ST. PAUL'S FOCUS

A publication of St. Paul's United Church
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THANKSGIVING 2022

Message from our Board Chair

Dear Friends,

It is hard to believe Thanksgiving is just weeks away!

There are so many things to be thankful for, we truly are blessed. We are able to meet face-to-face, enjoy coffee hour, welcome new friends to the church, and this week there was even discussion of a Christmas Tea!

Rev. Desire has added testimonials to our worship service, and it is heartwarming to hear the good things happening in people's lives, to hear how the spirit has moved them, and to request prayers for those in need.

Our music director, Diana has the choir singing in church and this past Sunday, Michelle sang Hallelujah and it was just beautiful. I noticed there was handbell practice and that means a real treat for all of us.

Deb is keeping our office running smoothly, she keeps us on our toes, and no matter when you show up, she always has a smile. I am thankful for her weekly What's Up, it is not only informative, it is always so visually appealing.

I am thankful Michael keeps our church clean. During the summer, the days I did coffee hour he always had the coffee maker plugged in and ready to go, for which I am grateful.

Our youth group is meeting in-person and if you read last week's What's Up, they have a slate of fun things to do this fall. I am thankful for our youth group leaders, Jeri-Lee and Hannah.

We can be thankful our Sunday School is open, and committees are meeting.

Belonging to a loving congregation, who are there for friendship and support is truly a blessing.

On behalf of the Board of St. Paul's I wish each of you a very Happy Thanksgiving.

Laurie,
Board Chair

HAPPY THANKSGIVING
FROM THE DESK OF REVEREND DESIRE

As St. Paul's commemorates its 150th Anniversary let us be grateful for the efforts, the sacrifices, the dedication and commitment of those who lived and worked before us. Their prayers and their ministry shaped who we are. We honour them as we move forward with gratitude, thanking God for providence and the assurance that we find in the Word.

The Lord will make a way for our future.

Gratitude is an intentional way of thinking about receiving a benefit and giving credit to others beside oneself for that benefit.
Practicing gratitude magnifies positive feelings more than it reduces negative feelings.
And this act of writing one thank-you note and saying thank you, can also change your life.
Giving thanks even to other people can make us positive thinkers. It can help you to leave negative mindset and thoughts behind and become more positive and hopeful.

It permanently changes life for the better.

Psalms 100 and Psalm 66 will help us to remember the Old Testament Thanksgiving ceremony.
It was much about remembering what God had done for Israelite people. The rescue from the Pharaohs, the crossing of the Red Sea, the Passover blood on the doors, the manna, and the water from the rock in the wilderness among others.

The Apostle Paul did not write 365 thank-you notes. But he did write about one-half of the letters that make up the New Testament … and Paul's letters overflow with thanksgiving.
No matter what challenges he endured, Paul's letters, like our Second Reading from 1 Corinthians 15:57 and Colossians 1:3-8 , were filled with thankfulness. And they overflow with joy too.
Because thankfulness from the heart produces spiritual joy.

Gratitude also helps us see our interconnectedness.

There is a story of a young couple in which the husband was graduating with his master's degree. It was the eve of his graduation from a long, grueling academic program. After four years of intensive, full-time study, he was finally about to receive his diploma.
His wife planned a special party so that many of their friends could come and help him celebrate the long-awaited day of graduation. There would be a catered BBQ, banners, streamers, swimming, croquet, and other yard games. Many people had already accepted her invitation to attend, and it looked like it would be a full house.
Her husband, though, had other ideas!
He secretly contacted each person who had received an invitation and revealed his plan to make the party a surprise in honor of his wife.
Yes, there would be banners, streamers, and all the rest, but they would bear her name, not his.
He wanted to do something special to let her know how much he appreciated the years of sacrifice she had devoted to support him in achieving his goal.
Working full-time to put him through school and delaying her dreams of a house and family had, in many ways, been harder on her than the long hours of study had been on him.
When the day arrived, she was busy with preparations and last-minute details, still convinced that all was going according to her plan. Her husband arranged to get her away from the party site, and while she was gone, he put up a huge banner with her name on it. During that time, all the guests arrived as well.
She returned to the house to be greeted with a loud "SURPRISE!"
When she realized what was going on, she could barely fight back the tears. Her husband asked a few people to share what they most appreciated about her. Then he stood before them and, with tender words of love and admiration, expressed his gratitude for all she had done for him. When he was through, everyone saluted her with a toast of iced tea, and by doing this for her out of gratitude, her husband created a lifelong, romantic memorial to his wife's love and dedication to their marriage and family.

