



*St. Paul's United Church*  
*Christmas Advent*  
*Newsletter*

308 King Street, Midland, ON  
Phone 705-526-6077

Email: [stpaulsunited@rogers.com](mailto:stpaulsunited@rogers.com)  
Website: [www.stpaulsmidland.org](http://www.stpaulsmidland.org)

November 2019

## **Advent Services 10 am**

**Advent 1** – Dec. 1 – Communion

**Advent 2** – Dec. 8 – Children’s Community Choir join us in worship, St. Paul’s/Serenata ‘Story and Song’ fundraiser for the Guest House – 7:30 p.m.

**Advent 3** – Dec. 15 - Children’s Musical ‘Camel Lot’ and Potluck Luncheon

**Advent 4** – Dec. 22 - 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**

On Sunday, Nov.24<sup>th</sup> during our worship service, we talked about an elderly priest who sees in the gift of a small child, his son John, hope for the world in which he lived. As we enter Advent, we too, like Zechariah, know about hope for our world in the birth of a child, Jesus the Christ. Like John, we too begin our Advent journey to prepare the way of the Lord in our lives.

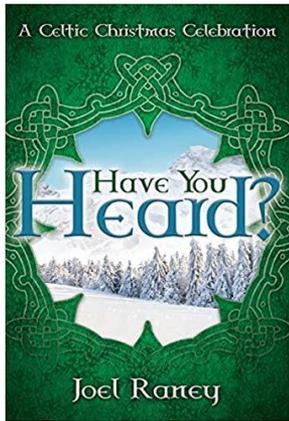
On behalf of the congregation, I invite you to join us in our Advent journey and Christmas celebrations. On **Sunday December 1<sup>st</sup>**, we will have our Advent communion service and decorating of our 16' Christmas tree in the Great Hall during coffee hour.

On **Sunday December 8<sup>th</sup>**, we have the Children's Community Choir enhancing our worship through their magical seasonal music. In the evening at 7:30 p.m. St. Paul's joins with the Serenata Choir for a special concert called 'Story and Song'. This is a fundraiser for "The Guest House", our local shelter for the homeless and hungry.

On **Sunday December 15<sup>th</sup>**, we have our Christmas Musical 'Camel Lot'!

*Description:* Beth has been practicing hard for the church Christmas pageant. Her Dad (who runs a car dealership), may be too busy with Christmas car sales to make it to the program. Exhausted from practice, with lines from Luke 2 swirling in her mind, she drifts off to sleep. Transported by Beth's imagination (and a sound effect or two) we all "wake up" in Bethlehem on a very special day, and in a most unusual place – the Camel Lot! It doesn't take long, inside Beth's topsy-

turvy dream world, to encounter camel shoppers, salespeople, shepherds, wise men, and a very familiar story, told in a fun and refreshing new way! Performance will take place on White Gift Sunday. Following the service will be a **pot-luck luncheon** and all are welcome.



On **Sunday December 22<sup>nd</sup>**, we will have our Choir Cantata. The music and readings are truly touching and it is a beautiful service. This year's Cantata is called "Have You Heard? A Celtic Christmas Celebration" written by Joel Raney. We are looking forward to hearing this new Cantata that I'm sure will touch our spirits.

On **December 24<sup>th</sup>**, 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. Of course, the cow, donkey and camel are also regulars on Christmas Eve. Please invite family, friends and neighbours to all 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**

## **A message from the Chair of the Official Board**

As we approach this Christmas Season, I am filled with gratitude for all the loving and caring folks of St. Paul's who share so generously of their time and talents every day, so that our church continues her good work in the community, and beyond!

All of us together have accomplished so much this past year; thank you, merci, meegwetch!

On behalf of the St. Paul's Board, I wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy and Healthy New Year!

