St. Paul's Focus

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

Worship Services

April 10 - **Palm Sunday - 10:30 am**
Come in the morning and join the parade, waving your palms!

April 10 – 2:00 pm - Covenanting Service for Reverend Desire Tiriwepi
A Celebration of Promise.
A Reception to follow

April 14 - Maundy Thursday - 6:30 pm
A service led by Reverend Desire Tiriwepi and Reverend Rob Smith

April 15 - Good Friday – at Pinegrove
We join Pinegrove/Trinity.
1:30 pm - The service begins at St. Mark's in Rosslyn where they will walk the cross to Pinegrove.
3:00 pm - Good Friday Worship Service at Pinegrove
You are welcome to join for the walk and/or at Pinegrove United or at Trinity United for in-person worship.

April 17 – *Easter Sunday*

6:45 am - Terry Fox Lookout
Sunrise Service led by Reverend Susan Ivany of Westminster
Communion will be served

9:00 am - LUNAN HALL
Join us for St. Paul's delicious pancake and sausage breakfast

9:45 - Easter Egg Hunt
Fun for the kids

10:30 - Easter Service
Rev Desire preaching.
This will be livestreamed.
****Sunday School BEGINS AGAIN****

April 24 - Full 'in-sanctuary' Celebration Worship Service.
It will also be livestreamed for those unable to join us.
A Luncheon and fun celebration will Follow the service in Lunan Hall.

FROM THE MINISTERS DESK

The covenanting service coming on the 10th of April is an opportunity to showcase St. Paul's creativity, hospitality, and music. With good music and organization, the covenanting service can be lively and inviting.

As the Easter slowly approaches it is important for us to look at Easter as the most important date on the Christian calendar.

It celebrates the resurrection of Jesus Christ three days after the crucifixion on Good Friday. It is chiefly about sacrifice beyond understanding, about relationships in all their many forms, and about the renewal of a world gone awry.

Renewal and revival at St. Paul's United Church - after hibernating for two years there is always a hope for another beginning and hope for the future of a lovely community of faith.

Hope to embrace something new and different. Hope for revival and the possibility of meeting with our Christian friends and family in the sanctuary and hope for new forms of worship and fellowship.

Hope to be able to win the hearts and minds of new people as we rebuild our community of faith.

Above all, Easter offers hope and possibility after a period of profound pain, loss, and sorrow by Covid-19.

In Easter we are looking at Jesus Christ for healing, rejuvenation, and renewal.

Two millennia on, whether we be literalists or given to symbolism, similar themes abide.

The COVID-19 crisis has delivered, along with its human and economic ravages, a season of wholesale soul-searching. It has created an enforced period of stillness. It has encouraged contemplation.

Not least of all, it has inspired an assessment of what's vital and what's not.

All around the world, as nations cope with the coronavirus that has killed tens of thousands and idled the global economy, people on their own, in their families, on streets and online, have been taking stock and seeking solace.

For our healing, we are encouraged to attend the services in person and online to participate in this life changing pilgrimage that will lead to the renewal of our faith.

We should take this opportunity to remember our friends who are dying in war in Ukraine as each day passes.

Jesus was crucified but death and the grave could not contain him. God raised Jesus from death, turning sorrow into joy, despair into hope.

By participating in Easter programs: the Palm Sunday, the Maundy Thursday services, the Good Friday and the Easter Sunday we are partaking in the passion journey and all its experiences.

We shall all celebrate his resurrection on April 17th as we will sing songs to celebrate the resurrected Lord who was raised from the dead. Easter is a sign of victory over death and hope over despair.

Because he lives all our fear is gone, and he has given us a firm assurance for our future. Easter is symbolic in that it takes away our fears and sorrows. We are constantly reminded at Easter that death is not the last word or final denominator but there is life after death, joy after sorrow and hope after despair.

I am inviting you to consider this year's Easter as a family celebration. Let's invite our families and friends to come and be part of this life-changing experience. An Easter hunt game shall be organised for the children in the sanctuary.

Let us continue to search for some deeper meaning and profound discernment as we look for the signs of hope, of joy and of life that are hidden in the world all around us. After the songs, dance, and the prayers we will have an opportunity to float - one table to another as we socialise in fellowship, cementing our ties and relationships.

“Behold the old is gone and the new is coming …. behold I am about to do something new.” (Isaiah 43:19)

Change can be fun and exciting but not always easy.
Do you know what a youth shadow church board is? Can we sing a warm greeting song when we welcome visitors?

