

THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA

St. Paul's Pastoral Charge

December 1, 2024

ADVENT 1 & Volunteer Sunday

PRELUDE

ANNOUNCEMENTS: Brenda Marshall

WELCOME

INTROIT: The Choir

GOD GATHERS US TOGETHER

ACKNOWLEDGING THE TERRITORY

As we begin, we respectfully acknowledge that the land on which we gather is traditional territory of the Anishinaabek, Haudenosaunee and Attawandaron peoples. We acknowledge with respect their diverse histories and cultures

FIRST SUNDAY IN ADVENT – Reader Karon Harris

From light comes life. Deep in expectant earth, a seed stretches. Through the fire-start of imagination, an idea takes root. In a passionate flash, love glows with infant intensity. Safe in the womb, a child senses its season turning and stirs. It is Advent, something coming, vulnerable in its unstoppable desire... God, unquenchable light, may they grow – the seed, the love, the idea, the child.

Let us pray

Karon: As winter days dim and bow to early darkness, you, God of light, set watch in the night sky and beckon the wise to follow.

All: When hope hangs low in the human heart, you, loving creator, kindle compassion, breathing life into the early embers of change and empathy.

Light the first purple candle.

Karon: We light a candle for hope, sending prayers high into the inky heavens and dreams deep into the human soul. As Advent dawns, God of all hope, shine your light on the story of the saints who journeyed before us.

All: May the seeds they planted in the world – peace, joy, love – take hold in our hearts and stretch towards the light. We light a candle for hope. May it light the way.

OPENING HYMN: VU #2 “Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus”

1. Come, thou long expected Jesus, born to set thy people free;
from our fears and sins release us, let us find our rest in thee.
2. Israel's strength and consolation, hope of all the earth thou art;
dear desire of every nation, joy of every longing heart.
3. Born thy people to deliver, born a child and yet a King,
born to reign in us forever, now thy gracious kingdom bring.
4. By thine own eternal Spirit rule in all our hearts alone;
by thine all sufficient merit, raise us to thy glorious throne.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (in unison)

God of all hope, we are a people of abundance. Your never-ceasing love surrounds us; your great compassion embraces us; but we take these gifts for granted. Open our eyes to the wonders of creation. Tune our ears to the cries for love in a lonely world. Fill our hearts with a faith that is revealed in action. This we pray in the name of the One who never ceases to come. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

One: The Good News of this Advent season is forgiveness of sin and new life.
Let us commit our lives to Christ's way of hope and peace.

All: Thanks be to the Advent God, who comes among us, setting us free to love and serve.

VOLUNTEER SUNDAY

International Volunteers Day is an annual event that honors the invaluable work of volunteers and volunteer organizations. It aims to inspire more people to engage in volunteer activities and promote the idea that volunteering contributes to building a better and more inclusive world.

When is International Volunteers Day 2024?

International Volunteers Day is observed globally on December 5th each year. This date offers a chance to acknowledge and celebrate the remarkable achievements of volunteers and to reflect on the impact of volunteerism on society.

Today we are celebrating all of the wonderful people who have volunteered their time, talents and treasures to our St Paul's church family.

God taught us the importance of service through the examples set by his Son, Jesus Christ. Through the works of the Holy Spirit and the grace poured out by God, we have many wonderful people who do great and wonderful things here at St Paul's. We pray God will continue to bless all our volunteers.

Thank You Volunteers:

In recognition of our volunteers, we have a small token.

Prayer for Volunteers:

One: Heavenly Father, we are blessed to have many volunteers within our St. Paul's Church Family.

All: We give you thanks, O Lord.

One: For the gifts given to them and for the many hours of service.

All: We give you thanks, O Lord.

One: For being the hands, feet and hearts of Christ in our community today.

All: We give you thanks, O Lord.

One: For the service of our weekly volunteers who help to make our worship happen each Sunday, our Community Kitchen teams, our Messy Church volunteers and all others who dedicate their lives to helping others in the name of our church.

All: We give you thanks, O Lord.

One: May we recognize everyone and their gifts, time and talents. Make us one in the body of Christ.

All: We dedicate our lives to your service; in Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

A TIME WITH THE CHILDREN

Prayer

The Lord's Prayer

CHILDREN'S HYMN: VU #7 "Hope is a Star" (vs. 1 & refrain)

Hope is a star that shines in the night,
leading us on till the morning is bright.

Refrain: When God is a child there's joy in our song.
The last shall be first and the weak shall be strong,
and none shall be afraid.

WE HEAR GOD'S WORD

PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION

SCRIPTURE: **Epistle:** **1 Thessalonians 3:9-13** pg. 204
 Reader: This is the Word of Christ.
 All: **Praise be to God.**

MESSAGE: "Hope in God" Rev'd Karlene Brown-Palmer

WE RESPOND TO GOD'S WORD

OFFERTORY HYMN: VU # 540 "Grant Us, God, the Grace"

Grant us, God, the grace of giving, with a spirit large and free.
That ourselves and all our living we may offer faithfully.