**Zena Pendlebury**

### **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

#### **Accessibility**

Warmest wishes of the season to you from the Accessibility Committee at St. Paul's. Thank you to the over 60 volunteers who attended the AODA compliance training in October this year. This was our big project as a committee this year and we are proud that St. Paul's has dedicated volunteers who actively engaged in discussions and problem solving to help understand not only our legislative requirements but also to promote good customer service and common sense.



We'd like to gently remind those committee volunteers that couldn't attend the training to please take the Customer Service, General Requirements, Ontario

Human Rights Code training modules found online at [www.accessforward.ca](http://www.accessforward.ca). Some committee members are required to complete additional modules as they pertain to their work. For example:

- M&P Committee will need the Employment module.
- The Tech & Communications Committee will need the Information & Communications Module.
- The Property Committee will need the Design of Public Spaces Module.
- The Worship Committee will also need the Information & Communications Module.
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If the training is completed online, people are asked to print the certificate from [www.accessforward.ca](http://www.accessforward.ca) when they complete the modules. Certificates must be submitted to the church office so that St. Paul's will have a record of who was trained and when.

Looking forward to 2020, the Accessibility Committee will identify new priorities for creating an inclusive environment, so we'd like to hear from you. Please fill in an Accessibility Feedback Form located in the atrium and submit it to the office. We'll look forward to reading your suggestions for the upcoming year.

Thank you for your continued commitment to welcoming people of all ages and abilities in our community. May 2020 bring good health and continued community support for all!

**Christina Strong**  
**Chair, Accessibility Committee**

## **Congregational Life**

The Congregational Life committee met recently and reviewed their responsibilities as part of the congregation of St. Paul's. We are committed to the Visitor's Team, Connections, the Men's and Women's Grief Groups, the Historic Roll, the Church Directory, the Alzheimer's group, and Social Hour.

The Visitor's Team is organized and very active. At this time anyone from St. Paul's who would like a regular visitor has one. Our goal is one visit a month. Karen does the hospital visits and will visit St. Paul's folk in their homes if requested.

Our new Alzheimer's committee is addressing this complicated issue that affects so many families. By publication time we will have had a special worship message, sharing the issues stemming from living with a family member with dementia as well as the opportunity to complete a survey created by the committee and to attend an information meeting.

Our Summerfest dinners have morphed into Food and Fellowship, a hot dinner served on the last Wednesday of the month, including a main dish, hot vegetable, side salad, rolls and butter, dessert, tea and coffee for \$15.00. This is quite a successful and fun fundraiser. Please join us for a chance to share a meal with friends old and new.

We are entering Advent season with all kinds of special events at St. Paul's. Please participate as you are able and we hope to see you at 'Camel Lot' (either the 10:00 a.m. worship service or the special performance

at 1:30 p.m.) the Christmas Cantata and Christmas Eve. Christmas Blessings to all our St. Paul's family and friends.

## **Sheila Thompson, Chair, Congregational Life**

### **Congregational Life – Pastoral Care**

The Fall season has seen St. Paul's Visiting Team very busy. Along with monthly visits, we also came together for a meeting where we caught up from the summertime and exchanged ideas regarding how to better include those who are in retirement, personal care and shut ins. Our team welcomed Barb Carswell, who will be visiting at The Villa Retirement Lodge.

Congratulations to Mary Vaillancourt for receiving her 20-year pin for volunteering at Georgian Manor and to Sharon Foster for receiving her 5-year pin. So many of our St. Paul's folks are doing God's work both under the St. Paul's umbrella and many other charitable organizations. We are very proud of your dedication!

Thank you for keeping us posted on folks who need pastoral care. You are all very much appreciated.

### **Merry Christmas!**

**Colleen Gareau, Pastoral Care Co-ordinator**

### **Faith Formation**

The Advent season is a busy time for St. Paul's and for our Faith Formation team. We are supporting 'Camel Lot - Don't Miss the Manger' and hosting the Annual St. Paul's Christmas Potluck lunch following the morning performance. Please join us for this fun luncheon and

perhaps stay to watch Camel Lot again. Many in the congregation felt that the organizers and cast had put so much effort into these plays over the past few years that it was too bad that they only had the one chance to perform it. So, the program will be put on again on Sunday afternoon at 1:30 p.m. We hope that folks from the retirement homes etc. can come and share in this joyful presentation. Everyone is welcome!!

