



St. Paul's SPIRIT

Newsletter Edition 47
December 9, 2025



ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS AT ST. PAUL'S

December 14 - Advent Three - "Unexpected Joy" at 10:00am

December 14 - Candlelight Noel (Lessons and Carols) at 7:00pm

December 21 - Advent Four - "Merciful Love" at 10:00am

December 24 - The Christmas Story with Live Animals at 4:00pm

December 24 - Traditional Christmas Eve Communion Service
at 7:00pm

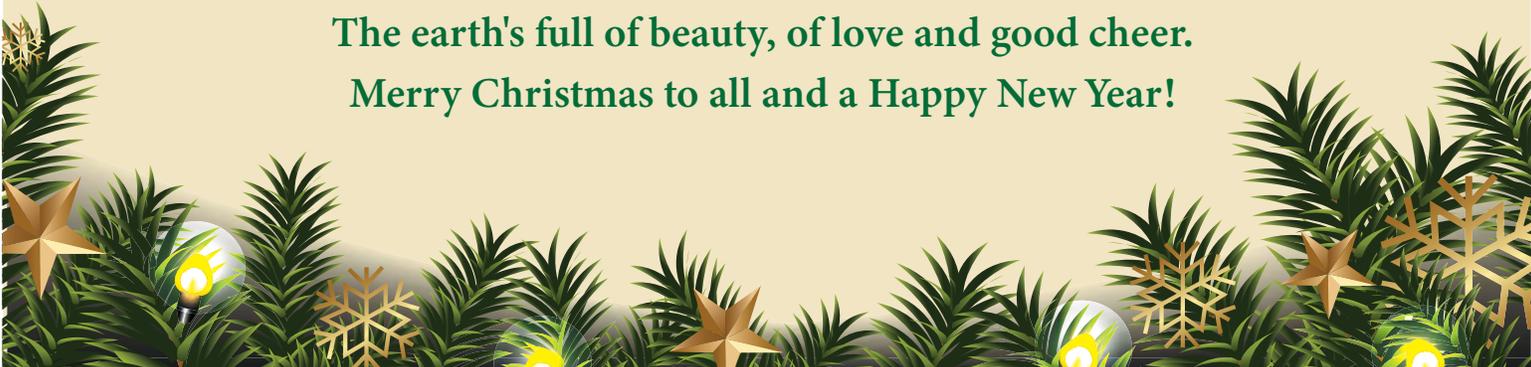
December 28 - Worship Service at 10:00am

Merry Christmas to friends! Merry Christmas to foes!

The world's bright with joy, so forget all your woes.

The earth's full of beauty, of love and good cheer.

Merry Christmas to all and a Happy New Year!





Introducing...A new logo for St. Paul's United Church

I began this project in May and have revised and revised, hoping this would be a fitting gift to St. Paul's to coincide with the 100th Anniversary of the United Church of Canada.

It still is the Anniversary year!

I would like to share with you my thought process:

- I wanted to start with a feature of St. Paul's that caught my eye and that was the scroll carving above the front doors.
- Collectively, we want to display a welcoming attitude, so the front doors are wide open below the scroll work.
- When I look through the open doors I see the gold cross at the front on the altar – that to me is who we are and why we come to church.
- Again, our mandate going forward is to be welcoming and caring to everyone thus the heart – ties in with our catch phrase 'Love has a Home Here'.
- Trailing off the bottom of the heart are two swoops which symbolize a path welcoming everyone into St. Paul's and it is our path out to the community as well.
- The colours of the heart and path are the rainbow colours to show we welcome everyone!

The St. Paul's Board has reviewed the logo and approved it.

I sincerely hope that this logo will serve us well for another 100 years.

Sincerely, Susanne Crago



We are happy to announce that Breakfast with Santa will be returning again this year. Santa will be visiting on December 20th from 9am-10am. Be sure to let your families know! We will be serving our regular menu this year.

Our wonderful volunteers will be taking a 2-week Christmas holiday break after the December 20th breakfast with Santa. The Valley Town Breakfast will be resuming on January 10th, 2026.

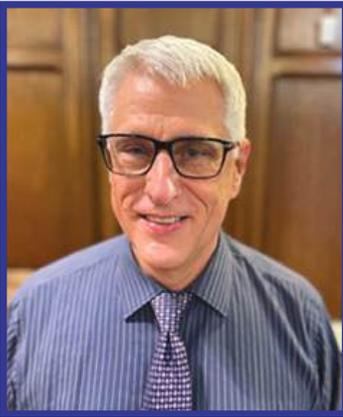
To brew a better cup of coffee for you to enjoy, we now grind our beans weekly in our kitchen. We continue to use organic, fair trade coffee beans to support farmers.

The dining hall is currently going through a modernization stage and we hope you will be pleased with the transformation once completed.

We will end the year with a Christmas potluck dinner and time of fellowship.

We are grateful for the support of our volunteers and the Dundas community for maintaining this thriving fundraiser for St Paul's.

Yvan Raymond



MUSIC MINISTRY

NE'ER-DO-WELL by Fredric DeVries

"If anything is excellent and if anything is praiseworthy. Think about such things."

- Philippians 4:8

Sadly, James was what they called a "ne'er-do-well." A scoundrel and slacker. Not that he didn't have role models and opportunities to make something of himself.