OFFERTORY PRAYER (in unison)

As we prepare, O God, for the festival of Christ's birth, help us to give in expectation of his return. May our gifts be used to prepare the world for Christ's coming, when all creation shall sing your praise. Amen.

COMMUNION HYMN: "Let Us Break Bread Together" VU # 480

1. Let us break bread together on our knees;
let us break bread together on our knees;

Refrain: When I fall on my knees with my face to the rising sun,
O Lord, have mercy on me.

2. Let us drink wine together on our knees;
let us drink wine together on our knees. **(Refrain)**

3. Let us praise God together on our knees;
let us praise God together on our knees. **(Refrain)**

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH: *The New Creed* (in unison)

We are not alone,

We live in God's world.

We believe in God:

**who has created and is creating,
who has come in Jesus,
the Word made flesh,**

To reconcile and make new,
who works in us and others
by the Spirit.

We trust in God.

We are called to be the Church:
to celebrate God's presence,
to live with respect in Creation,
to love and serve others,
to seek justice and resist evil,

to proclaim Jesus, crucified and risen, our judge and our hope.

**In life, in death, in life beyond death,
God is with us.**

We are not alone.

Thanks, be to God. Amen.

SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

As we come to this table, we are reminded that this is the table of Jesus Christ, a banquet prepared for everyone. All who seek to be nourished and sustained in the journey of faith, all who seek wholeness and compassionate paths to peace and justice, are welcome here.

God be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift our hearts in prayer.

Let us give thanks to God.

It is good to give God thanks and praise.

Let us pray:

Blessed are you, Breath of peace, Giver of all life, Source of love that knows no boundaries. Your song of wisdom rang out before the world began; throughout the ages, your song of liberation has impregnated us with your hope for a world where: those considered last and least are first and most; violence is overcome by the power of your ancient love; and, all siblings work together for peace.

You bring our longings to birth, and send prophets to awaken us to your approaching Advent among us.

We thank you for those who, like Mary, have the strength and courage to give birth to your love in the world; for those who, like the shepherds, dare to seek out the Child of Bethlehem; for those who, like the wise ones, actively challenge violent and oppressive powers.

We praise you that your everlasting light is shown to us in womb and tomb, in cradle and cross, in tenderness and compassion.

We join in the Advent prayer of all your people, "O Come, Emmanuel."

And, as we wait and watch for your coming among us, we proclaim your goodness. At this time, we also remember all with whom you would have us share your feast.

We pray for all who are in sorrow or in pain...
All who are close to our hearts...
all all who are ill or alone...
all our sisters who live with fear, oppression, or hunger...
all whose lives have been blighted by violence, racism, or poverty...
for all whom the world counts as last and least.

We pray for the church and its many ministries, for nations as they strive for peace and justice, for an end to violence against women.

God of hope, make this bread the means of our rebuilding, this wine the medium of our transformation, this table the foundation of our renewal, and this community the place of our rebirth.

At this time, we remember Jesus, who on the night before he died, took a loaf of bread, gave you thanks, broke it, and said, "Take and eat; whenever you do this, remember me." Likewise, after supper, he took the cup, saying, "This is the new covenant; remember me."

Gracious God, Breath of peace, Source of love, we pray for your Spirit.
Make us, while many, one. Make us, though broken, whole. Make us, despite death, alive.

And so we pray:
Come, Holy Spirit, come.

SHARING THE BREAD AND CUP

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION (in unison)

We thank you, God, for breaking into our world and pouring into our lives and our experiences. We thank you, God, for this meal of thanksgiving and the stories of love, grace, and hope that it tells. Amen.

*Communion liturgy Written by **Alydia Smith**,
Program Coordinator, Worship, Music, and Spirituality, General Council Office*

IN JESUS' NAME WE GO TO SERVE

CLOSING HYMN: "I Know Who Holds Tomorrow"

1. I don't know about tomorrow, I just live from day to day.
I don't borrow from its sunshine, for its skies may turn to gray.
I don't worry o'er the future, for I know what Jesus said,
And today I'll walk beside Him, for He knows what is ahead.

Refrain: Many things about tomorrow, I don't seem to understand;
But I know who holds tomorrow, and I know who holds my hand.

2. Every step is getting brighter, as the golden stairs I climb;
Every burden's getting lighter; every cloud is silver lined.
There the sun is always shining, there no tear will dim the eye,
At the ending of the rainbow, where the mountains touch the sky. **[Refrain]**

3. I don't know about tomorrow, it may bring me poverty;
 But the one who feeds the sparrow, is the one who stands by me.
 And the path that be my portion, may be through the flame or flood,
 But His presence goes before me, and I'm covered with His blood. **[Refrain]**

**COMMISSIONING AND BENEDICTION
 POSTLUDE**

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We welcome all who join us for in-person worship today and online.