Rev Desire Tiriwepi

Message from our Board Chair

Hello Friends,

The Easter season is a time of renewal and rebirth. After two long years of lockdowns and coping with the pandemic, we are finally returning to a new normal. In our church, we are witnessing renewal! The sanctuary is open for in-person services and we have our new minister, Rev. Desire, tending to us. It is great to be in our church, hear the reflection, see old friends, and last Sunday to make new friends with the 5 people who came to our church for the first time. The message from Rev. Desire, last Sunday was to open our arms and hearts, to forgive. It is a time of renewal!

I have to say, that I missed seeing the children. It is amazing how much Harley has grown in the last two years! Rev. Desire’s three children bring new life to our church; seeing them in the sanctuary and the return of the children is renewal. Sitting and having coffee with Tal and three people who came for the first time, was comforting and a renewal of the fellowship we were unable to enjoy during the lockdowns and mandates that prevented us from meeting in-person.

The life and work of the church is gathering momentum, with three big events to mark on your calendar. On April 10, at 2.00 pm is the covenanting service for Rev. Desire, followed by cake and tea/coffee. For Easter Sunday, we will have a pancake breakfast, after a sunrise service. On April 24, is the official re-opening of the church to in-person services, followed by a lunch and fellowship. It is a time of renewal.

Deb posted the flowerpot for the Ukraine and in the matter of a few days, the vase is brimming. Rather than preparing for Easter celebrations, those in the Ukraine are fighting a war, our giving to help others is a renewal of our faith.

I look forward Easter and renewal during this holy time of year.

Isaiah 40:31: "They who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint."

On behalf of the Board, I wish you a very Happy Easter.

Laurie,
Board Chair

CHURCH FAMILY

Janie McDaid, Co-Chair, Susan Phillips, Co-Chair, Joy Himmelman, Hannah Cryer, Mavis Wilkes

Happy Spring Everyone!

Church Family is starting to embark on some of their “pre-covid” activities. We are planning on delivering lilies to our elderly shut-ins depending on the availability of lilies at Metro. The deliveries will take place the week prior to Easter.

Reverend Desire's covenanting ceremony will take place on Sunday April 10th at 2:00 at St. Paul's United Church. Church Family will provide the cake for this celebration. Please join us in welcoming our new minister and his family.

We continue to send out birthday cards to our 90+ church members. Congratulations to all those reaching this impressive milestone!

Thank you to all those who sent in family pictures and updates for the mini directory we provided to Reverend Desire. A more formal directory will be made once the covid restrictions are lifted. There will be a message from our minister (finally) in the new directory. Thanks to Debra in the office for compiling all the data and pictures for our new minister. I am sure this will be a huge help to him.

As restrictions are slowly lifted, we will resume our normal activities. Hopefully we will be able to host our annual Newcomer's luncheon in November. Hope springs eternal!!

HAPPY SPRING and **HAPPY EASTER** to ***ALL!***

Respectfully submitted,
Janie McDaid

WORSHIP COMMITTEE

Dance with the Spirit early in the morning,
Walk with the Spirit throughout the long day,
Work and hope for a new life aborning,
Listen to the Spirit to show you the way.
(MV 156)

Halleluiah! He is Risen!
This is a time of new beginnings. Our Easter newsletter comes at a time when many of us are longing for a return to warmer weather. Easter is a time of resurrection in many ways, a time when we experience "new life" as the earth warms and we see budding greenery and come out or our winter cocoons and breathe the transforming spring air. A letting go of restrictions, time with cherished family and friends. Joy is in the air.
This Easter is a time of new beginnings for us, we celebrate the new relationship with Rev. Desire Tiriwepi, and his family. This is an exciting time, a new life aborning. A time of new growth, a time of renewing our faith, and new hope.
In Isaiah 43:18-19a "Do not consider the former things or consider the things of old. I am about to do a new thing; and now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?"

We are looking to new things. Spring will be a celebration of many things and they are all listed on the front page of this newsletter.

We have many things to be grateful for, I am grateful for Brenda Reimer and her knowledge and helping hand as I take over the position of Chair of Worship, I couldn't do it without my committee of Brenda Reimer, Linda Kuusisto, Bette Anne Elliotson, Judith Petch, Hope Fennel, Marilyn Marrier-Oborne, Diana Hannaford- Wilcox and Rev. Desire. This team has stepped up to help keep things going in ever changing times and I am so proud and thankful.
I am also give thanks for our Worship planning team of Diana, Rev. Desire and myself. We meet weekly and work together planning new things, have good discussions, and laughter.
Listen to the Spirit to show you the way.
Halleluiah!
Cyndy Raby, Chair
Worship Committee

FROM THE MUSIC ROOM

Spring. The season we get up each morning hoping the snow has melted a little bit more, small patches of grass start appearing, and those hardy tulips start peaking up encouraging the gardens to wake up and bless us with colour. There is great anticipation of opening camps, booking campsites, and arranging family get togethers. Spring is the sign of new beginnings.