James (born 1822) and his sister Juliet (born 1816) and brother John Jr. (born 1819) were children of Rev. John Pierpoint, a staunch abolitionist, and pastor of Hollis Street Unitarian Church in Boston. With a father of such high moral character, you would think James might follow in his footsteps. Not likely. And while his sister "married well," being wed to a wealthy banker, and becoming mother to a son who would become the richest financier of the late nineteenth century "Gilded Age," the same could not be said for James.

Like any well-born boy, James was sent to a boarding school in New Hampshire; but he hated it and rebelled against it. Repeatedly he ran away from the school, and according to his letters, the school supervisors would send sleds into the woods to find him and bring him back to school.

In 1836, at age 14, he successfully ran away and made it to Boston, where he found work on a whaling ship. He later joined the U.S. Navy and served till 1843. In 1846 he married his first wife, Milli, of Troy, New York and they started a family.

In 1849, leaving his wife and family behind, James headed to the California Gold Rush to get rich. He didn't get rich. He ran a store that went bankrupt and returned home. Briefly.

In 1856, James left his wife and two children again in Massachusetts, to follow his brother, John Jr., also a Unitarian abolitionist pastor like his father, to take a church in Savannah, Georgia.

Apparently, James had some musical ability and made a success of writing minstrel songs for musical halls of the era. Some of his big hits were "Kitty Crow" and "Ring the Bell, Fanny."

And....He also became the organist at brother John's Unitarian Church.

One might ques-

tion what kind of spiritual music this composer of dance hall ballads, may have played on that organ.

While in Savannah, James married his second wife, Eliza, the daughter of Savannah's mayor. In saying "second wife," there is some ambiguity whether he was still married to his first wife. Milli did die young, but there seems to be overlap between her death and the birth of James and Eliza's first child. Hmmm. And James never again did anything to support the two children he left behind in Massachusetts.

And then came the American Civil War. Was it out of spite for his abolitionist family? I don't know, but James signed up to fight for the Confederacy. The Georgia Cavalry Regiment. Surviving the war, he stayed in the south till he died in 1893.

With this dubious list of accomplishments to his credit, is there anything he did worthy of praise?

WELL-----he did write one minstrel song that became quite popular. It had people "laughing all the way." Maybe inspired by those sled chases back in New Hampshire. He called it "One Horse Open Sleigh," (1857), but you might call it "Jingle Bells." Not really a Christmas song, but "Oh, what fun it is to ride."

Not without its own controversy, however.

The controversy is about where it was first performed, Savannah, or Medford, Massachusetts. They both have a plaque claiming it. Take your pick.

"Dashing through the snow" in sultry Savannah?

Or maybe Medford. It was, after all, dedicated to John Ordway, the leader of a musical group in Medford. He led a group of white men who sang minstrel songs in blackface. Ouch! Either the farcical mismatch of Jingle Bells and blackface, or the embarrassment of a musical genre people thought was clever and harmless, long ago.



Unitarian Church Savannah, Georgia

BUT.....did you know Jingle Bells was the first song broadcast from outer space? In December 1965, from the space mission Gemini 6, Wally Schirra and Tom Stafford reported seeing a UFO leaving the North Pole heading south piloted by someone dressed in red. They then performed Jingle Bells on harmonica and, as you might guess, sleigh bells to the whole world. Laughing all the way.

We could dwell on what an irresponsible person



Plaque in Savannah, Georgia

MUSIC NEWS

Ah, the glorious music of Christmas. December is a time when all our musical friends can share this Christmas music at St. Paul's, from week to week. Worthy of special mention is the Candlelight Noel on December 14 at 7:00 pm. You are invited to come to sing your favourite carols, enjoy the beauty of our sanctuary, and hear a variety of musical offerings. The Christmas Story Pageant at 4:00 pm on Christmas Eve is a time for the young and young at heart. And the Christmas Eve Communion at 7:00 pm offers a time for quiet reflection.

Looking over the past year in music we recall the Musical Showcase in March, the glorious brass and bells and choir on Easter. Lively contributions from the Joyful Voices. And on the 100th anniversary of the United Church of Canada, we celebrated with a commissioned piece for Brass, Organ, and Percussion composed by Dylan Tomiharu Wright, called "Century United." In the fall we welcomed Chris Eckart, our new teacher of the Holy Ukuleles.

In 2026, I encourage you to mark March 6 on your calendar for St. Paul's Musical Showcase, as we continue to celebrate the music of St. Paul's.

James Lord Pierpont was. It was, after all, a life filled with missteps.

However St. Paul says, "If anything is praiseworthy or excellent, Think about such things."

Who can deny that singing Jingle Bells and shaking those sleigh bells at this time of year, brings a smile----when so many other things in our world take our smile away. (Those "missteps" are bygones now, while Jingle Bells lives on.)

Oh yes, that sister who married well? Juliet married Junius Spencer Morgan, founder of J.S. Morgan & Co. Their son (James' nephew) John Pierpont Morgan (J.P. Morgan), became the wealthiest financier of the Gilded Age.

Jesus wants us to have **JOY**, saying, "I am come into this world that you might have Life, and have it abundantly, **AND THAT YOUR JOY MIGHT BE FULL.**"

Our Christmas Joy is fuller today also, with a little help from James Lord Pierpont.

As James eloquently tells us in Jingle Bells-----
"HEY!"