Everyone is invited to join for fellowship and refreshments
 in the Friendship Room down the hall after today's service.
 Members of the Congregation are hosting today.

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In our thoughts and prayers this week:
 Jim Donaldson, Bill Drew, Stacia Hanson, Karen Kaufman, Julie Putoczki,
 Darlen Stafford and Jim Withington.



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We say Happy Birthday to Lillian Neale
who will be celebrating her 90th birthday on December 3 and to
Lynda Coles who celebrates being 82 on December 6.



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**The Poinsettia today and this month has been placed
 by John and Carol Morling in memory of loved ones.**



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UPCOMING SERVICES IN DECEMBER

- 7th Cantata with very special guests 2:00 p.m.
- 8th Christmas Pageant & Adopt-a-family
- 13th Blue Christmas service 1:00 p.m.
- 15th Choir Cantata during worship 10:30 a.m. & Poinsettias
- 22nd Christmas Sunday Worship 10:30 a.m.
- 24th Christmas Eve worship 6:00 p.m.
- 29th New Year's worship 10:30 a.m.

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I would like to personally thank everyone who was involved in the UCW Frosty Fair Bazaar. It takes everyone to make a beautiful tradition successful. Since I was a little girl, I can remember all of the ladies, and their supportive partners, preparing and hosting this event. From the bottom of my heart, THANK YOU, for continuing the peace, love and fun where the Frosty Fair brings us together to begin to celebrate the blessings of the Christmas season.



Julie Avery

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Community Closet is in immediate need of gently used men's sweaters and hoodies. Our shelves are currently empty of these items due to high demand from our guests as the weather is getting colder. If you have any items to donate, they can be dropped off in the multi-purpose room or you can call / email Keith and Julie at 519-493-4192 kjavery1@gmail.com to arrange for pickup.

We thank everyone in advance for items they may be able to donate.

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For friends or family in hospital (here in Tillsonburg or elsewhere) please contact our Church Office (519-688-0011) with Hospital name and details to let Karlene know so she can follow-up with a visit or phone-call. Hospitals no longer provide daily lists of patients wanting visits and we would not want to miss anyone.



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St. Paul's choir and friends, under the direction of Shelley Vermeersch, present **"The Sounding Joy" on Saturday December 7 at 2 pm.** They will also perform this cantata during regular church service on Sunday December 15 at 10:30 a.m.

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Christmas time is quickly approaching.

This year our Adopt-a-Family:

Background - there was a fire in their house and they have lost everything. There is mom and dad, 6 kids and 2 dogs.

All of them need winter coats, boots, hats and scarves. So far they haven't had much luck at the Community Cupboard for coats etc. as they just didn't have the right sizes.

Boy age 10 - wears size 14-16 and size 7 in men's shoes

His favorite color is green

He likes play doh, slime, tools, diamond paintings, hockey, basketball and baseball.

Boy age 9 - wears size 12 in clothes and size 6 in men's shoes

His favorite color is blue

He loves video games, likes to draw, likes Melo and lego

Girl age 6 - wears girls size 7 in clothes and Size 2 in shoes

Favorite colors pink and gold

She is into Barbies, coloring, playdoh and age appropriate books

Boy age 2 - wears size 3T and toddler size 7 in shoes

His favorite color is yellow

He likes Sponge Bob, trucks, cars, dinosaurs, blocks, baby books and toys with lights and sounds. He also likes to color

Girl age 6 months - wears 9 month clothes

Loves Mickey Mouse, will be teething soon and likes balls and rattles.



Girl age 15 - wears Womens S in all clothing and size 7 in women's shoes
Her favorite color is blue, she is into makeup, nail products and hair products-and of course, clothes.

Mom and Dad - need things as well - bedding, pillows, and household items. We will get some more specific details about this.

And - I'm going to add this here as well -

They have 2 dogs that were affected by this fire. They both had to be revived.

Puppy - toys and treats

Older dog - soft food and treats (missing teeth) They were both on Old Roy dog food.



I am going to put up a tree and the tags within the next couple of weeks, but if you want to start shopping, just let me know how you made out.

For people who like to do grocery gift cards- please get them from Walmart or make a donation by cash, cheque or e-transfer noting Adopt-a Family. This will be like shopping for two families when it comes to food. I have been given a very extensive list of what the food hampers are to contain.

We need to be all wrapped up by Sunday December 15th as it all gets delivered on the 17th. So let's get ready to shop 'til we almost drop and make this a very special Christmas for this family.

My email is marianneriach@gmail.com My phone is 519-788-4323

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Food Bank Items requested for December



- packaged stuffing
- canned tuna
- pudding cups
- canned peas, carrots and beans
- granola bars
- cereal



...that we collected 82lbs of food for the Helping Hand Food bank in November.

All donations for 2024 must be received in the mail slot by December 27 OR on the offering plate December 29 to be included in the 2024 receipts.