Once again, St. Paul's will present our Christmas Eve nativity pageant with music and readings. All children in attendance will have the chance to 'costume up' and be part of the cast. This has become an annual Christmas tradition in many families, and we enjoy seeing our sanctuary filled with folks on this special evening.

Some of our committee are involved in a new curriculum that we are looking into for our Discovery Kids that can be expanded to include all ages. It is called Godly Play and we've been working with Unity Church to see if this is a good fit for St. Paul's.

At this very special time of year I speak for our whole committee in wishing all of you a very blessed and joyous Christmas.

**Sheila Thompson, Chair, Faith Formation**

**Faith Formation – Art and Spirituality**

Art and Spirituality completed both their spring and fall sessions. During the spring session we concentrated on drawing and presented a show of our



work. The fall session focused on elements and principles of design in theory and application.

## **Joan Neville**

### **Outreach**

I cannot believe we are getting ready for Christmas. I should not be surprised with the weather that has been with us since the beginning of November. The Outreach committee has been busy.

The annual **Canadian Foodgrains Campaign** wrapped up on the 24th November and the congregation raised approximately \$6,500. The board will match donations up to \$2,500 this year and the Federal government matches 4:1. The board will consider increasing this amount next year when our fiscal house is in better shape. Thank you to all who supported the campaign.

We are not doing the Christmas food Hampers for Christian Island this year. The Social Services team from Christian Island informed us that they have received a grant and are sharing that with the families on the Island. They have really appreciated our help in the past and may need it again in the future.

The Monday Morning Drop In group has started collecting donations to make gift bags for their clients, to be distributed in December. There will be a display Board in the atrium with their requests where you can choose what you wish to donate.



The Midland Santa Claus parade is on November 30<sup>th</sup> and we are providing hot chocolate and a place to warm up again this year. We also allow people to use our washrooms. We usually serve the hot chocolate before the parade. All volunteers are welcome.

The Outreach Committee wishes everyone a blessed Christmas Season. Stay safe and enjoy family and friends.

**Sharon Penrose, Chair of Outreach**

**Property**

As I sit here looking out my window on a blustery November afternoon, howling winds and snow squalls coming off Georgian Bay, it is not hard to imagine that winter and by extension Christmas, will soon be here. We will soon be seeing the Christmas decorations going up here at St. Paul's. By the time you are reading this, the Christmas tree in the Great Hall will be up and the Nativity Scene installed on the front lawn. The jolly old elf, Santa, will be coming soon.

Christmas is very special here as we celebrate the birth of the Christ Child, Jesus. On behalf of the Property Committee, I would like to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a healthy and prosperous New Year.

Members of the Property Committee include Hans Mueller, Tom Barber, Colin Whiteside, Floyd Tilson, George Leck (Hon), Cam Bonner and Bruce Wilcox. New members are always welcome.

**Bruce Wilcox, Chair, Property Committee**

## **Social Media and Tech**

With Advent fast approaching and winter hammering on the door to come in early, it is time to stir up our hearts and minds and write something for you about what we have been doing the last few months.

**Website:** Apart from a brief problem arising from posting too many images on our Home page, the website has been operating well. With so many activities it is sometimes hard to keep the information current, so I welcome input if you see that something is missing or out of date.

**Facebook:** Linda has been doing a marvelous job keeping the Facebook page interesting and up to date with pictures and information on all the activities and events taking place.



**Live Stream and HUB:** Despite Murphy's attempts to disrupt things, Glenn and the Tech Team have provided those in church and those watching at home with an audio visual service for us to attend in 'real time/live stream' and/or watch at a later date. The equipment for the HUB is in place and work is ongoing to provide this service to other congregations.

