an early snowfall it is not hard to begin to turn our thoughts and minds to the Advent and Christmas season. This season of quiet reflection and preparing ourselves to remember again and again that Christ is born into our hearts and our lives. It is a time of anticipation as we ponder, like Mary, how the presence of God enters our world, often through us in our day to day relationship with each other and all that is created.

At our last Official Board meeting we were informed that Rev. Bev Irwin is going to officially retire effective Dec. 31. 2108. The Good news is that she will be staying on as our V.A.M. (Volunteer Associate Minister). We have been so blessed to have Bev on our staff team these past few years. Her joy, her presence with the children, her pastoral wisdom and her amazing ability to write reports are just a few of the many things we so appreciate about our "Revie Bevie". In the new year there will be a chance for us to express our appreciation to her. Colleen Gareau who is currently our Youth and Young Children staff person at six hours a week has been offered the position to work with me as our Pastoral Care Co-Ordinator at twelve hours a week starting January 01, 2019. Colleen is so appreciated in the work she has done with the children and we look forward to continuing to work with her in this new position. We are currently making arrangements for coverage of our Discovery Kids on Sunday mornings and our youth group. Colleen reported that in this whole past year there was only one Sunday when we did not have children present and

participating in Discovery Kids. We are so blessed by the leadership we have in this congregation.

On behalf of the congregation, I do invite you to join us in our Advent journey and Christmas celebrations. On Sun. Dec. 02nd we have our Advent communion service and decorating of our 16 ft. Christmas tree in the Great Hall during our coffee hour after the service. On Sun. Dec. 9th we have the Children's Community Choir as our music guests in the worship service. In the evening at 7:00 p.m. St. Paul's joins with the Serenata Choir for a special concert that is a fund raiser for "The Guest House", our local shelter for the homeless and hungry.

On Sun., Dec. 16th we have a Christmas Musical called, "A Play in a Manger". Last year the play was amazing with drama, singing, dancing and a fun retelling of the Christmas story with over 15 children participating. This year the cast have been faithfully rehearsing since the second Saturday in September. Following the service is a pot luck luncheon and all are invited. We look very much forward to this special event.

On Sun., Dec. 23rd is our Choir Cantata. The music and readings are truly touching and a beautiful service. December 24th. Christmas Eve, there is an evening service at 7:00 p.m. to celebrate the birth of Christ. All children attending the service are invited to become part of the service as once again Mary, Joseph, angels, shepherds and wise people enter in. Of course, the cow, donkey and camel are also regulars on Christmas Eve. Please invite family, friends and neighbours to all of our special services.

Keith and I would like to wish everyone a very blessed Christmas and pray that the hope, peace, joy, and love of God might be with you this season and every day of your lives. Merry Christmas, Karen



*Bev's Christmas
Meanderings*

Christmas Peace to all,

A little while ago I asked a little guy if he was ready for Christmas.

"Of course," he said, "I'm always ready."

I've reflected on that remark for several weeks now. "I'm always ready!" Many have been practicing for Christmas, learning new Christmas music, baking, figuring out what to give whom, and some have purchased tickets for a few days in the sunny south away from the snow and cold. You are ready, albeit somewhat stressed and wondering if everything is well prepared for.

I didn't hear any hesitation in that little boy's response. HE WAS READY! If I had asked him in the middle of July, I feel the answer would have been the same "I'm always ready!"

I asked myself if I am ready. Is my heart open to the mystery and wonder of Hope, Peace, Joy and Love? Am I ready to open my heart fully to the incarnation of unconditional Love? Am I singing Hallelujahs even when the hallelujahs are hard to sing? Yes, I want to

say 'yes' and really believe 'yes' and live everyday
"YES!"

I also want to share something with you, my friends. As of January 1, 2019, my status at St. Paul's will be changing again. I will be your 'VAM', Volunteer Associate Minister, which is a volunteer position for retired ministers. Life is changing, as it is prone to do, and this way, if I am able to be of assistance to the ministry at St. Paul's it is carried out voluntarily. The primary work of pastoral care will be passed on to another person, though I might be called on to do some pastoral care. This position fits my life better and hopefully fits the ministry of St. Paul's better as well. Perhaps this way I can get on with doing some reading and writing, spending time with family and friends, and I never know what surprises might be around the corner.

As this season morphs into another, may we be blessed by 'new life' again and again and again. My mother inspired me every day, right up to her ninety ninth year. She lived life with passion and excitement. "I learn something new every day!" she'd say.