Candlelight Noel

A Service of Lessons and Carols



Chancel Choir, Holy Ukuleles
Handbell Ringers & Musical Friends

Sunday, December 14th at 7:00 pm

St. Paul's United Church
(Cross and Park Streets), Dundas

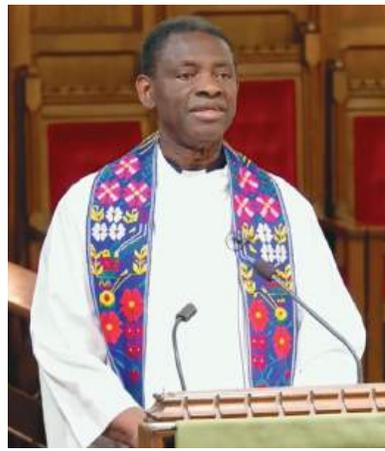
Nursery Provided, Fully accessible

Reception to follow

Freewill Offering for the work of St. Paul's

EVERYONE IS INVITED!

PASTORAL CARE MINISTER'S REPORT



Sit To Be Fit

Our new facilitator, Sophia Christianson, began on Thursday, November 27, 2025. The program now meets at 11:00 a.m. in the Moss Davidson Hill Room. Since moving to the 11:00 a.m. start time, several members who had previously stopped attending have returned—wonderful news!

Sherri has confirmed that the facilitator is willing to add a second weekly session. This additional class will begin on **Tuesday, January 6, 2026, at 10:00 a.m.**, in addition to the regular Thursday sessions.

Please note that there will be no class on **Thursday, December 25, 2025.**

The Alzheimer's Society sells **exercise balls for \$10.00 and TheraBands for \$5.00.** These can be purchased from Sophia during the program—**cash only.**

Weights are also available at Dollarama on Governor's Road: 2 lb. weights for \$4.00 and exercise balls for \$4.00. The church has some balls available, but not enough for the entire class.

We look forward to having you join us soon!

Care Program for Café 55+

Win and I have discussed the time for Sit to be Fit with Dr. Dave and we agree that 11.00 am on Thursdays is OK since the new facilitator is not free for 10:00 am. Café 55+ and Sit To Be Fit are gradually becoming one program. While Café 55+ participants play games in the Parlour, Sit To Be Fit participants will be using the MOSS DAVIDSON HILL room for the exercises. Coffee and lunch are available to both groups.

St. Joseph's Villa Program

St. Paul's United Church worship program at St. Joseph's Villa will continue on the first and last Fridays of each month. The last worship at St. Joseph's Villa for this year was on Friday, December 5th.

Wentworth Lodge Program

Wentworth Lodge worship service was rescheduled to the third Tuesday of the month, November 18, 2025. This was as a result of the Remembrance Day celebration, which took place on the second Tuesday of the month. The last Wentworth Lodge worship for this year was on December 9, 2025.

Visitation to Hospitals and Long-term Care homes

Members in hospital and long-term care homes were visited and received telephone calls. Some members called requesting visitation. Our visitation cards are already in use. The importance of the visitation card is to let relatives know that St. Paul's visits and cares. Some of the elders complain that they were not visited.

Telecare Program

This is a program of team-based care calls to all members of St. Paul's United Church. We are planning to register two cell phones under St. Paul's United Church. Every member should get a call at least twice a year just to check in. A visitation can then be requested by those who desire it. This is to ensure privacy.

Passing on to Glory

Bill Robinson died on Sunday, November 16 at about 2:00 pm. The funeral ceremony took place on Friday November 21 at 11:00 am in the church sanctuary. A reception was held in the Parlour. The interment followed at the White Chapel Memorial Garden.

Sincerely, Rev. John Adeyemi

THE AFTERNOON SINGERS

by Mary Margaret Fink

"Christmas is forever, not for just one day; for loving, sharing, giving are not to be put away like bells and lights and tinsel in some box upon a shelf. The good you do for others is good you do yourself"

Norman Wesley Brooks

Christmas is the most emotional of seasons, it draws upon our deepest feelings for our families, our friends, our homes and the past. It is meant to be a intimate celebration where love and caring are conveyed in the most personal ways...acts of grace that go beyond measure. It is time to make the season's magic happen for everyone, but it too, must be a pleasure. Thoughtfulness in contributing time and energy to one's community and enjoying the uniqueness of the season. Sharing the joy of the season with singing is what the Afternoon Singers do so willingly and it is our community with seniors in which we live that should reap the benefits of the true Christmas Spirit. We are Christmas Carolers with our music and song and are still entertaining each week up until Christmas. Caroline Place was our first venue and a truly memorable time there was spent with our own David Cooke and friends. Unit 5 of the UCW was another lovely treat and so appreciated was the presence of Rev. Charlie and Rev. Heather that afternoon. Charlie and Heather in their true fashion spoke loving thoughts and their Christmas blessings to us all. The Chartwell Georgian and Bertram Place are next on our list before Christmas Day arrives.

This Christmas Season remember to put aside time for yourself for some simple things that will refresh both body and spirit. Christmas can be a demanding time with many hours spent shopping, cooking, and very likely entertaining too. Be sure though, to break away from the hustle and bustle and savour the pleasures of the season itself. Prepare that simmering pot on the stove filled with herbs, cinnamon, cloves, nutmeg and allspice, always a welcome greeting when your guests are coming and for yourself as comfort too.

