St. Paul's Focus

Easter 2023

A publication of St. Paul's United Church
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Worship Services

April 2 – Palm Sunday at St. Paul's
Bells will ring and palms wave! 10:30 am

April 6 - Maundy Thursday
Service at Westminster 5:30 pm

April 7 - Good Friday
Service at Harmony 10:30 am

April 9 - Easter Sunday
Sunrise at Terry Fox Lookout 7:00 am
Westminster
Easter Service at St. Paul's 10:30 am
Livestreamed

April 16 - Awaken Us! - Cantata
Joint UC at St. Paul's 10:30 am
Presented by First-Wesley

A Message from our Board Chair

Dear Friends,

When Deb sent out the reminders for newsletter submissions, our driveway was clear, the sidewalks were mostly clear of snow, and my backyard bird feeder, which was easy to get to, was full of chirping birds.
Overnight, the driveway was full of snow, the sidewalks were impassible, and it was a challenge to wade through the snow to get to the bird feeder.
Today, the sun is shining, and the snow will begin to melt again, the driveway and sidewalks will be clear, and it will not require snowshoes to feed the birds. It will be spring!

Spring is the time of growth, as we see trees and plants coming back to life. For us, at St. Paul's it is a time of reflection, where we celebrate the resurrection of Christ.
During this holy season we see growth in our church as we welcome old and new friends, celebrate a year with Rev. Desire and his family bringing so much to our church, the chapel is alive with Sunday prayers, and once a month we have an Intercultural/interdenominational prayer service.
The Intercultural/interdenominational prayer service is lively, with beautiful singing, and many children who bring energy and joy. It feels like spring in our church!

New committees have formed, existing committees have welcomed new members, and the work and life of the church continues. Like the buds we are waiting to see, it feels like renewal in our church.

Our staff continue to serve us well. Deb, is always smiling and happy to work on anything asked of her. Michael, not only keeps things clean, he quietly does things like get the coffee started Sunday morning. Diana, makes sure there is joyous sound in our church, with choirs, handbells, guest musicians, and encouraging the congregation to sing. Rev. Desire's energy is infectious and we are sometimes dancing in the aisles. Like the blooming colours of spring, it feels like growth in our church.

On behalf of the Board of St. Paul's, I wish you a Happy Easter and look forward to the continuing renewal and growth of our church.
Happy Easter!

Respectfully submitted,
Laurie Forbes
Board Chair

Zechariah 10:1

Ask the LORD for rain in the springtime;
it is the LORD who sends the thunderstorms.
He gives showers of rain to all people,
and plants of the field to everyone.

FROM THE DESK OF REV. DESIRE
Easter Conversations …

Luke 24: 13-34

Easter is more than a date on the calendar. It can be understood as a verb and also as a noun. That's why I am using the word "Eastering".
We Easter the risen Lord and celebrate new life and new beginnings. We Easter possibilities, love, community, inclusion, new hopes, and we celebrate good news.
Easter means a lot but here at St. Paul's we Easter, living with a faith that enables us to hear and see differently. This draws **all** of us to engage in a conversation at the ***sacred table***. To make our conversation rich and diverse, I ask you to look up a longer passage of scripture.

Luke 24:13-34 tells of the men who walked with Jesus on the Road to Emmaus and the hope that came to them after a deep conversation.
You have that same hope!
You serve a risen Savior!
Yes, He did die, but the tomb is empty!
Because He lives, you can face your tomorrows!
In fact, everything about you, your faith, your foundation, your fellowship, and your future is all because you serve a risen Savior! Hallelujah!
Can you imagine living life, unaware that Jesus is alive?
Here, in Luke, we see two disciples walking from Jerusalem to Emmaus. The two travellers, one of whom is now named as "Cleopas", tells their new companion the story of Jesus of Nazareth. Their account of Jesus holds together the human and the holy. As they continue to speak, we hear that all their hopes have been dashed by the death of Jesus. The horrifying aspects of the materiality of his death are evident as they tell what happened: "Our leaders handed him over to be sentenced to death and had him crucified."
But that is not the end of the story. There is a further confusing event. They tell about the resurrection, setting the story in time and place, "early in the morning", "two days since it all happened", "at the tomb."
They describe the resurrection as material, not ethereal. The women from their group, they say, witnessed the empty tomb and returned to tell the other disciples. As they continued with the journey Jesus himself came along and walked with them, but they could not recognize him.
He asked them, "What are you discussing together as you walk along?"
They stood still, their faces downcast. "Are you the only one visiting Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?
"What things?" he asked.
"About Jesus of Nazareth," they replied. "He was a prophet, powerful in word and deed before God and all the people."