I hope I can do the same and always be ready as my little friend who exclaimed "I AM ALWAYS READY!"

Peace my friends, Bev

Accessibility Committee

Many blessings of the season to you from your Accessibility Committee! We're happy to report that our committee has grown this year to include Elizabeth Asmann, Marjorie Baks, Cam Bonner,



Pat File, Fran and Doug Hill and Christina Strong. Together, we meet monthly to discuss the removal of barriers at St. Paul's and to promote inclusion for people of all abilities.

We're currently exploring new options for audio supports at St. Paul's. It's an exciting time as the new digital sound board is being installed in the balcony. The new technology will allow greater clarity in the assistive listening receivers and we hope more people will begin using them in the new year. We're working closely with the Tech Team and Worship Committee to create a protocol to distribute these devices each week. Watch for an upcoming opportunity to try new styles of headsets. We'll look forward to your input!

Speaking of input, there will be a new Feedback Form available for you to fill in whenever you want to let us know about any issues you've had in accessing programs or services at St Paul's. They can be dropped off in the collection plate or at the church office. Once we receive your comments, our committee can make recommendations to address any accessibility concerns.

Thank you for working with us to make St. Paul's a truly inclusive community. We wish you all the best as you reflect on another year and anticipate the promise of 2019.

Christina Strong, Accessibility Committee Chair

Congregational Life

As we prepare for winter and all that the season brings us, we anticipate Christmas, a very joyous and

welcome season at St. Paul's.

Elsewhere in this newsletter, you'll read about some staff changes in 2019. We're very excited that we'll have a dedicated staff person for Pastoral Care. Bev did a wonderful job of phone-ministry, which was greatly appreciated by those she spoke with as well as the rest of us. Bev is retiring - again, so we wish her the best and are delighted she's hanging around St. Paul's as a Volunteer Associate Minister. Thanks Bev!!

Congregational Life is responsible for organizing Social Hour. Anyone who stays for refreshments and fellowship after worship on Sunday knows what a valuable connecting tool this is, with 80-90 folks chatting, laughing and getting to know each other better. There is a yearly schedule for the hosts and these are groups and committees at St. Paul's who make the coffee, tea etc., supply the cream, milk and snacks. Unfortunately, we lost one team when the Fellowship group disbanded. This means more turns per year for each team. As well, some of the committees are quite short on members and sometimes have difficulty finding enough folks to do this job. If you aren't on any of our church committees and would just like to help with social hour a few times a year, please speak to me. I'll see that you get matched up with some folks who know the ropes and will appreciate your support.

It has been at the discretion of the hosting team whether they use the glass mugs or opt for disposable ones. Sometimes the amount of help that is available impacts that choice. Except for plastic stir sticks and

drinking straws, all our supplies are disposable. The cups are paper and can go in the blue bin as can the plastic glasses. Questions have been raised about how we recycle. Just like at your home, there are two trucks who stop at St. Paul's each Tuesday. The recycling truck has two compartments - one for paper and one for containers. The garbage truck has two compartments as well - one for garbage and one for compostables. We work very hard to be as environmentally responsible as possible, recognizing that it is our duty to be good stewards of God's gifts. We've also been known to hide the garbage can, just leaving the blue and green bins in sight. Please be conscious of where you're placing litter, not only in the church, but everywhere.

While on the topic of Social Hour and the kitchen, we must all work together to keep our kitchen neat and tidy. There are reminders in place about turning off the coffee machine and dishwasher and leaving everything ready for the next users. Please remember that we all share the kitchen space and wouldn't want to leave a mess for someone else to clean up.

From the Congregational Life Committee - Jean Stainton, Sharon Penrose, Sandra Flint and myself, Merry Christmas to you and your families and blessings of good health and happiness for 2019.

Sheila Thompson

Worship Committee

From 'Out of the Ordinary' by Joyce Rupp

THE MANY DISGUISES OF EMMANUEL
Emmanuel, God-with-us,
long awaited, eagerly anticipated,
delicious dreams of royal robes,
a messiah enthroned with elegance.

False notions and easily accepted illusions.

A few open ones, full of surprise,
heard the fresh, full cry of life
echoed in the uninhabited haven,
the only place ready for a birth that was ripe.

Shepherds, sages, and scribes,
drawn by angels and stars,
discovered this divine simplicity,
then hurried from the hillside
with news that amazed them all.