Gratitude also inclines one to "give back" what they have received.

Gratitude has the largest effect on peoples' willingness to "give back" – more than sadness, happiness, empathy, shame or anger.

The Bible also exalts us to remember what God has done. How can we forget?
In the Gospel reading from Luke 17, Jesus heals ten lepers.

Of the ten healed, only one came back and gave thanks to Jesus - - a Samaritan, who had imperfect faith and belief. Nine of them continued on their way after their healings to do what Jesus said—get their certificate of health so that they could start their new lives as soon as possible.
But there was a deeper movement in the one who returned to Jesus filled with gratitude.

So, the percentage of those healed who came back was exactly ten percent. Hmm…does that number sound familiar? It is a tithe.
Oh, St. Paul's do not give tithe, but a gift or an offering of gratitude.
And the tithe was to be *not* from the "bottom of the barrel." It was to be from the very *best* of the harvest.
So, the very best was a Samaritan? Double ouch for the Jews! Coincidence? I don't think so.

Lastly, Gratitude is like a thermometer that tells you the state of your spiritual health.

The most beautiful prayer of Thanksgiving is the celebration of Eucharist, an offering of praise to God our Father for having sent Jesus to sacrifice himself for us and for sharing his very self with us. In fact, the Greek word "Eucharist" means thanksgiving.
Begin your prayer time in the middle of the workday when you are immersed in tasks, with praise and thanksgiving.
It's natural to want to ask God to solve our problems when we come to him in prayer. But we will feel more immediate help when we say something like,
"Thank you, Lord Jesus, for loving me. Thank you for coming in the flesh to save me. Thank you for dying on the cross for my sins. Thank you even for the trials I'm going through, because I know you will work them out for my good, and help me to grow through them.
Almighty God, we thank you for your graces and blessings and healings in our lives.
Help us to ALWAYS be grateful to you through your Son, Jesus Christ. Amen."

PRAYERS IN THE CHAPEL

I am inviting everyone to come for prayers in the Chapel - every Sunday at 9:00 am

The benefits of prayer:

1. Prayer helps you develop a relationship with God. When we pray God listens and answers.
2. Prayer helps you to gain an understanding of God's loving nature. God is love (1John4:8). Feel that love, guidance, and assurance as we pray together.
3. Prayer provides answers. God answers prayers and through prayer you will better understand your purpose in life.
4. Prayer helps you to find direction in your life. God gives guidance and helps us to discern the direction for our life.
5. Prayer gives you strength to avoid temptation. Jesus counseled His disciples, "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation." (Matthew 26:41)
   Through prayer, we can overcome temptations to sin. Pray for God's help to keep you from making wrong choices. This will give you the strength to do what is right.
6. Prayer aligns your will with God's will. Prayer helps us to understand God's will for our life.
7. Through prayer God Strengthens us.
8. Prayer brings healing, peace, and forgiveness.
9. Prayer builds our faith in God.
10. Prayer is the key to a healthy connection with God and a key to God's grace.

Youth and Sunday School Led Service - - on October 30th

Rev Desire is working closely with the youth to organise this youth led service - - with the intention to involve the youth in church activities and attract more youthful people to come to St. Paul's United Church.

The young people in discipleship approach will help us attract more young people.

FINANCE COMMITTEE

It is so nice to be back in church every Sunday!

Rev. Desire has been a blessing and beacon for us all, and I am slowly seeing both new and old faces returning to the church.

In terms of finances, our church givings have been steady but below the pre-Covid levels. The manse repairs were considerable, and absorbed most of the surplus funds we had managed to accumulate over the last couple of years

With a full compliment of staff, we will have some financially challenging times ahead.

Please remember to give during this time of Thanksgiving to keep the lights of our church on.

I would like to thank all the staff of St. Paul's for all they do for our wonderful church and wish them all a wonderful Thanksgiving.

Best Regards,

Andor Petrovich
Chair of Finance

M & P COMMITTEE

Well cooler temperatures are here, and camps are closing, but here at St. Paul's things are just ramping up! Deb is back from her summer vacation all refreshed and is already heavy into preparation for the annual meeting and all the fall activities that are scheduled between now and Christmas.

If you are heading into the office, remember that the board passed a motion to make St. Paul's a Scent-Free building.

