St. Paul's Christmas 2022

A publication of St. Paul's United Church
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Nov 27th – Advent 1 - HOPE

Dec 4th – Advent 2 - PEACE

Dec 11th – Advent 3 - JOY
Handbells will be playing

Dec 18th – Advent 4 - LOVE
White Gift Sunday, Drama, Bells

Dec 21st – The Longest Night Service
At 7:00 pm

Dec 24th – Christmas Eve - 7 pm
Candlelight Service & Drama

– Christmas Eve - 11
Candlelight Communion Service

Dec 25th – Christmas Day Service
Jointly at Trinity – 10:30 am

Jan 1st – Worship Around the Table
in Lunan Hall
Potluck Breakfast - 9:30 am
Worship at the tables - 10:30 am

A Message from our Board Chair

Dear Friends,

With snow on the ground and our Christmas Tea days away, it is beginning to feel a lot like Christmas!

This is a year of much goodwill and joy.
Our minister is at the pulpit each week and his enthusiasm for the services, church, congregants, and those who will join us is truly joyful. The kitchen and tearoom are buzzing with activity and excitement; we are enjoying social time as we do the work of the church. I cannot wait to make the sandwiches. It really is great fun and full of goodwill!

At the Annual General Meeting, people were asked to join committees and they did!
Three new Board members were elected.
We now have a new person on the Finance Committee.

The Communications Committee has been revitalized and we already met. During the meeting new initiatives were discussed and are being worked on as I write this report.

A new committee, the Kitchen Committee, has 6 members. Given the importance of the kitchen in the life and work of the church this is exciting.

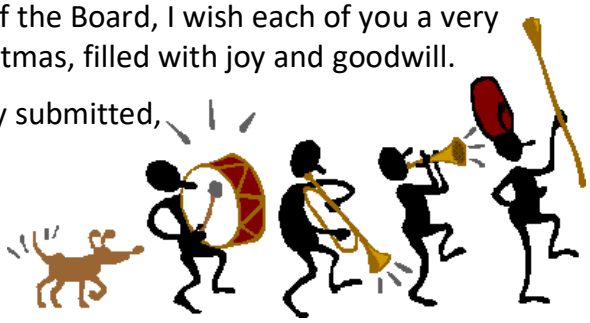
On Sunday, Rev. Desire announced the Men's Fellowship is active once again.
We really do have a reason to shout for joy and celebrate goodwill.

Our staff are incredible and such a pleasure to work with. Another reason to shout for joy.

Our church family makes St. Paul's the friendly, welcoming church we are. More shouts of joy!

On behalf of the Board, I wish each of you a very Merry Christmas, filled with joy and goodwill.

Respectfully submitted,
Laurie
Board Chair



A Message from Reverend Desire

Christmas Season

Time is moving so fast, it's hard to believe we are already approaching Advent and Christmas time. This will be my first Advent and First Christmas *in Canada*.

Basically, the Advent season refers to the period starting four Sundays before Christmas. It is a time of preparation for the Christmas celebration, as the church commemorates the coming of Jesus Christ. Advent also refers to the Second Coming of Jesus into the world.

In this newsletter I would like to draw your attention to the original Christmas Story (Luke 2:8-14) in which the angel revealed to the shepherd that the coming of Christ is multiple-faceted celebration.

1) It is not a time for fear. For *God has not given us a spirit of fear but of power, love and self-control*. **(2Timothy 1:7)**

2) The angel brought Good News and Joy for all the people. Christmas time is a time of the good news of Joy - - for the family, church and the community at large.

I challenge the St. Paul's Church Family to be Disciples of Good News of Joy. Let is embrace the Good News and celebrate it with joy and thanksgiving - - the Good News message, so vivid and healthy as we walk out of brutal pandemic.

3) The Savior is born unto you, and he is the Messiah. This calls for a joyous celebration with hope and faith.

Christmas is a time of giving because God gave first. Christmas is a time for celebration!

God Loves You!

In sending his Son on that first Christmas, God said in the most powerful way he could, "I love you "and so he gave. **(John 3:16)**

God loves you so much, he came to earth as a human being so that you could know him, come to trust him, and learn to love him back. Christmas is an affirmation that:

God loves you - - God is with you - - God is for you! Emmanuel, The Lord is with us and for us in every walk of our life, family life and our endeavors.

Let us as a community embrace and seek to impart and share this love with others as we all pursue Deep Spirituality, Bold Discipleship and Daring Justice.