But many years later the cry goes unheard,
stifled in the roar of unyielding opinions,
submerged in the noise of hasty judgments,
masked in the false folds of cultural glitter.

The Surprising One continues to come,
entering the world in endless disguise,
concealed in those we have never forgiven,
secreted in the hearts of people we despise,
found in the rejected and unacceptable,
hidden in the ones we ignore and criticize.

Cathy Metzgar, Worship Committee Chair

Choir

As always, we have a busy lineup for this Advent and Christmas season! December 9th, 2018, the Children's Community Choir will be our musical guest at the morning worship service.

This year's youth musical presentation is called *A Play in a Manger*. The town of Centerville is preparing their annual Christmas Extravaganza – but this year it's going to be bigger and better than ever! The excitement is off the chart as the writer and director and legend-in-his-own-mind, Cecil V. Deville, calls for pyrotechnics, sky-diving angels, dancing camels and more. It's an over-the-top, down-to-earth Christmas Musical you won't want to miss!



The following week, December 23rd, our St Paul's Choir will present the Cantata entitled *Bethlehem's Child*. This beautiful work by Victor C. Johnson and Lloyd Larson will bring the message of Christmas to your hearts. As in the past few years, we will be joined by instrumentalists. Don't miss this moving morning worship service!

December 24th will be magical, as we gather to celebrate Christmas Eve together. Special music will include choir and invited soloists. We look forward to sharing this magical season with you and yours.

Victoria Warwick

Faith Formation

We've all had a busy year, and here it is, Christmas season again! Lots of things going on around St. Paul's and we hope you participate in as many as you're able to.

The Youth Group continues to meet monthly and Colleen is looking at a special December project. There may be some changes to the age criteria for this group in the New Year. As the members get older, they often find jobs or other things that interfere with attendance at Youth Group.

The Discovery Kids, as expected, are very eager for Christmas. There will be lots of stories and crafts relating to the birth of Jesus for the kids to enjoy. Karen reports that her groups are all very active and those attending are active, enquiring and discussing their particular topics. The Theological Studies group read and pondered "The Art of Dying", leading up to a presentation in October by the author. This group had 25 folks registered and average attendance was 19. The Monday Bible Study is a smaller group, with a limit of 10. This is a new way to study the Bible and it is very effective. The monthly Observer Reflections is less structured, allowing those present to study and discuss any article they've seen in the Observer.

The Christmas Family Service presentation, "*A Play in a Manger*" has been in rehearsal for over a month and the cast and crew are working very hard on their lines and music. This will be a wonderful production - remember last year, so mark your calendars for Sunday, December 16 - come on out and bring your

neighbours. December 16 will also be the annual Christmas pot luck lunch. Everyone is invited to share a meal and fellowship with their church family in the Great Hall following worship. Please bring a dish to share - main dish, salad, dessert - whatever works for you. We'll have a 'carol sing' after lunch and perhaps a special guest!

Christmas Eve means our traditional Christmas Nativity Pageant with scripture readings, carols and the children presenting the story of Jesus' birth. This is an hour-long family service starting at 7:00 p.m. and includes any children who wish to participate. For many families it has become a Christmas tradition.

Perhaps you've heard that there will be some staff changes in 2019? Bev will retire but still be hanging around as a Volunteer Associate Minister (VAM). I'm sure she'll find lots of projects to get into as well as supporting Karen when needed. Colleen will work on Pastoral Care, so we'll lose her presence and organization with DK and the Youth Group. M&P is looking for someone to replace her in those areas, so if you have an idea or suggestion, please pass it along.

On behalf of the Faith Formation committee, Colleen Gareau, Lynn Angus, Chris Karges, Pat File, Joan Lavin and myself, I wish all of our St. Paul's family and our friends and neighbours everywhere a joyous and blessed Christmas, sharing special times throughout the season.

Sheila Thompson

Stewardship

On behalf of all the members of the Stewardship Committee, we offer Christmas greetings and heartfelt thanks to you, the congregation of St Paul's United Church, for your continued generous support.

Stewardship includes sharing your time, talents and treasures and you do all of this with great abundance.

Each month the committee meets to review church finances including givings, expenses, fundraising events, and special projects. In this way, we have a clear view of the health of the church. We worry about details but are continuing to be impressed and excited when we hear of the many ways this church is fulfilling its Christian goals. A great example is the completion of our accessibility project which enables St Paul's to provide facilities for all, with or without disabilities.