**LED sign:** We believe the new sign has already proved beneficial judging by the sell out for the Food & Fellowship Dinner in November! There are some things still to learn to get the full benefit of all the features, so we look forward to engaging more people in the wider community as we become more familiar with these features.

We hope that what we provide helps to enrich your experience and keep you in touch with life here at St Paul's United.

## **Fran Hill**

### **Worship**

Greetings to everyone. Our snowfall is early. On the downside, we have shoveling and snow blowing. On the upside, there are no mosquitos to swat. For those of you who have answered the call to serve Communion, thank you! For anyone who wants to serve Communion, when asked, please prayerfully consider saying YES. This is one of those unique opportunities to share our faith in sacrament together.

St. Paul's celebrates communion on the first Sunday of each month, from September to June. Eight people are needed to serve each communion Sunday. The servers meet in Karen's office for special instructions on where to stand and what to say. If for any reason you are unable to meet your obligation, please contact Julianna Shaw our Communion Server recruiter at 705-534-7082 or [julishaw@rogers.com](mailto:julishaw@rogers.com), Cathy Metzgar at 705-529-6665 or [bycatmet@gmail.com](mailto:bycatmet@gmail.com).

**God Bless each and every one.**  
**Cathy Metzgar, Chair of Worship**

### **Worship – Choir**

#### **Advent at St Paul's!**

We hope you will plan to be with us each week of Advent as we prepare our hearts and minds for the

season and incorporate enjoyable service music, new and old.

**On Sunday December 1<sup>st</sup>**, there will be special music from our choir's soprano and alto sections. As this is the first week of Advent, we will have special service music, including week one of the new Advent Candle Lighting."



Don't miss the Children's Community Choir on December 8<sup>th</sup>, our Christmas musical 'Camel Lot' on December 15<sup>th</sup> and our Choir Cantata, 'Have You Heard' on December 22<sup>nd</sup>

We are grateful to the McCullough family for the tremendous gift of a new Baldwin Grand Piano for use in our sanctuary. This instrument could not have come at a better time, just as Advent and seasonal concerts are beginning. We remember fondly Phyll's active participation in Advent and Christmas services, and acknowledge her significant and special contribution to St Paul's.



**Respectfully submitted,  
Victoria Warwick**

**United Church Women (UCW)**

The seasons come and go. In my last submission, we were looking forward to the lazy hazy days of summer. As I write this report, it is sunny and cold out there.

We enjoyed many interesting and informative presentations and hope that you'll not be disappointed in the coming months. On December 10<sup>th</sup>, we have a luncheon planned in the Great Hall at 11:30 a.m. Unity United Church from Vasey will be our guests. Unfortunately, they don't have their own UCW group. A donation of socks for the Guesthouse would be appreciated.

Stay tuned for more UCW event announcements in the coming months.

### **Sharon Foster, UCW President**

#### **The History of Christmas Carols - taken from a newspaper article.**

The word Carol means to dance or a song of praise and joy. Carols were first sung in Europe thousands of years ago. Carols used to be written and sung in all four seasons but only the tradition of singing them at Christmas has really survived.



In AD129 a song called "Angels Hymn" was sung at a Christmas service in Rome. In 760AD another famous Christmas Hymn was written by Cosmas of Jerusalem. Soon after this, many composers all over Europe started to write carols. However, not many people liked them because all the carols were written and sung in Latin, a language very few people could understand.

By the middle ages (1200's) people lost interest in celebrating with Christmas Carols. This all changed in 1223 when St. Francis of Assisi started his Nativity Plays in Italy. The people in the play sang songs to tell the story. Some of the choruses of these new songs were in Latin, but the rest of the song was in a language the people could understand.

The new carols spread to France, Germany, Spain and other European countries. Before carol singing in public became popular, there were sometimes official carol singers called "Waits". These were bands of people led by important local leaders (such as council leaders) who had the only power in the towns and villages to take money from the public. If others did this, they were sometimes charged as beggars! They were called "Waits" because they only sang on Christmas Eve. This was sometimes known as 'watchnight or 'waitnight' because the shepherds were watching their sheep when the angels appeared to them and when the Christmas celebrations began.