Apple cider is always available if you can get to a country Farmer's Market - never pass that treat by. Bring out the Holiday greenery, place the candles, pull out the ribbon, the gift wrap, and hang those memorable ornaments on your Christmas tree. Bake that shortbread and your gingerbread cookies because nothing smells more like Christmas than the aroma of freshly baked cookies. Acts of generosity can be divine but perhaps it can be those small touches that make it more personal. Send off Christmas greetings the old fashioned way, in the mail (that traditional way) and imagine the receiver opening it days later. Visit the florist shops while shopping and stroll through the Botanical Gardens as it will lift your heart at this time of the year. Take time to walk or a drive through the city streets and take in all the sights. Take a long, warm soak in a scent-filled bath after your sleigh-ride or tobogganing on the slopes with your children. Light your candles and cuddle up with your own thoughts. Try just a few of these suggestions to truly enjoy this precious time. On behalf of the Afternoon Singers I wish you all a Blessed Christmas.

"We shall find peace, we shall hear the angels, we shall see the sky sparkling with diamonds."



Throughout the year and perhaps even more so during Advent, many of us are looking for ways to contribute to meaningful causes locally and globally. With this in mind, the Affirming Committee presents two ways in which we can contribute to the United Church of Canada's work being done to affirm and protect our 2SLGBTQIA+ community members near and afar.

Advocating for Sexual and Gender Minorities in Other Countries

UCC Round the Table Blog, May 2025

We are blessed to live in Canada, a country that recognizes the right to love whoever you want, regardless of their gender or sex. And while we haven't always done what is right, The United Church of Canada now recognizes that all love—including Two Spirit or LGBTQIA+ relationships—is holy and blessed by God. But those rights do not exist in many parts of the world today.

"One of our partners in Kenya has advocated strongly for the human rights of sexual minorities, and that has caused him to be in jail, caused him to risk his life to be able to do that," says the Rev. Michael Blair. The church's first openly gay General Secretary is now helping to advocate for sexual and gender minorities in foreign countries. "When we hear these stories, we can see that this is a life and death matter."

Your gifts for Mission and Service help shelter refugees as they escape repressive governments. As of May 2024, 64 jurisdictions criminalize private, consensual, same-sex sexual activity, and 12 countries have jurisdictions in which the death penalty is imposed or at least a possibility for private, consensual, same-sex sexual activity.

Mission and Service also holds consultations in other countries to discover how we can best work with our partners to protect sexual and gender minorities. "A few years ago, we hosted a consultation here in Canada with several partners and asked how we can be supportive of their work," Blair says. "They told us we needed to come and help in their context."

To date, Mission and Service has supported consultations in Latin America and the Philippines.

"We are bringing together leaders to explore how the church can be a place of liberation and life for sexual and gender minorities in those communities. That is happening because of the folks who contribute to Mission and Service," says Blair.

Thank you for helping to protect sexual and gender minorities. You are saving lives and changing views around the world!

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How Can We Make a Donation?

If you would like to contribute to work being done by the United Church of Canada to support the 2SLGBTQIA+ locally and globally, please consider making a donation to UCC Mission and Service or to the UCC Foundation's 2SLGBTQIA+ Global Solidarity Fund. You may donate online directly to these initiatives, or through the church via collection plate, cheque, e-transfer or online via St. Paul's website. Please make note of your desired initiative, so the office knows where to send your donation.

How does my donation to Mission and Service support the 2SLGBTQIA+ community?

"By giving to Mission and Service your congregation will support the following (along with much, much more):

- The work of our Mission and Service partners with Two Spirit and LGBTQIA+ people in Canada and around the world – anything from keeping lines of communication with partners open without drawing unwanted attention to them all the way up to giving them very visible support and funding.
- The work of Affirming congregations in Canada through Mission Support Grants – each Region receives an equal amount from Mission and Service and uses it to support partners in that Region, including Affirming congregations.”

— Kathie Murphy, Annual Giving Associate, Philanthropy Unit, The United Church of Canada
1-844-715-7969

How does my donation to the UCC Foundation’s 2SLGBTQIA+ Global Solidarity Fund support the 2SLGBTQIA+ community?

“The 2SLGBTQIA+ Global Solidarity Fund strives to advance the rights, dignity, and inclusion of lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, intersex, queer, and Two-Spirit people around the world. This work is crucial, since homosexual activity is still illegal in over 60 countries and rates of violence perpetrated against trans people worldwide are alarmingly high.

The fund supports international consultations with religious leaders, safe shelters, and sponsorships of LGBTQ+ refugees to Canada. A portion of the fund will be endowed to ensure sustainability. Your Gift will advance the rights of 2SLGBTQIA+ people around the world.”

— United Church of Canada Foundation Website: 2SLGBTQIA+ Global Solidarity Fund 1-866-340-8223



HAPPY GANG

What is Happy Gang?

Well, we are a group of women and men who meet twice a month in the Parlour from 2 to 4:30 pm to have a bit of fun playing Dominoes, Cards or Rummy Cube (which can be spelled in different ways, but is the same game) and enjoy a refreshment break.

We are a friendly group willing and able to help newcomers who may wish to join us to learn these games. If you already know how to play, simply join in. Members do not need to be from St. Paul’s or any church for that matter...everyone is welcome. Currently we have 20 plus members on our list, but of course not everyone can join us every time, although most do.

Our Christmas luncheon is scheduled for Wednesday, December 10th at 1 pm, after which we will be playing Dominoes and Rummy Cube.