Another project that bonded our church immeasurably is the three-year hosting of Toronto Conference's AGM. We are proud of all our volunteers and grateful for the financial assistance this project provided.

Financially we continue to be strong compared to many other churches around Ontario. This is a direct result of having a caring and giving congregation. In this season of Christmas, when giving to others is on our minds, our committee and our Official Board want to give you our sincere thanks for your generosity throughout the year.

Terry MacPherson, Chair, Stewardship Committee

United Church Women (UCW)

It's been a busy few months for St. Paul's UCW. We

had a giant Garage Sale and a Soup and Sandwich Luncheon. We also catered several funeral teas, provided pies for the Annual Beef Dinner and looked after coffee time social hour following some of our church services.

We have an average of 20 members that attend our monthly meetings and we usually have guest speakers. We continue to financially support the St. Paul's Mission and Service Fund as well as the Guesthouse Shelter, St. Vincent De Paul, Salvation Army, Habitat for Humanity, Massey Center, Fred Victor Center, Anglican United Refugee Alliance (AURA), Camp Simpresca, Leprosy Mission, Sleeping Children and we also have a Foster Child. We would not be able to do all this work without the generous help and support with our events from the whole congregation. Thank you!

However, we are not all work; we share fellowship, we have a great support network and we enjoy getting together every month. We meet on the second Tuesday of every month (except July and August) at 1:00 p.m. in the Parlour. All are welcome to join us!

Zena Pendlebury

From our Webmaster

Already summer seems a long time ago as we don warmer clothing and think of hot chocolate, soups and stews simmering on the stove and evenings by the fire. It's a good time to think about what we have been doing all year and to start planning for the future.

When I took over maintaining our website, I hoped to

keep it up to date and make it interesting. I started with doing the simple things like ensuring that the bulletin was posted weekly.

To comply with our Accessibility Policy, I continue to focus on trying to ensure that everyone who visits our website can navigate to the topic or page that interests them as easily as possible. This means using typefaces and colour contrasts that are easy to read for everyone.

With your help, we have added information (and links) on a number of other events such as the Toronto Conference AGM, meeting information for the Youth Group and the United Church Women (UCW), Camp Awesome, (including registration) and of course promoted fundraising events like the Desotos summer dance. This year we have added links for the 'streaming' of our Sunday service and occasionally other special services or events.

While from the comments I have received that the website is proving valuable and providing the information you are looking for, please remember that it will always be a work in progress. With so many activities to engage us, I do need help ensuring that all the information is up to date, especially when we are talking about committees and groups whose meetings and events are sometimes hard to keep up with.

I hope you like the results and invite you to contact me with your comments.

Fran Hill dfhill59@gmail.com



Serving God in this area since 1829
Worship Service (and Discovery Kids) Every Sunday 10am
Office Hours 9am - 1pm

Quick links



What's
Happening



[ABOUT US](#)

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We are glad you are here on the web

Come and worship with us

Can't get out to church?

click on this link to watch the live stream of the service which starts at 10am

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCCTO6avKTwwSRA1H-Coh5Lw/live>

If you missed a service and wish to view it later
the link appears beside the [Bulletin](#) on that date

AND YOU! *by Antje Clarke*

My daughter-in-law's professional assignments take her away from her young family for weeks at a time.

Although 3-year-old Phoibe is on these occasions well cared for by her father and grandparents, she can hardly wait for her mummy to come home again.

When it then actually takes place, it's a joy to witness the welcoming as I experienced just recently. Since I'm, an early riser I was visited the next morning by an armful of books with Phoibe and blanke in tow.

Once, very quietly ensconced under my bedcover, we became re-acquainted with Pooh Bear, Charley and Lola and the list goes on. During a necessary pause for breath, I mentioned to her that she was really, really happy now that Mummy was home again. "Now you have Mummy, Daddy, Mamma before I could turn another page her face came close and closer and she whispered "...and you, Omi" who can measure my

feeling of worth and belonging, to be included. With the approach of Advent, we're again reminded of the angel's message to the shepherds. "Do not be afraid, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people". We are all included in God's love through the birth and sacrifice of his son, Jesus Christ.

"This story was originally written for our 2009 Christmas Newsletter... Phoibe is now a lovely young lady of 12 who often visits St. Paul's with her Omi Antje Clarke".