The chief priests and our rulers handed him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified him; but we had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel.
The women went to the tomb early this morning but didn't find his body. They came and told us that they had seen a vision of angels, who said he was alive. Then some of our companions went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but they did not see Jesus.
He said to them, "How foolish you are, and how slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Did not the Messiah have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?"
And, beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself. As they approached the village to which they were going, Jesus continued on, as if he were going farther. But they urged him strongly, "Stay with us, for it is nearly evening; the day is almost over." So, he went in to stay with them.
When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them.
Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him, and he disappeared from their sight. They asked each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?"
This is such a moving story about Easter Conversations.
The disciples were so captivated, consumed, engaged, and fascinated by the discussion, they were walking unaware that Jesus is alive and that he was with them on the journey and in the discussion!
We at St Paul's United Church are also journeying together with Jesus and conversing with each other. Conversations are healthy and beneficial in a myriad of ways. They bring social support, build connections, repair relationships, challenge us to think broader, bring new perspectives, clear confusion, and clarify misunderstandings. They are informative and educational in essence.
As a church family we are constantly conversing in Board and Committee Meetings, Coffee hour, Intercultural Services, Children's Time, Men's Supper Meetings, Ladies Luncheons, in our offices, with our families and with friends.
The Easter Conversations always bring a bunch of mixed feelings: wonder, awe, intense emotion, joy, sorrow, fear, happiness, loneliness, individuality, community, friendship, pain, hopelessness, trust, hope, love, togetherness, anticipation, promise, confusion, despair, strength, fearlessness, empowerment, clarity and confidence.
We constantly wrestle with these innumerable, ambivalent feelings as we journey through the passion week to Easter.
A week prior, things were different.
It was Palm Sunday, and Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey, while the people shouted and praised God.
One week later, they witnessed a crucifixion. They saw Jesus die on the cross, but they didn't hang around long enough to know the rest of the story. Good Friday is sorrowful passion filled with pain and agony, but Easter Sunday brings joy, happiness, and hope.
These disciples did not believe Jesus was alive, they were walking home with their heads hung low with sadness written across their faces. One could tell from way they were walking and talking that tomorrow wasn't looking promising. They were unaware of the news in Jerusalem, unaware of a risen Savior.
You don't need to worry about your health, family, work, retirement, studies, children and everything else. From your perspective, your future may not be looking good. Don't worry! Don't borrow sorrow from tomorrow.
God has it all in control! Because he lives, we can face tomorrow!
If you are in a troubled place, take comfort in the sovereignty of the Lord. Sovereignty is God's control over His creation. The risen Lord is the answer to our worries and fears.

He has some good news for you! He is still walking with you.
As the St. Paul's United Church Family, we have had our own equal share of challenges, difficulties and tribulations.
Our New Creed reads***," We are not alone, God is with us, we are not alone. Thanks be to God*".**

Isaiah 43:2 *says,*
"Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me!
When you pass through the waters, I will be with you."

Happy Easter.

CHRISTIAN GROWTH

SAVE THE DATE!! SAVE THE DATE!!

FINANCE & ADMINISTRATION

Hello everyone!
Easter is finally upon us, and Spring is fast approaching.

I can hardly wait to see the blossoms, trees budding and the lovely greens. We would all like to see the spring green, the church finances would also like to see more … *green*.

Inside your Newsletter is a special offering envelope. These special givings are essential for us to maintain a balanced church budget.

Thank you for all the gifts that you continue to give to our beloved Church.

Sincerely,
Andor Petrovich
Chair of Finance

WORSHIP COMMITTEE

Look! The dawn is breaking, see on the hillside the sun is beginning to rise!
Look! The tomb is open. A new day has begun.
Look! The tomb is empty.
The stone is rolled away.
Hope is reborn. Rejoice, for the day of Resurrection has come at last!
Alleluia!

As we look to Easter, we remember our days of Lent … our pondering and contemplation … we saw how Jesus was betrayed and arrested, beaten and tortured, tried and undefended by his friends. Jesus overcame it all.

He is risen, He is with us, do not be afraid.

Like the promise of crocuses bursting forth, Easter is the story of new life and not living our lives in fear.
Jesus is alive and will be with us, as we live each day, not in fear and worry, but in hope and love. Do not be afraid.

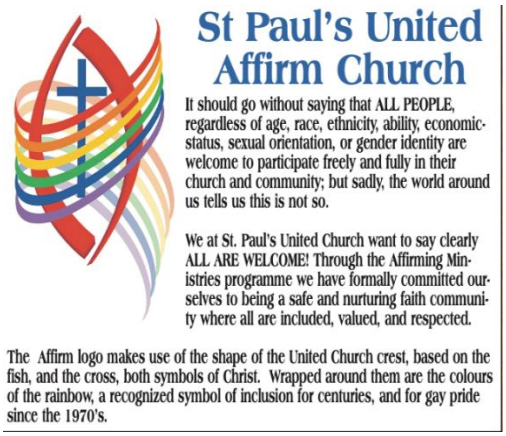
I hope this Easter will bring you time to reflect on the blessings we have, the opportunities to gather, the relationships we are lucky to have, and the people who surround us.
Rejoice!
There are many services planned in the United Churches and all are welcome to attend.
Let the joy of this Easter season fill you.
Hymn: VU 166:

"*Joy comes from the dawn; joy comes with the morning sun; joy springs from the tomb and scatters the night with her song, joy comes with the dawn*."