We are called to accept that good Christian living requires us to treat one another with love and compassion; care for the sick; feed the hungry; look out for the poor and stand up for the victims of injustice and persecution. For it is these acts of human kindness that will allow us to bind together as God's beloved family in the advancement of our global faith and civilization.

Jesus was born into some pretty sparse circumstances. Born in a manger, the son of two poor Galileans, he lived a life of humility and simplicity that became a key element of his ministry here on Earth.

We try to reflect these same Christ-like attitudes at St. Paul's United Church by accepting each other and welcoming the diverse variants of God's creation. Jesus calls us to be his disciples and share our love with people at Christmas. **(1 John 4:7-9)**

Our love is not to be limited to *"just words and talk; it must be true love, which shows itself in action"* **(1 John 3:18)**

One way we tell our families and friends that we love them is by giving them our focused attention. Attention says, "I value you enough to give you my most precious asset—my time."

When you give someone your time, you're giving them a portion of your life that you'll never get back.

You can always make more money, but you cannot make more time.
Isn't it ironic that at Christmas we will spend our money lavishly, yet spend our time like misers? We keep our schedules so full and hectic that we often have difficulty showing up—with focused attention—in the lives of those we love.
Yet Jesus showed his love by being there. He gave people time and focused attention when they needed his help, when they needed his comfort, when they needed his protection, when they needed an answer to a perplexing problem, and when they just needed time with him.

Give with delight

God uses giving as an antidote for materialism **(Deuteronomy 14:23),** and he loves it when we give with a delighted heart **(2 Corinthians 9:7)**
Jesus said there's more happiness in giving than in receiving **(Acts 20:35),** but here's an important point to remember at Christmas:

Giving is a matter of willingness, not wealth.

It's an attitude, not amount. God doesn't want your possessions; he wants your heart **(Matthew 6:21)**
We've replaced true, heartfelt, delightful giving with a hollow materialism that keeps us all overspending during the holidays. Instead, we should give from our hearts.
In fact, as a pastor, I'd like to see you expand your definition of giving beyond the financial.
Imagine how much you could bless others if you simply shared your time and talents.
When you don't share, you're keeping others from experiencing the full blessings of God, and you're being a poor steward of all God has given you.
There's another reason we need to learn generosity in giving:
It builds our faith as we look to be generous with the world.
Everything we have is a *"good and perfect gift"* from our Heavenly Father **(James 1:17)** who lavishes on us *"every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms because we belong to Christ"* **(Ephesians 1:3.)**
The essence of Christmas is that we simply and humbly give of ourselves, just as God gave generously and sacrificially to us through his Son, Jesus Christ.
With this Good News as our center, we can generously show up in the lives of others with our time, talents, money, possessions, and friendship.

May Joy, Love, Peace, and Harmony be with you during this Christmas Season.

Rev. Desire Tiriwepi
Minister at
St Paul's United Church

Church Family News

Church Family Members: Janie McDaid (co-chair), Susan Phillips (co-chair), Joy Himmelman, Hannah Cryer, Laurie Forbes.
We welcome Laurie Forbes to our Church Family Committee. Happy to have you on board with us.

We are extending best wishes for a speedy recovery to Susan Phillips who is recuperating at St. Joe's after her open-heart surgery in Toronto. Susan you are missed at the church!! Looking forward to your return!! Take your time healing. Big hugs to Bob who has been supporting you through your journey to wellness.

Church Family recently hosted the Newcomers Welcome with a cake at coffee hour. Bill Everitt kindly took the newcomers on a tour of the church. Kudos to Bill for doing this.

Our next event is the **Children's Christmas Party** which will be held on:

Wednesday, December 7th from 6:00-8:00 pm.

If you want to join us, please call Debra at the office to register. There will be games, crafts, songs, stories, face painting, snacks and a visit from the Big Guy himself.
This is a great opportunity for you parents out there to catch up on some Christmas shopping or just spend a quiet night at home.
It is always a fun time for the kids.

We have been asked when the new directory will be started. We do plan on doing this when the time is right for our committee members.
Hopefully in the New Year.

Wishing everyone a safe and happy Christmas season filled with family, friends and good cheer.

Respectfully Submitted,
Janie McDaid

From the Music Room

Can you believe it? The snow is falling, stores are busy, and the overabundance of Hallmark Christmas movies have appeared on Netflix. The best part is that bells are ringing, and choirs are singing, all preparing for the exciting season of Advent and Christmas.

