

THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA

St. Paul's Pastoral Charge

May 4, 2025

Mental Health Sunday

PRELUDE

ANNOUNCEMENTS: Kelly Springer

WELCOME

INTROIT: Choir

LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE

One: The light of the Christ candle signifies that we are meeting in the presence of God.

All: He knows our needs, hears our cries, feels our pain, and heals our wounds.

GOD GATHERS US TOGETHER

ACKNOWLEDGING THE TERRITORY

Long before today, as we gather here, there have been Aboriginal Peoples who have been the stewards of this place. We recognize and deeply appreciate their historic connection to this place. We also recognize their contributions both in shaping and strengthening our region, our province and our country as a whole.

CALL TO WORSHIP (responsive)

One: We gather in the presence of the One who breathes life into all of Creation.

All: We sing God's praises, breathing in God's glory.

One: All are welcome in the presence of the Most High.

All: We come seeking the goodness in the hands of God.

One: We gather as God's beloved people, leaving no one outside.

All: Together we reflect the fullness of God's love; together we bring God's love into the world.

One: Let us worship the Living God whose breath gives us life.

All: Amen.

(Rev. Dr. Rachael Keefe, based on Psalm 104)

OPENING HYMN: VU # 600 "When I Needed a Neighbour"

1. When I needed a neighbour were you there, were you there?
When I needed a neighbour, were you there?
And the creed and the colour and the name won't matter. Were you there?
2. I was hungry and thirsty were you there, were you there?
I was hungry and thirsty, were you there?
And the creed and the colour and the name won't matter. Were you there?
3. I was cold, I was naked were you there, were you there?
I was cold, I was naked, were you there?
And the creed and the colour and the name won't matter. Were you there?

4. When I needed a healer were you there, were you there?
When I needed a healer, were you there?
And the creed and the colour and the name won't matter. Were you there?
5. Wherever you travel I'll be there, I'll be there.
Wherever you travel, I'll be there.
And the creed and the colour and the name won't matter. I'll be there.

PRAYER OF INVOCATION (responsive)

One: O God, come into our place of worship this day and enliven us.

All: Come into each heart, each story, each prayer, each song, each life here today so that we may live and love with purpose, courage, and beauty.

One: O God, who has created each of us in your image and made us one body, each as holy vessels of your presence to one another, create in and among us a holy place.

All: Give us hearts and minds, we pray, to be open to human vulnerability, to listen to each other with patient and thoughtful attention and support. To perceive the grace of the differences in our embodied experience, to resist what excludes and diminishes, and to dismantle what acts as barriers to our flourishing together in love and justice.

One: O God, help us to trust your Spirit's work to make us whole, together in relationships of mutuality and partnership, in sacred rhythms of giving and receiving.

All: Gather us together to be your people in the world. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

(Dr. Tom Reynolds)

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (responsive)

One: God of promise and possibility, we come before you broken and breathless, thinking we are trudging through a valley of lifeless bones. We look for life amidst the bones and dust and fail to notice your breath flowing in and around us. We think we need to be perfect before we can enter the new life you have for us. We become fearful when illness in body, mind, or spirit enters into our lives or the lives of those around us. We worry that sickness of body, that mental illness, is a judgement from you. We would rather walk in a valley of bones than believe that your Love, your Spirit, claims us all – in our brokenness and our wholeness.

All: Open us to the power of your Spirit, a power that makes us all whole: bone, sinew, and flesh filled with your breath. Let us remember that you do not leave us alone in a valley filled with dusty, dry bones; You call us into new life, again and again.

WORDS OF ASSURANCE:

One: Hear the Good News: No valley is too despairing, broken, or dusty for God to enter in. No fear, no chaos, no hopelessness is beyond the reach of the One whose breath gives us life. Come, Holy Spirit, come. Make all things new.

All: Through Christ, God sees only our wholeness. Through Christ, forgiveness, love, and new life are always possible. We are reclaimed and remade by the Spirit of Life. In our brokenness and in our wholeness, we are God's beloved. Thanks be to God. Amen.

(Rev. Dr. Rachael Keefe, based on Ezekiel 37)

PRAISE SONG: In Christ Alone

LITANY

One: On this Mental Health Sunday, we join in this Litany of Naming.

All: As a congregation we are glad to lift up our voices and our spirits to break the silence that often happens when we are confronted with mental illness.

One: As a faith community, we name the gifts and the often-unnamed experiences which come to those who live with a mental illness such as major depression, bipolar disorder, anxiety disorder, schizophrenia, and eating disorder. We name:

All: The Hope which upholds our spirit through honest sharing;

One: The Pain when people turn away because of fear;

All: The Courage to speak in a safe place the way that Jesus spoke truth with love;

One: The Strength from being with others who listen compassionately; the Isolation that comes when no one knows what to say;

All: The Realization that mental illnesses and brain disorders can be managed;

One: The Exhaustion that comes with living with a mental illness as well as for those who are caregivers;

All: The Welcome of mental health as part of our church's ministry and outreach.