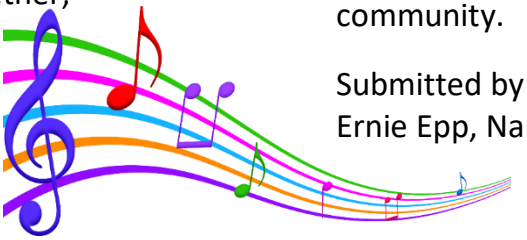
This year's new beginning starts with our new minister's Covenanting Service which will be held on Sunday, April 10th at 2:00. This will be an afternoon of music and celebration. What better way to celebrate new beginnings then with a live choir, a band of instruments, the handbell choir, and some dancing in the aisles. Come and join us as we celebrate Rev. Desire Tiriwepi and his family, the newest members of our church family.

I would like to take this time to send out a special thank you to all the choir members who took part in the Virtual Choir. This group of people took time every week to send in whatever hymns or anthems the music directors sent their way. It just felt like yesterday when the doors closed and there was a need to figure out how we could still worship together. It was a privilege and a pleasure working with the talents and enthusiasm of the Music Directors from Trinity, Harmony, Pinegrove, and First-Wesley. I hope that, in the future, we can figure out how to keep that relationship in friendship and music.

Spring, the season of new beginnings. Let us celebrate together, in person, as we walk together on this new and glorious path of hope, faith, and Resurrection.

Let's make a joyful noise together,

Diana Hannaford-Wilcox,
Music Director



OUTREACH COMMITTEE

Slowly spring is arriving, and the pandemic restrictions are easing. Your Outreach Team gives a heartfelt Hallelujah.

During the Pandemic we were able to organize two drive by food drives for Dew Drop Inn; continue support for Isthmus and the Milk Program and help with the cost of turkeys for Christmas Hampers that Thunder Bay Indigenous Friendship Centre provides for the elders they support. Most recently we have initiated the Sunflowers for the Ukraine campaign. The response has been wonderful.

As we move forward out of the Pandemic, we are exploring some new possibilities in addition to our continued support of Isthmus and the Milk Fund:

A request from a group of local farmers to help support the Canadian Foodgrains Bank by participating in a community program to raise a calf to market weight and then auction the meat in such a way that some of it goes to local food banks and the auction money goes to the Canadian Foodgrains Bank of which the United Church nationally, has long been a partner.

Developing closer ties between the Indigenous Friendship Centre and our congregation. Can we learn from each other in the way we look after our most senior and shut-in members?

Needs of Shelter House and Dew Drop Inn

Continued Refugee settlement support

Discussion with Rev. Desire as to outreach opportunities that may be close to his heart.

The possibilities are endless, and the Outreach Team welcomes your suggestions and concerns as to where St. Paul's is needed in the community.

Submitted by
Ernie Epp, Nancy Post, Brenda Reimer

Inter-Church Refugee Committee

It is with bittersweet feelings that members of the Inter-Church Refugee Committee say their goodbyes to Jamila, Mariam and Omar Mahmoud. The three young people along with their mother, Faiza Saleh, have decided to leave our city to move to Ottawa.

The family decided collectively to begin a new life by moving to a larger city with greater economic opportunities and with a larger Somali diaspora. Key to the decision was an invitation by a Somali friend of Faiza's to join her in Ottawa. The two had worked together in health care in Somalia earlier in their careers.

The I-CRC sponsored the children three years ago. We sponsored Faiza for the past year.

The three children had thrived in Thunder Bay while living in their small apartment off John Street in the city's north end.

Jamila, the eldest, continues to work on her North American Sign Language skills as she explores opportunities to become a professional photographer.

Mariam completed her early childhood education program at Confederation College and was recently hired full-time to work at the Northwestern Ontario Multicultural Association.

Omar, the youngest, has been working at the Golden Bakery on Arthur Street while striving to obtain his grade 12 English diploma.

Recently, the members of the Inter-Church Refugee Committee met via Zoom to lament the departure of a wonderful group of young people and to rejoice in the adventure ahead for them.

Brenda Reimer of St. Paul's United pointed out that the young people will now have a much greater opportunity to socialize with others from their ethnic community.

At a final gathering at the ultimate Canadian gathering place, Tim Horton's, Omar told members of the I-CRC that he now has his G-1 driving licence. He said once he has obtained his G-2, it was his plan to buy a car and drive across Canada. He promised to stop in Thunder Bay to check out some of the sights the pandemic had kept him from seeing.