Both the Chancel Choir and the Handbell Choir have been meeting regularly trying to get back some normalcy after being away for so long because of the pandemic. Although there have been a few setbacks because of the lingering of covid and my ankle replacement surgery, we have had the choir in the loft every Sunday morning leading hymns and singing anthems when we can.

I would like to encourage anyone who would like to sing on a short-term basis to come sing with us for Advent and Christmas. You never know, you might enjoy it so much you'll want to stay!!

The Handbell choir will be guests at the Silver Sound Choir Concert on Sunday, December 11th at 2:00 right here at St. Paul's. Grab a friend, a relative, a neighbour and come support this great choir and our handbell ringers.

White Gift Sunday will be on Sunday, December 18th. The youth and children will be leading our worship service and there will be a drama called, "Follow the Star" where all the children and young at heart will be given a part to play in the Nativity.

Christmas Eve will be a very special night. We will be lighting candles, singing carols, and having a drama to illustrate the telling of the Jesus Birth IN PERSON!!! The choir will sing, the handbells will play, and the carols will be sung.

"The Nazareth Evening News" will come to us live at this service with roving reporters interviewing all those who follow the star to the manger. Nothing will help with your holiday spirit like adding a little hope, peace, joy, and love into your busy lives.

Remember, if you would like to be a part of either the Chancel Choir or the Handbell choir, send me an email or come see me after a Sunday service and I will make sure you have everything you need to start.

Make a joyful noise!
Diana Hannaford-Wilcox, Music Director
dlcwilcox@tbaytel.net

Mark Your Calendars
Tuesdays at 6:00 pm - - Handbells
Thursdays at 7:00 pm - - Chancel Choir

Christian Growth

Sunday School & Youth Group

Sunday School is in the swing of things again. We enjoy having our regular children each week along with a few new kids that have been attending, which is terrific!
We hope to see all of the children come each Sunday as we would like for them to be part of the services leading up to Christmas and the Season of Advent. We look forward to taking part in the White Gift Service on December 18th.

We are excited and are looking forward to starting three different Youth Groups for various age groups:
Junior Youth Group – Grades 2 – 6
Youth Group – Grades 7 – 12
Young Adult Group – 18 and over
Look out for more information as we begin to start planning. If you know any youth that might be interested, please let us know!

All the very best for a wonderful Christmas season and we look forward to a great 2023!

For any information on Sunday School or the Youth Groups please contact:
Kristin Williams Chair,
Christian Growth Committee
at tkwill@tbaytel.net
or cell 628-7793

Ministry & Personnel Committee

Holy Moly! Is it that time of year again?
As I write this, the sandwich fillings have just been made and the Christmas Tea is around the corner. You may ask what that has to do with M&P, and I don't blame you!
This is one of the busiest times of the year for all of our staff from our Youth Facilitators, Jeri-Lee and Hannah who ensure that our children have an opportunity to get together other than on a Sunday morning for some fun and learning, on up to Reverend Desire who helps you leave each Sunday service feeling uplifted, with a purpose in your stride as you walk out the door or go for coffee.

Yes Sir, the church is a busy place from now until Christmas where everyone is working in high gear. What with the seasonal concerts, Christmas Tea's, weekly presentations, building preparations for the season so that we look bright and cheery - and all the other things that go into having a successful season full of wondrous activities, they are kept hopping about.

All of these things do not go on without the constant, diligent efforts of our staff.
Every piece of paper you read, every space you walk through, every musical note you hear, every service, meeting, or event you attend has somehow been touched by one of the members of our staff.
So, as you walk around this facility know that they, along with the multitude of volunteers amongst us, have done their best so that what you experience when you come into St. Paul's is a positive and welcoming environment.

On behalf of Jodi, Joy, Andre and myself,
we wish you a Happy and Joyful Holiday Season.

Rejean Langlois,
M&P Chair

The Worship Committee

"Christmas is coming, let the church bells ring!"
This is the start of an anthem the choir is working on. It is peppy and happy and is one that I sang on my way home from practice.
Here we are at Advent, the beginning of a new liturgical year. Time keeps moving forward in a fast pace.
Advent is a time to prepare, the choir is singing, the bells are ringing, and the worship committee has planned a full schedule to help all prepare for the coming of the babe in the manger.
We will be requesting help for ushering and candle lighting on Christmas Eve so stay tuned! Diana will also be reaching out to those who would like a part in a drama.
Let us not forget that Advent is a time for preparing our hearts and homes for Christ's birth in our world today. Advent invites us to reflect and open our hearts to welcome the Christ child into our lives.
It is our hope that this Christmas season will bring hope, peace, joy and love to you and yours as you travel with us on the road to Bethlehem!