One: The Wisdom that comes when we become educated about mental health; The Spirituality that comes when we walk alongside those who show both resilience and vulnerability in their lives affected by mental illness;

All: We receive these gifts that we have named, those which are welcomed and those that are challenges. We come before you, our God, knowing we are not alone and that You will show us a way to be and live. In the name of Jesus, we pray, Amen.

(Rev. Alan Johnson)

**CHILDREN'S FOCUS: Video – Mental Health Explained
PRAYER**

LORD'S PRAYER

CHILDREN'S HYMN: VU # 577 "I've Got Peace Like a River" (vs. 3)

I've got joy like a fountain; I've got joy like a fountain
I've got joy like a fountain in my soul
I've got joy like a fountain I've got joy like a fountain
I've got joy like a fountain in my soul

WE HEAR GOD'S WORD

PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION

SCRIPTURES: Psalm 34 pg.761

I will bless God at all times,
God's praise will continually be in my mouth.

**My soul will glory in God,
the humble will hear and be glad.**

O magnify God with me,
let us exalt God's name together.

**I sought God, who answered me,
and freed me from all my fears.**

Look to the Most High, and let your light shine,
and your faces will not be ashamed.

**This poor soul cried out and God heard,
and saved me from all my troubles.**

Your angel, O God, keeps guard over those who fear you
and delivers them.

**Taste and see that our God is good.
Happy are those who take refuge in God.**

Fear God, you who are the saints
for those who fear God lack nothing.

**Strong lions suffer want and go hungry,
but those who seek God lack no good thing.**

Come, my children, and listen to me,
I will teach you the fear of God.

**Which of you delights in life,
and desires many days to enjoy prosperity?**

Keep your tongue from evil, your lips from speaking lies.
Turn away from evil and do good, seek peace and pursue it.

**God's eyes are upon the righteous,
God's ears open to their cry.**

God's face is set against evil-doers,
to blot out their remembrance from the earth.

The righteous cry out and God hears them,

and rescues them from all their troubles.

God is near to the broken-hearted,
and saves those who are crushed in spirit.

**Many are the afflictions of the righteous,
but God sets them free from every sorrow.**

God guards every bone in their body;
not one of them will be broken.

**Evil brings death to the wicked;
those who hate the righteous will be condemned.**

But you, God, redeem the life of your servants;
none who take refuge in you are condemned.

Reader: This is the Word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

**VIDEO PRESENTATION: "Dear Anxiety"
– Spoken Word Poet Clayton Jennings**

SONG: "I Am Not Okay" – Jelly Roll

MESSAGE: "Everyone Can Find A Place with Jesus"

SELECTION: - Choir

WE RESPOND TO GOD'S WORD

OFFERTORY PRAYER (in unison)

Loving God, open us to a new world. Where there is no longer least and greatest, rich and poor, haves and have nots. A world where all are treated as beloved precious children. Until that day comes, bless our contributions of time, talent and treasures and may it work towards the building of your new world. Amen.

(Written by Rev. Dr. Alydia Smith)

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE:

One: Let us pray to the God of our Ancestors, who is the Creator of all Life: Eternal Divine Spirit, we pray for the Church that you created through your Son, Jesus Christ; that it may provide an extravagant welcome and serve those who live with a mental illness, particularly in minority communities.

All: Lord, in your mercy, guide us, the citizens and leaders of this land, this region and this town of Tillsonburg that we may unite to provide for and protect those of us who are poor, homeless and suffer in mind, body and spirit.

One: Lord, in your mercy, forgive us as a community, when we knowingly or unknowingly ridicule, look in disgust, neglect or discriminate against those who suffer from mental illness.

All: Lord, in your mercy, comfort and relieve those who are troubled in mind and spirit. Bring them hope, peace and the consolation of a loving community.

One: Lord, in your mercy, grant patience and courage to the families and friends of those who are ill. Increase their perseverance as they face challenges to recovery for their loved one.

All: Lord, in your mercy, protect and defend those living with mental illness from exploitation, addictions and abuse.

One: Lord, in your mercy, increase our awareness, compassion, and sensitivity so that we can embrace our siblings and cousins who wrestle with Mental Illness.

All: Lord, we recognize that because of their intense pain, and at times, their lack of perceived options, we commend to your mercy and defense all who are contemplating suicide today, right now. Bring someone or something to intervene.

One: Lord, in your mercy, we pray for the families who have lost a loved one to mental illness, bring them comfort in trusting that your grace accepts their loved one, despite the event that brought them into your loving arms.

All: Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer. Guide those who do research for the prevention and treatment of mental illnesses; uphold them with your compassion and diligence.

One: Eternal Spirit of Love, Giver of life and health, we trust that in your time and way, you will dispel all confusion with your order, all fear with your peace.

All: Through Jesus Christ, who intercedes for us and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

(Rev. Colin Jones, Co-Pastor of Advent United Church of Christ in Columbus Ohio)

IN JESUS' NAME WE GO TO SERVE

CLOSING HYMN: VU # 266 "Amazing Grace"

Amazing grace, how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me.
I once was lost, but now I am found, was blind, but now I see.