After two years of being cooped up and doing things through social media. The youth group led by Jeri-Lee and Hannah will be able to meet in person and return to normal activities. As Reverend Desire has shown a wish to become more involved with youth, we look forward to what things the three of them can come up with for the group. Also remember all youth are welcome whether a member of our congregation or not.

Now that church services are in full swing, Diana has her hands full with choir practices, and service preparation. As always, we look forward to the wonderful, varied music program that she will come up with for the coming season.

Through the pandemic, Michael was very active in keeping the church running as smoothly and possible. With the upcoming concert season, lecture evenings and numerous in-person meetings he will be kept hopping so if you do see something that needs attention, please contact a property member, or politely make him aware of the issue.

With the arrival of Reverend Desire and family, things are returning to normal with full in-house services, pastoral care, and the multitude of other duties of a fulltime minister being handled on our behalf. His family has become part of our family as they participate and enjoy many of the activities available here at St. Paul's. We are truly blessed!

A thank you goes out to the other members of M&P (Joy, Jodi, and Andre) for their continued support and input.

Respectfully submitted,
Rejean Langlois, Chair

CHRISTIAN GROWTH

Vacation Bible School was a smashing success once again! It was a wonderfully received week of activities for the children and youth after an unscheduled, two-year hiatus.

Sunday School has started up again as children and families return to usual routines. It is always so amazing to see how the children have grown over the summer.

Youth Group is led by our enthusiastic and experienced leaders, Jeri Lee and Hannah.
Here is a look at their list of events:

FALL SCHEDULE
Sep. 25 - - Getting to know You - Games Night
Oct. 2 - - Paint Night - Pet Edition!
Oct. 23 - - Movie Night
Nov. 6 - - Milkshake Competition-Winner takes all*!*
Nov. 20 - - Bowling – Just Roll with it!!
Dec. 4 - - Escape Room!!!
Dec. 18 - - FESTIVUS CELEBRATION
(Caroling for canned goods)

Happy Thanksgiving to everyone and thank you for all the support we receive for our endeavours!
Kristin Williams,
Chair

Property Committee

A ton of work has been done this year!
Numerous faulty parts were replaced in our boiler and heating system and so far, the clonking noises are gone. The heating system is running smoothly and much more efficiently.

Over the summer, a new furnace and hot water tank was installed in the Manse and soil was spread for a garden, as well as proper drainage away from the building.

We extend our sincere thanks and appreciation to Ray and Rosemary Quinn for all the hard, physical labour they volunteered, to make the Manse a comfortable home for Reverend Desire and his family.

Isthmus Thunder Bay

With the start of another school year, we again are putting our efforts forth to help put food into the tummies of as many hungry school children as possible.
Nothing much has changed this year. Currently, we are going to feed children in 13 of the city's schools. This could change as the school year progresses, with other schools asking for assistance or the addition of children whose needs weren't known at the time of the initial list.
Unfortunately, at the time of writing this, we haven't received all the numbers from school administration yet, but do expect them very soon. We suspect it will be close if not more than the numbers last year. Previously, with the generous help of our church members, we provided bags of food for 459 children every Friday throughout the school year.
The cost of supporting a child for one (1) year still remains at $120.00.
If you want to donate you can do so through the Isthmus website or a cheque that I will direct through the proper channels. **If writing a cheque, please make sure it's made out 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.
This year we will still be putting single portions of oatmeal, snack bars, can soup, can spaghetti, canned beans, can tuna or salmon, juice boxes, etc. These foodstuffs can be dropped off in the church office, and I will bring them to the packing place.

I would like to give a heartfelt thank you to all the generous church members for their amazing support since I took on this campaign. It is truly a heartwarming experience. The children are excited every Friday to receive their little bags of food and are very appreciative.
God Bless everyone & your generosity.
Marlene Crago

Camp Duncan

Board members of Thunder Bay United Church Camps Inc. are rejoicing over the use of Camp Duncan this summer. After two years of "no rentals" because of COVID-19, the camp was used again by churches and community organizations. Both the United Reformed Church and the Presbytery of Superior--our erstwhile brothers and sisters in the Presbyterian Church--offered camping experiences for children this summer.

The camp facilities were also used by Our Kids Count and Autism Ontario in July and by the Lakehead University Residences in late August (a long-time involvement). One of our Board members brought the Thunder Bay Hiking Group there for a weekend in August. And the Rev. Ken Moffatt, our senior Board member, closed the season with a weekend retreat for the First Wesley Adult Group, which featured former Moderator, the Very Rev. David Guiliano, as speaker and facilitator of writing autobiographies.