Many Blessings
Cyndy Raby
Worship Chair

DECEMBER SPECIAL EVENTS:

2nd & 3rd – TBSO presents - Handel's "MESSIAH"

7th – Children's Christmas Party 6:30 pm

11th – Silver Sounds Concert – 2 pm

14th – Sr. Ladies' Luncheon

Finance and Administration Committee

Hello Congregation,
It has been so great to see activities resuming in the Church again. The Finance Committee has been able to move back to 'in-person' meetings each month.

Lately, we've been working hard preparing the annual budget, as well as maintaining monthly duties and counting the givings.

I'd like to thank you, the congregation, for your offerings which helps to keep our church alive and thriving. After the last couple years, Reverend Desire brings our church back to life with both his dynamic preaching and thoughtful initiatives for growing our numbers.

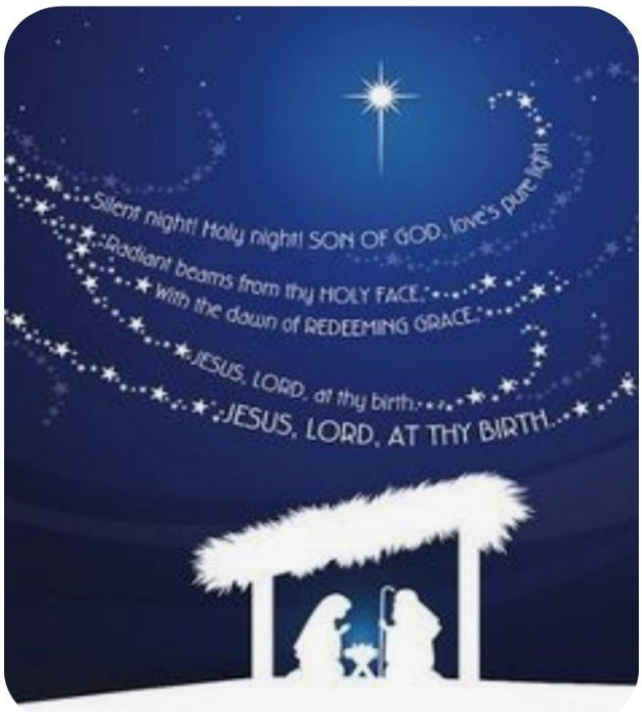
Givings can be submitted in person - - or as a monthly Pre-authorized Remittance which can be easily set up through Deb in the office - - or as a direct deposit e-transfer, which can me remitted through your baking app to office@stpaulstbay.net

Your official income tax receipt for all givings will be mailed to you in the new year.

We are pleased to report that Bill Everitt has joined our committee. If ***you*** are interested in joining or coming to one of our meetings, please let us know and we will send you an invite.

Have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Sincerely,
Andor Petrovich, Chair
Finance and Administration



The Outreach Team

"Let's brighten the world together"
December 18th
has been designated
White Gift Sunday at St. Paul's.
You will be supporting:
The Elizabeth Fry Society by bringing gifts of toiletries, hats and mitts for women and children as well as reusable shopping bags.
You will be supporting the Clothing Assistance Mission by bringing gifts of underwear and socks.
Gifts of cash designated White Gift will go to St. Paul's Benevolent Fund.
Your festive gifts can be placed near or hung on the Christmas tree at the back of the sanctuary.
Nancy Post

ISTHMUS

Currently, we are feeding 482 children in our city's schools. It is a huge number supported in part by many members of this generous congregation.

The cost of supporting a child for one (1) year remains at $120.00.
If you want to donate you can do so through the *Isthmus website.* Be sure to designate your payment to:

ISTHMUS - THUNDER BAY.

The large jar is still at the back of the church for donations of any denomination. Cash donations always go towards the purchase of fresh fruit every week.
Single portions of oatmeal, snack bars, can soup, can spaghetti, canned beans, can tuna or salmon, juice boxes, etc can be dropped off in the church office or the baskets at the back of the sanctuary.

God Bless everyone & your generosity.
Marlene Crago