Happy Gang will resume in the New Year on January 14th and 28th, 2026 at 2 pm in the Parlour.

Perhaps we will see some new faces in the coming year and you are most welcome to give it a try. We know you will enjoy our afternoons of fun, laughter and fellowship.

For more information, please contact Win Czum or Cathy Pengelly.



A MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD by Jenny Blake

Denny and I live in a house divided- I look outside to see snow and feel excited! I hear the snowplow grind past our house in the night and I feel comforted. I grew up in Quebec City so snow is programmed into my psyche. Let's just say Denny does not share my enthusiasm for winter. We do agree that it is particularly nice to gather around the table, or the fire at this time of year.

The early snow grounds us in the season - not the commercial season, but the season of the solstice, and the Birth, and new light. After the business of the fall, it is a time when we hope to be with family and loved ones, or to curl up with a good book and Christmas music. At St. Paul's we look forward to some special Advent services. The church is decorated, Candlelight Noel is on the calendar for Dec. 14th, and the animals are looking forward to Christmas Eve.

As we look forward to this season, in our faith we are reaching out to provide care and comfort to those who have little to hope for; we remember those we have lost and grieve with those who mourn them.

The hardest part of the Christmas season is to resist the pressures that come with it and accept it as a time of retreat and rest and gathering around a table, after the busy fall. Few of us brought in a harvest, but many put food up over the summer, and many meals - for body and for soul - were served in our church. I count our work as harvest and this fall has indeed been busy for our many volunteers. The Church Board has also been at work.

We are particularly pleased to be proceeding with the search for a new lead minister. Thank you to those who have helped us with all the preparatory work, and those who will be serving on our Search and Selection Committee.

I am happy to announce that Dave Davis has stepped up to take on the role of Chair of Stewardship. This is an exciting role; it is how members and supporters enable the good work of the church to go forward. We do have other opportunities for leadership and Bev Gough or I would be happy to chat with anyone who would be

interested in getting more involved.

Financially we are ahead of budget. Revenues from rentals and events have increased and are helping us to carry the fixed operating and maintenance costs of our building. That means your important contributions can be directed to staff and activities for our church and community.

Planning is underway with the help of the UCC for us to mount a Summer Day Camp. Porscha has developed a well thought out plan - I wish I could attend! We have received a small grant in aid and are hopeful there may be more support, which will cover start-up costs and hopefully enable us to subsidize children who might otherwise not be able to afford a camp. The Board will review the plan and the feasibility report at our December meeting.

We are grateful to the Bertram Foundation for the grant which enabled us to complete the enhancements to the gym, and the addition of radiant heat in the gym and lower hallway so that we can further reduce our use of the boiler and our environmental footprint. Our reduction in fossil fuel usage has resulted in our gas supplier reducing our usage category- so that we now pay less for the fuel than we previously did.

We have applied for grants this year to support our Summer Camp, Café 55+ and for our church.

For our church we have made a major ask of the Bertram Foundation for two necessary projects - the first is to make a level pathway from Cross Street to the narthex, to enable wheelchair access and emergency exit for those using wheelchairs or scooters. The second project is to finally retire and decommission our aging and unrealisable boiler - it has been on life support these past several years, helped along as we have gradually added heat pumps and taken spaces off the boiler usage. The last phase of this project is to install heat pumps in the sanctuary which will provide heat in winter and air conditioning in summer. We do not expect the grant to cover the full cost of these initiatives, so will be seeking added revenues to complete the projects.

The Horseshoe Falls Regional Council fall meeting was an active one. There is a sobering document

that was presented at GC 45 entitled Towards 2035. The predications contained within it are of a continued decline in UCC membership, from 750,000 in 1992, to 320,000 in 2023, towards a projected 111,000 in 2035.

That projection is just math - and we know that this math makes the assumption that all else remains equal. But humans are not like that.

We can see the numbers and receive the message - if we were to do nothing we too would be declining towards a vanishing point. A deeper look at the numbers show that while overall membership is declining, there are hundreds of churches that are growing. Growing churches are engaged in their communities and are strengthening and nurturing spiritual life. In other words, doing what churches do best. Looking at our numbers over the past 15 years, we have lost members; the rate of loss has been slow, 1-2% per year - despite all the turmoil we have been through, but we want to turn those numbers around and they may be. Last year we showed a small increase - that is the trend we want to continue. We are definitely not "doing nothing", we are planning on thriving.

To assist churches in the region in shifting the downward curve, the Region announced three small new grant programmes, one that will be directed to "the first third of life" initiatives that are directed to those 30 and under; a second towards collaborative efforts between churches and a third to capital projects - particularly if there are additional sources of funding contributing.

We are watching out for these grant announcements and will be ready to submit our applications.

The UCC, in their open letter regarding 2035, challenged us to ask ourselves these questions:

"Where do you sense God at work in your corner of the church?"

"Where do you perceive "a new thing?"

"What possibilities do you already see emerging out of a connexional, cooperative approach?"

I hope you will agree that we see God's work in every corner of our church, you can see it and hear it and feel it. We work best when we work together, and we need everyone's engagement to properly address these questions.

To pick up on our Advent theme, we nurture a vigilant hope to imagine new ways of doing our work as a church, and we have the courage to begin again. This is the time of year for those new beginnings, to refocus ourselves on those questions as we prepare for a new year.