Mariam, who, along with her siblings, was living in Malaysia before coming to Canada, remarked that she had come to love winter and the brilliant white of the snow after a storm had blanketed the city.

Jamila showed off to the group some of the beautiful winter scenes she had taken pictures of with her camera.

We urged Mariam, who has a degree in computer science as well as being perfectly multilingual, that she should seek work in the federal government, perhaps Immigration Canada.

Covid 19 limited our opportunities to introduce these wonderful young people to the wider faith community membership of the I-CRC.

But the people who were intimately involved with this family were left with nothing but fond memories and great joy at seeing them thrive in a country without violent conflict.

We wish them well. We also invite anyone in your congregation who are seeking a unique opportunity to help the less fortunate in this world to consider putting your name forward to your representative on the I-CRC as someone we might call on to provide hands-on help in our settlement efforts.

AFFIRMING TASK GROUP

How wonderful it is to see the church beginning to fill up again on Sundays! We are excited to welcome our new minister, the Rev. Desire Tiriwepi, and his family. He has already brought messages that are both challenging and hopeful. And as we see people coming through the doors, we have happily welcomed back those whom we have not seen for a while, as well as many new faces, some who have come because they have seen our colourful rainbow flag. Others have come because they learned of us through the PIE Day event we sponsored on Zoom with the Canadian Shield Regional Affirm Committee. This was an event encouraging us all to be **P**ublic, **I**ntentional, and **E**xplicit about our welcoming and accepting of all persons. It was informative, entertaining, and fun as we shared pie and heard the experiences of others. We also learned about Rainbow Camp, something some of our youth may want to consider next summer.

In December we presented to the Board, and they accepted, an updated action plan to help us all move toward being more intentional about our Affirming mission.

The Affirming lending library continues to be available at the back of the sanctuary and at coffee hour. Some of the books have been highlighted during the announcements before service. All books are available for loan simply by signing them out on the paper slips provided.

It is not yet known what Pride Week will look like this year, but we hope to take part in some way, and encourage all members of the Congregation to join in the fun.

If you are passionate about inclusion and would like to help our Congregation celebrate and promote diversity both within and outside our walls, please let Deb or any one of us know that you want to be part of our team.

Members of our task group are Ernie Epp, Dale Haché, Gail Henderson, Brenda Reimer, Steve Robertson, and I, Susan Marrier.
We'd love to see your name added to this list as you bring your ideas and skills to our table!
(When we meet in person, we have tea and cookies and lively conversation!)

"When everyone is included, everyone wins."
Jesse Jackson)

CHRISTIAN GROWTH

Sunday School, Youth Group and VBS Report

We are grateful that we have a wonderful new Minister, Rev. Desire Tiriwepi, along with his wife Judith, and their children, Blessing, Brian and Beverly, to join our church family.
I know they are excited to see our children and youth we have at church.

SUNDAY SCHOOL STARTS*!!*

EASTER SUNDAY – APRIL 17th

We are very excited that Sunday school will be starting on Easter Sunday; and a lot of fun is planned for the morning*:*

9:00 Pancake and sausage breakfast at the church!

9:45 Easter Egg Hunt!
Before the service we Will be decorating the Church for Easter with flowers and balloons!

10:30 Church service with Sunday school with fun activities and crafts!

We are so excited that after 2 years of not being able to have Sunday school, we are extremely happy and hopeful that the children will come back to church and be able to come to Sunday school.
We have missed them all and are looking forward to seeing them come back!

We will continue to use the wonderful curriculum entitled "One Room Sunday School". Each week there is a DVD to watch relating to the lesson, along with various materials according to the appropriate age of the children who are in attendance that week.
There are new upbeat songs for each session.

YOUTH GROUP

Every second Sunday evening 7 – 9 p.m.

The Youth Group has been meeting and they now meet every second Sunday evening from 7 – 9 p.m. with our wonderful leaders, **Jeri Lee Mehagan and Hannah Cryer.**

They have a lot of fun participating in discussions and planning different themes and activities at the church.

Youth Group is for children/youth from grades 4 – 8+ … and all are welcome!

Their schedule for the spring is:
(Dates and events subject to change)

April 1- Paint & Garden Night
April 24 – Speed Meeting ** open event**
May 7 – R.A.O.K
May 29 – Birds of Prey
June 12 – Art Attack

Please contact Jeri-Lee at 476-8641
or Hannah Cryer at 355-9642
to get more information.

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

We are very hopeful that our Vacation Bible School will be able to take place again this summer!
Please contact the church office or Kristin Williams or Trudy Epp, if you're able to help with any of the positions:

Teaching bible lessons, crafts, recreation, and snack preparation in the kitchen.
We will need a lot of help so we can offer this wonderful program to the kids!!