The first appearance in print of God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen, The First Nowell, I Saw Three Ships Come Sailing in and Hark the Herald Angels Sing was in "Christmas Carols Ancient and Modern" (1833) by William B. Sandys. Composers like Arthur Sullivan helped to re-popularize the carol, and it is this period that gave rise to such favourites as Good King Wenceslas and It Came Upon the Midnight Clear.

Also, at this time, many orchestras and choirs were being set up in the cities of England and people wanted Christmas songs to sing, so carols once again became

popular. New carols services were created and became popular, as did the custom of singing carols in the streets. One of the most popular types of Carols services are Carols by Candlelight services, held in countries all over the world. At this service, the church is only lit by candlelight and it feels very Christmassy.

**Submitted by Cathy Metzgar**

**Peace- A Christmas Story - Christmas 2003**

I had a good Christmas this year. The amber of human understanding was richly fanned during this most misunderstood time of the year.

My little British Columbia granddaughters helped me decorate an aromatic, freshly cut spruce. Their enthusiastic efforts gave the tree a lopsided, comical look – much to my liking. Big sister Jessica took great interest in arranging and re-



arranging the small nativity figures on her night table,” these are the shepherds, here are the Wise Men with Mary and Father Joseph and Baby Jesus in the middle...and where is God?” Pause! A taxing question for any grandmother. Two-year old Zoe discovered her best Christmas gift in my yellow Labrador retriever Charlotte. Which other toy is warm, moveable, rideable and always ready with sloppy, juicy kisses?

A tasty and noisy festive dinner with two thirds of my family, proven and new friends followed by a truly

inspirational Christmas Eve service prepared me exceedingly well for the actual Christmas story. My doorbell rang well after Christmas day; a cheerful post person handed me a parcel, old fashion size, a bit lumpy without any sharp corners, giving it the appearance of ready eagerness. "Here I am, finally, all the way from the far north. Open me!"

Yes, the long-awaited messenger from the other third of my family had arrived from the Yukon. Before telling you about the much-anticipated content of the lumpy arrival, you must know that I love Canada's North, especially the Yukon. I always return refreshed, purified, maybe just simplified from my many northern ventures. Since I couldn't be there this year, my oldest son, daughter-in-law, grandsons Max (six) and Angus (three) sent the Yukon to me.

How does one transfer affection? Here are the ingredients: Over the Top chocolate Gold and Butterscotch Nugget dessert sauces, Boreal Brew coffee beans, a travel coffee mug from the Midnight Sun Coffee Roasters, a calendar with the Northern Lights ablaze in a January sky, "I believe in Magic" note paper, an article describing the opening of a new skating and skiing venue with the picture of a smiling Max cutting the ribbon, the same inviting smile as in his first school photo now in front of me. Next – Tim Horton's gift certificates, yes, you heard right but then you're not familiar with my favourite, mystical walks across the mighty, historic Yukon river from my son's house to you know where. Finally, three big family enterprise manufactured placemats with various size cutouts of familiar photos and hockey players and more

hockey players; best of all, it says "to Omi", in Max's writing and a big orange "O", compliments of Angus.

Just think, now I have company during my otherwise solo meals. I'll see Father Clarke towing his boys in a canoe, Angus looking whimsically wise in his Harry Potter glasses and Max raising his fist in victory having won again in table hockey.

To bring this grand event to conclusion, I must mention that the enclosed greeting card contains one word – Peace. Peace which should be and is the core of Christmas. What is it that gives us peace, a spiritual balance? To me it is the joy of giving and receiving the gift of human understanding. God sent his only begotten Son and led us to the simple stable to interact with Him through this innocent messenger of peace. Human understanding is a precious gift, to me this year it came also in a wobbly, eager parcel from the Yukon.

**Submitted by Antje Clarke**