On behalf of the Church Board, we wish you all a blessed Christmas and a happy, healthy and peaceful New Year!



OUTREACH COMMITTEE

Outreach members happily report a busy fall season. Regular meetings held in September, October and November focused on the Canadian Food Grains Appeal and the Wesley Urban Ministries Christmas Hampers. We were especially pleased by the outstanding video presentation prepared by Luke Alsop and Winston Lindsay for the October 19 service celebrating St. Paul's ongoing support of the Canadian Food Grains Bank. The two put an amazing number of hours, creativity and thoughtfulness into their video production. Many thanks to Shirley Cranston and Kevin Butter who kindly agreed to be filmed. The flyover of the two farms and chats with Shirley, the amazing woman who donates land for growing St. Paul's crops and Kevin the caring steward, who farms the land captivated congregants interest and kept those who watched online glued to the screen. It was good to learn about the details of grain farming - all the machines, care of the soil, availability of seeds, dependence on weather, etc.



In addition to regular meetings, committee members held a retreat on November 1 to discuss Outreach goals, objectives, accomplishments and future directions as these fit with the St Paul's Strategic Plan. The intent was to have a broad ranging discussion, unlimited by a formal agenda. Four areas of focus were identified for work in the coming year. Ideas were exchanged about strengthening our committee's work by seeking to engage youth as much as possible and building partnerships with community groups and other congregations on our areas of focus. These are:

- Caring for the earth/climate change and environmental issues
- Maintaining St. Paul's Annual Appeals
- Wesley Urban Ministries: Case for Kids Walk and Christmas Hampers
- Canadian Food Grains Bank
- Routes Youth Centre
- Advocacy on social issues (homelessness, poverty, climate and environment, refugees)
- Isolation/ food insecurity:

Community Dinners - St. Paul's continues to host the free Community Dinners every second Monday of the month. This fall we have averaged 50 guests per month. Along with the regulars, there are always new faces.

At December's meal, we will be giving out a present to the diners in the form of a \$25 Metro gift card from St. Paul's Church. The past two years these gift cards have been purchased with a donation from Dundas 55+. But due the generosity of our congregation, plus the proceeds from the donation box on display every Saturday at the Valley Town Breakfast, we are able to afford this gift ourselves this year.

At December's dinner, the Prayer Shawl Ministry will have a table of hand-knit mittens, hats and scarves available for those who need them. Many thanks to our dedicated group of volunteers who keep the dinners running smoothly every month. Carlies Longbottom

Our autumn was a successful one as Cafe 55+ continues to grow and thrive. We have new volunteers (who cook, visit, play games and even offer music) and several new guests who enjoy our hospitality, warmth and pleasant, friendly setting. We reached our maximum all-time attendance this fall too: one of our lunches attracted 36 guests, a record for this nurturing, everybody-knows-my-name, "family."

None of it would be possible without our active, regular volunteers and supporters- Amanda, Win, Sharon, Sarah, Gisell, Yvan and others from the church; and our Salvation Army and community volunteers. Many thanks!

Cafe 55+ is a great success because of you!

Come join us, every Thursday from 10am-1pm. See what the buzz is all about!

Dave Davis for the Café 55+ Team



SPROG (St. Paul's Refugee Outreach Group)

We have some news in this long process to bring our Syrian families "home" to their family members already here in Hamilton.

Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada have approved our application package for the two families. The applications now go to Amman, Jordan for processing. This is good news! However, the processing time in Jordan has been averaging about 27 months. We will be hoping for a shorter timeline, but this is definitely a long and difficult process.

A very generous donor committed this year to matching gifts made to SPROG up to \$2,000. Donations have been received to qualify for the matching pledge. We extend our most grateful thanks for the caring and support of our anonymous donor, and to those who have contributed to match the funds.

And there is more good news. A new baby has been born into one of the families! In this time of difficulty and suffering and waiting, there is hope.

Joan Williams

Mary Anne Tangney has represented St. Paul's on the Association of Dundas Churches for over a decade. She has stepped down from this role which is now being taken up by Judy Klevin. We thank Mary Anne for her longstanding service. We are delighted that she is staying on the Outreach committee as a regular member. We welcome Judy as ADC representative. Judy and MaryAnne worked together to promote the annual Advent Walk in Dundas Driving Park on November 30. Approximately 80 people attended, many from St. Paul's.

Outreach is an active, energetic, outward looking committee. We are searching for new members. Do consider working along with us, either as regular members or as 'friends' of Outreach - individuals we can call upon for short term assistance. As outgoing Chair of Outreach I can sincerely attest to the genuine camaraderie, good humour and thoughtfulness of all those who serve and have served on the committee over the past number of years.

Sharon McKay on behalf of committee members: Dave Davis, Barry Dymont, Linda Evans, Winston Lindsay, Amanda Ljucovic, Bill Poole, Sandi Stride, Mary Anne Tangney and Joan Williams

PASTORAL CARE REPORT

- About 20 Poinsettias will be placed in church for Sunday, December 21st worship service and then delivered to St. Paul's friends in LTC, Retirement Homes and others confined to home.
- The Prayer Shawl Ministry has knit/crocheted hats, mitts and scarves to be given to local schools and at the Community Dinner to those in need.
- We are still seeking a couple more volunteers who would be willing to accompany a resident in the DARTS vehicle from St. Joseph's to Sunday worship at St. Paul's. If 2 or 3 people would volunteer they would only need to be available 3-4 times per year.