The Board is considering changes in the booking policy for Camp Duncan, which will challenge our communities of faith to plan their use of Camp Duncan earlier than in the past. The Board hopes that we might organize camps for children and youth in 2023.
We, at St. Paul's, are always mindful of our Vacation Bible School offering, but could we not join in the outreach possibilities of some United Church camp offerings? The facilities continue to be upgraded in a several-year campaign organized by Bill Lynch, who became Chair of the Board this summer, and they deserve much more use than they received this summer!

Ernie Epp,
St. Paul's Representative (with Laurie Forbes)

From the Music Room

Usually, we talk about spring being the time for new beginnings. That time of year when life seems to blossom before our eyes. The stark, grey tree branches become hidden with bright, green leaves, sleeping gardens wake with the sprouting of flowers, and the birds fill the air looking for the perfect spot to spend the upcoming warm days with their new family. Don't get me wrong, fall is a beautiful time of year as well. The leaves turn from green to a vibrant yellows and reds, gardens are overflowing with a bountiful harvest, school is back in session, and there is pumpkin everything!

Reflecting on the past two years, it still astounds me and warms my heart because of the Thunder Bay United Churches and their Music Directors forming an alliance to keep the music in our services by learning how to put together virtual choirs. The support and encouragement we received from both choir members and our congregations was astounding. I'm happy to say that the Music Directors still meet every Tuesday morning to talk about the music in our services. We would still like to put together some virtual hymns and anthems for those who are not comfortable coming back to sing in person. Thank you for all your love and support!

I am thrilled to say that the Chancel Choir and the Handbell Ringers are back rehearsing and getting ready to make music in our worship services! If you would like to join us, come and see me after a service or send me an email or a text and I will make sure you are included!
Handbells meet Tuesdays at 6:00 pm and Choir rehearses Thursdays at 7:00 pm. I am also looking for instrumentalists - Guitar, Bass, or anything else you might be able to play!

Let's make a joyful noise!!
Diana Hannaford-Wilcox,
Music Director

Worship Committee

"Come, you thankful people, come!"

This year is our first thanksgiving with Rev. Desire and his family. We have much to be thankful for.
This fall we will see celebrations in our history and relationships with the Masons.
One hundred and fifty years is something to be thankful for!
We will continue with live-stream services, only on our rotation, so we, at this time, will not be pre-taping a portion for the Live-stream.

The sanctuary is open for Sunday services, with the choir back in place and bells rehearsing.
We are looking forward to a Youth Led service and communion in October.
Things are coming alive!

Rev. Desire has said in his sermons that St. Paul's is his mission. He has plans, new things are on the horizon, and all of us are to be a part of the journey.
We want to hear your ideas, your voice, see you participate in services, come out for bible study.
Prayer time is still offered in the chapel Sunday mornings from 9:00 – 9:30.
I am thankful for my committee of willing people who volunteer their skills and talents freely. There is always room for more.

We are working with Rev. Desire to "gather all our people in".

Come and join the fellowship, praising in word, prayer, and song.
Happy Thanksgiving!
Cyndy Raby
Chair

CHURCH FAMILY

MEMBERS:
Janie McDaid, co-Chair, Susan Phillips, co-Chair, Joy Himmelman, Hannah Cryer

Greetings from Church Family,
It is with much sadness that we acknowledge the passing of one of our members, Mavis Wilkes. Mavis passed away in July of this year.
She played a very active roll in **ALL** our functions, and she will be missed by the church and by our Church Family.
Rest In Peace, Mavis and thank you for all your incredible contributions. You have left behind a tremendous legacy of service.

Church Family is deliberating whether to hold our annual Newcomers' luncheon in November and the children's Christmas party in December. We will keep you posted as to our decision.

We are hosting the 150th Anniversary celebration of St. Paul's United church on Friday September 30th. This event is scheduled for 7:00 and there will be coffee/tea and cake following the program. *Please join us for this momentous occasion.*

As with many of the committees at the church, we are proceeding with caution as to our re-opening of events. We are certainly feeling euphoric about the continual relinquishing of covid restrictions, and we are taking measures to keep the church community safe while we re-integrate into our social agenda.

Humpty Dumpty had a great fall!

Hope you have the same!

Respectfully submitted,
Janie McDaid