This Easter may you be free of fear, filled with joy, and held in love.
Halleluiah!
Cyndy Raby,
Chair of Worship

AFFIRMING COMMITTEE

The Lord is risen! He is risen, indeed! Jesus triumphed over the forces that misunderstood, or refused to accept, his message of love, acceptance, and inclusion for all, especially the most vulnerable. And we have the awesome opportunity not only to celebrate that, but also to live out his message in our own lives, as individuals, and as our faith community of St. Paul's. Hallelujah!
Your Affirming Ministry team is here to help keep that message alive and give us all opportunities to reflect and act on it.



That was very much in evidence on March 19, when we celebrated PIE Day, our commitment to being Public, Intentional, and Explicit about welcoming all persons into our family. It was a great celebration.
Because of technical difficulties, we were unable to see/hear our guest speaker, the Rev. Ken DeLisle, of Winnipeg; but through Diana's wizardry, it is now available here:
https://youtu.be/1QSNoaCGjdc
And the pies were wonderful! Thanks to all who contributed pies, which were enjoyed by all in attendance, and which allowed for $120 to be contributed to the Dew Drop Inn. Extras were also donated to the Ladies' lunch bunch.
Through Cyndy and Mike's efforts, a mailout from 2015 has been found, which included among other information, this, which I think still describes our church very well!
A blessed Easter to all; and may you continue to enjoy PIE in all its forms!

COMMUNICATIONS

Our committee created an ambitious to-do list for this year ranging from new pew cards to creating a church logo.

We strive to find meaningful ways for St. Paul's to maintain a welcoming and prominent public presence as we promote our various events in an economical manner.

For the first time, we will advertise our Vacation Bible School in the city's Summer *KEY*!
Hoping to reach up to 40 children, volunteers will be *very* much needed to make this a wonderful experience for the children. *Please let Kristin or the office know if you will help.* (807-345-5864)

Perhaps the most exciting news is the imminent arrival of our new St. Paul's website!
Watch for it in April!!

Easter Greetings from our whole team,

Andor Petrovich, Deb, Reverend Desire Tiriwepi, Diana Hannaford-Wilcox, Laurie Forbes and Teresa Parr

KITCHEN COMMITTEE

The Kitchen Committee has a cleaning day once a month. We are slowly cleaning and organizing the kitchen and taking stock of what is needed for a well-equipped kitchen. Karen, has supplied two new can openers, one a hand held and the other electric. Jane ordered good shelving paper online, as we replace the old shelving paper, some of it which is wallpaper and we have fun dating the era is from! Thank you, Karen and Jane.

You will be happy to know we have purchased 36 pickle forks!

On our workday we shared a lunch and lively conversation. You are more than welcome to come to our cleaning days to help and if you would like to join the committee, we would be thrilled to have you.

Exciting news! The Kitchen Committee is hosting a Blossom Tea on May 13, from 1 to 3 pm.
Tickets will be $6.00 per person.
It will be a dessert tea and each person attending will choose a slice of fancy dessert or pie. Please think about donations of pre-packaged individual meals, salads, plants, homemade jam, etc. Bakers, please think about baking delicious cakes, cheesecakes, upside down cakes, and pies to serve our guests. The Kitchen Committee is looking forward to working with everyone to make the Blossom Tea a huge success.

Respectfully submitted,
Laurie Forbes, on behalf of the Kitchen Committee

From the Music Room

Music Ministry is such an integral part at St. Paul's, and we are blessed to have so many volunteers to make a joyful noise to the Lord. The commitment our Chancel Choir and our Handbell Choir shows every time they come to weekly rehearsals shows every Sunday. We have some exciting things happening this spring so make sure you mark your calendars.

Easter Sunday this year will be a livestream service, a chance for us to come together as a community of faith. It will be a "Day to Rejoice" with the combining of both St. Paul's and Pinegrove Handbell Choirs. The Chancel Choir, along with Trinity and Pinegrove choirs, will be singing "Was It a Morning Like This" together. We are so fortunate to have the ability to bring these groups together on such a special day.

At our April 16th service, we are coming together with all the Thunder Bay Church Choirs to sing the Cantata, "Awaken Us." I had the privilege of seeing the premiere of this amazing music while I was in Halifax in 2019. Rick Gunn, the composer, will be flying into Thunder Bay to give the choirs a workshop on the Saturday as well as attending our service.

Music United is a diverse association of people passionate about their music ministry in the United Church of Canada. Every year, they put together a music conference, Music Matters, hosted in different areas of Canada. This year, I will be heading to Toronto to Islington United Church the weekend of April 21st – 23rd where I will be taking workshops on choral conducting, contemporary hymns, and drumming circles. I am very excited to enjoy a weekend with fellow music ministers from all over Canada. Next year, St. Paul's will be the host of Music Matters!

Music is a way to feel God's presence, a different way to pray, and way to praise God. I would like to send out a big thank you to Saira VanderWees who has brought movement to our worship services. It is so thrilling to look out into the congregation and watch everyone "dance" as they sing.

"Where words fail, music speaks."
Hans Christian Andersen

Blessings,
Diana Hannaford-Wilcox, Music Minister