- There have been four funerals and funeral receptions at St. Paul's since the last newsletter.
- See Rev. John Adeyemi's report for other Pastoral Care ministries.
- Please call the office 905 628 6396 for any Pastoral Care needs or contact Win Czum.

**Wishing you Love, Hope, Joy and Peace
at this Christmas Season.**

Win Czum, Chair of Pastoral Care



UNITED CHURCH WOMEN



United Church Women will be providing Christmas Gifts for the residents of Ellen Osler House in Dundas.

To the left: Unit 5 preparing the gift bags.

UCW Unit 9 with the help of Unit 5 will be serving and providing refreshments after the Candlelight Noel Service on Sunday, December 14th.

The UCW donates to Wesley Centre, Mission and Service and Good Shepherd at this time of the year.

LIBRARY COMMITTEE REPORT

We are happy to see from the “Check Out Book” that there has been an increase in the use of our Church Library. This should not really be a surprise because our library contains many, many books on such topics as Theology, Faith, Devotion, World Issues, Indigenous Issues, Fiction and Children’s books, to name a few.

Speaking about children’s books, our December Book Review is a delightful Christmas storybook called “The Best Christmas Pageant Ever.” If your child has already read it, there are several other good storybooks available in the Library.

When you visit the Library you will notice that most display shelves are filled with items that represent the various aspects of the work and interests of our church, such as Music, YCC and Indigenous issues...but we are not quite finished yet!

Each shelf has or will have information relating to the display thanks to Susanne Crago, who has been a tremendous support to our committee. Thanks also to Fredric, Sheelagh, Porscha and Barbara Carpio who have all been instrumental in helping create the displays.

We do have a request though - please always “check out your book” before removing it from the Library and please return it to the “Return

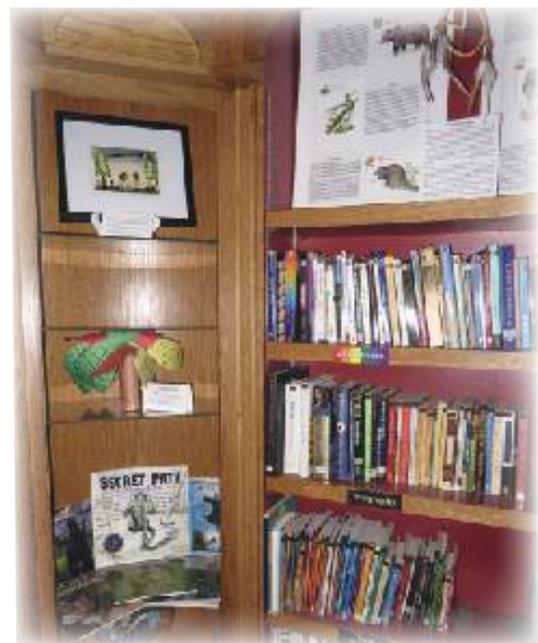
Basket” as soon as possible because others may be waiting to read it.

Our work in the Library continues as we check through the books to ensure that they are shelved under the correct topics, as well as having the correct coding. That job is nearing completion.

**May Peace, Joy and Blessings be yours
this Christmas Season!**

Judy Kleven, Barbara Carson and Cathy Pengelly and a warm welcome to Mary Unwin, who has recently joined the Library Committee

The Library Committee



Library Committee
BOOK REVIEW

**THE BEST
CHRISTMAS PAGEANT EVER**

by Barbara Robinson



The Herdmans are bad kids, really bad kids. They lie, steal, hit little kids, swear, and take the name of the Lord in vain. There is Ralph, Imogene, Leroy, Claude, Ollie and Gladys. They live over the Garage. While some people have grass in their front yard they have rocks. Where other people have beautiful plants, they have poison ivy. They are always in trouble at school.

Somehow, they showed up at church the day the teacher was trying to start practising the Christmas Pageant. They had never heard about Jesus; they did not know about celebrating the birth of a special baby. The Herdmans decided they wanted to be in the Pageant.

This is an excellent family story. It might be fun to read it together or read alone for eight years plus. It is delightful when the Herdmans learn about the love of Jesus and the Christmas story.

You can find this book in your library. Enjoy!

PROPERTY COMMITTEE

The gym renovations are now complete with the installation of radiant heaters. This allows us to eliminate one more boiler zone. The only section of the church that remains dependent on the boiler is the Sanctuary, Narthex and the Dining Hall.

In order to renew our insurance policy, the boiler had to go through a detailed inspection which included taking all key components apart. There were several key components that had to be repaired and/or replaced. Consequently, our boiler maintenance costs increased significantly this year. Our 50 plus year old boiler is nearing the end of its effectiveness.

After extensive consultations with the Hamilton Heritage Committee on the installation of an accessible entry at the front of the church, we have finally been given approval to move forward with the project. A church sub-committee is now meeting regularly for planning as well as sourcing trades for the work.

A baby change station has been installed in one

of the dining hall washrooms. Another baby change station is planned for the Moss Davidson Hill washroom soon.

The dining hall will be closed from December 22nd until January 9th for further renovations. Coffee hour after Sunday service will be in the Parlour and Library on December 28th and January 4th.

New carpeting will be installed in the Moss Davidson Hill Room, Library and hallway by the Parlour and YCC Room early in the new year. If anyone wishes to donate to the carpet fund, please contact Sarah in our office at 905-628-6396.

We welcomed a new, part-time tenant to our 4th floor offices.

Continuous maintenance of our church is always at the forefront of the committee's work and I sincerely thank our property volunteers and friends, for their continued support and work.

Yvan Raymond
Chair, Property Committee





A Christmas Thank You to Our Volunteers

Two weeks ago, I was at an event and happened to mention St. Paul's to the person seated beside me. "Oh!" she said. "St. Paul's! You are so active in the community. It is wonderful what your church is doing."

Christmas is a time to give but also to say thank you, to acknowledge the countless hours our volunteers have given in ways seen and unseen. We are deeply grateful for:

- Those who knit scarves, hats, and mittens for our Community Dinner guests and others in need of warmth, and who knit prayer shawls and baby blankets.
- The volunteers who cook and serve at our Community Dinners, welcoming a growing number of neighbours who find both nourishment and friendship at St. Paul's.
- The collaboration that has brought Café 55+ to life—and continues to help it grow.
- Happy Gang - dominoes, board games, and card games.
- Music! Choirs, handbells, ukuleles, violins, brass and woodwinds, piano.
- Volunteers who support children, families, and our youth group.
- The dozens who volunteer every Saturday at the Valley Town Breakfast.
- Our dedicated Property Committee, what a transformation our church is undergoing!
- Pastoral Care volunteers who visit and comfort the frail, the sick, and the home-bound; who bring casseroles, compassion, and ministry; and who sustain the prayer chain.
- Those who lead our advocacy for justice and for the environment.
- Those who are leading and deepening our journey of affirmation.
- The unstoppable United Church Women.
- Our Library team, who maintain a very fine collection and provide book reviews.
- The church archivists, who not only maintain our archives, but who educate us and remind us of how we got to be where we are.
- Those who maintain our garden and decorate our church to mark the seasons and the celebrations.
- Our Tech Team.
- The many hands that bring special events to life - The Garage Sale, the Previously Loved Art Sale, and this fall, Rally Sunday and Fiesta Craft & Marketplace.
- The enormous task of communication: those who help us share our story with clarity and warmth.
- The committee members who provide the backbone of our church, Finance, Stewardship, Ministry & Personnel, Trustees, whose essential work is often unseen.
- Office volunteers, who work seamlessly with our administrator.
- Worship Committee, who have kept our Sunday worship meaningful and engaging, even as we have been without a lead Minister
- Our representatives to the Association of Dundas Churches and to our Regional Council.

And we thank our incredible staff, Rev. John Adeyemi, Pastoral Care Minister, Frederic De Vries, Minister of Music, Sarah French, Office Administrator, Porscha Hewitt, Youth and Young Families Coordinator, and Gisell Arevalo, our Church Caretaker.

Not everyone is able to join a committee or take on a volunteer role, but every gesture matters: a smile and a word of welcome at Sunday coffee, a donation to support our ministries, a helpful suggestion, a prayer offered quietly at home. Together, it all adds up to make St. Paul's a compassionate, caring, and uplifting community.

On behalf of the Board, we wish you a Blessed Christmas and a Healthy, Peaceful New Year.

From Courageous Conversations, in partnership with Outreach and Pastoral Care, to Ron's Buechner Wisdom book study, and Porscha's excellent ongoing work with YCC, Young Adult programming and Parent and Child Drop in times and activities, with library book reviews and improvements, it has been a busy time this past year. Now, as we begin a new church year this Advent, we are busy doing ongoing planning for the July and August Summer Camp at St. Paul's and considering some possibilities for activities for the upcoming dark days of January and February. A book study? Another Courageous Conversation on a topic concerning our relationship with Creation in the new light of science? A community oriented time for discussion of "What Constitutes Genuine Christian Behaviour in These Troubled Times?" Another family game night?

There is always so much to be done and never enough energy to do it all, so we do our best, trusting in a future of "more than we can ask for, or imagine." We head together into the unknown tomorrow. Attempting new things (that do not always turn out as we had planned) and in the process we learn new things about ourselves, about others and about life.

May you all have a blessed and Merry Christmas.

DECEMBER

One last leaf
clings to the tree.
No longer green
Stubbornly hoping
to see spring again.

Marlene Monster



DECEMBER

All the months go past, Each is like a guest.
December is the last, December is the best.
Each has lovely things, Each one is a friend
But December brings Christmas at the end!

Please join us for Sunday Service at 10 am. Services are livestreamed and can be viewed on our website (stpaulsdundas.com) or Facebook. We also record the services and upload to our website allowing you to view them at a later date.

Enjoy refreshments in the Dining Hall with friends following Sunday service.

The church office is open Monday to Friday 9 am – 5 pm but is locked outside of these hours. Access only to those with a key fob or buzz the room you are scheduled to meet in.



St. Paul's Ministry Team

Minister of Music: Fredric DeVries fredric@stpaulsdundas.com
Pastoral Care Minister: Rev. John Adeyemi jadeyem4@uwo.ca
Minister Emeritus: Rev. Merrill Graham
Office Administrator: Sarah French 905-628-6396 office@stpaulsdundas.com

St. Paul's Website <https://stpaulsdundas.com> Twitter or X <https://twitter.com/StPaulsDundas>

Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/StPaulsDundas/>



St. Paul's United Church

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Our mission as a community of Christ's disciples is to grow in faith, in love of God, all human beings and the world God created.