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, and grace my fears relieved. How precious did that grace appear the hour I first believed.

Through many dangers, toils and snares I have already come,
'Tis grace has brought me safe thus far and grace will lead me home.

The Lord has promised good to me, His word my hope secures;
He will my shield and portion be, as long as life endures.

Yea, when this flesh and heart shall fail, and mortal life shall cease
I shall possess within the veil, a life of joy and peace.

When we've been there ten thousand years bright shining as the sun,
We've no less days to sing God's praise than when we've first begun

COMMISSIONING AND BENEDICTION POSTLUDE

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

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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 is Carol Crocker. Carol is in room 206 at Tillsonburg Hospital.

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Happy Birthday celebrations to
Barb Aubrey celebrating "84" years on May 6;



and

Janet & Reg Butcher are celebrating "55" years of marriage on May 9.
Congratulations!

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The flowers in the Sanctuary today are placed by Dianne McPherson in memory of her Mother in honour of Mother's Day and for her sister whose birthday was in May and passed away in January of 2023. The flowers will be delivered to someone who needs to know we as a church family "care".



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Belatedly and very sincerely we thank you for the beautiful hydrangea plant which was delivered to us on Easter Sunday. We had both been under the weather so this was a ray of sunshine. Thank you so much. Dave and Jenny Ramer

UCW orders for geraniums - cost of \$3.50 each. A variety of colours are available: red, white, pink and orange. To place your order please contact Wilma Jeffery at (519) 688-0065 or Rita Van Lamoen at (519) 842-9271. **Last day to order May 5th**. A sign-up sheet is available outside the Friendship Room. Pick-up for geraniums will be Friday at 7p.m. OR Saturday at 10:00 a.m. at the church.



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Celebrate 100

REMEMBER -- to contribute to the "Celebrate 100" a number relating to 100. All monies will stay at St. Paul's --- do you have an idea to celebrate 100? We may announce a contest soon.

Direct your questions to Mary Anne Silverthorn



Just a gentle reminder:

Let's Celebrate our 100th Anniversary wearing a Name Tag. Contact Lisa at 519-409-1058 or add your name on the Name Tag sign-up sheet on the table near the Friendship Room.

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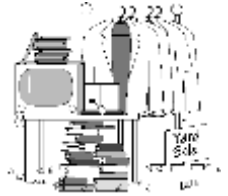
Saturday, May 31st is fast approaching for our annual Yard Sale – indoor this year from 8-1p.m. We are in need of:

Good used clothing, shoes, purses, Jewelry, children's and adults' books; puzzles, games and toys also, glassware, housewares, small appliances, bedding, linens china and small furniture items and tools

You can drop off items Monday, Wednesday and Fridays 8:30-12 noon. (place on trolley) by the Bidwell doors

For more info. contact: Brenda, Lesley or Karon

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UPCOMING EVENTS:

Seated Massage Workshops



Learn how to do a relaxing seated massage by using some simple and easy to learn techniques focusing on neck, shoulders, back, hands and feet. Turn your family and friends into putty in your hands. Wear comfortable, loose clothing and bring a pillow.

Dates: **Tues. May 6 and Wed. May 7**

Location: St. Paul's United Church - Friendship room

Cost: Attending one session \$20 each person

Attending both sessions \$30 each person

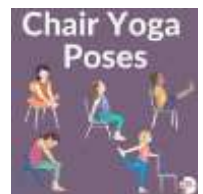
Bring a partner or we will find you a partner for you.

Sign-up sheets outside the Friendship room – this is a fundraiser for the church.

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Please join us for a new outreach social program to Celebrate 100 years of the United Church. **All ladies and gentlemen are welcome for CHAIR YOGA** every Thursday at 2:15 PM in the friendship room, starting on **May 15th**. This will be via "YOU TUBE". The first session will be about 25 minutes.

- Work at your own comfort level.
- Great way to keep fit and stay healthy.
- Enjoy some social time with friends.
- Come for the Yoga and stay for the tea.
- SIGN UP BY THE FRIENDSHIP ROOM.



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Foodbank Drive – May

At this time, we are in **urgent need** of the following popular items: Crackers, canned fruit, canned pork and beans.

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SOMETHING NEW is COMING to St. Paul's



A member of our church family had an idea and Council gave their approval. Several donations have been made and now we have a NEW project. To celebrate--- the 100th anniversary of the UCC, our proud Canadian Heritage our 158th year for St. Paul's UC
***** the memories of loves ones -

(Plaque and wording of citation to be determined later)

Council approved the purchase of a flag and flagpole to be erected near the Bidwell St. Entrance - exact site to be determined.

If you would like to make a donation ---- write a cheque OR e-transfer monies marked payable to St. Paul's UC and marked flagpole/flag. All donations will be added to your yearly giving's and a receipt issued at the end of the year. Cost of the project - Approximately \$4500.00. Includes—professional installation etc.

Hoping to have this all completed prior to July 1—to celebrate Canada Day.

Stay tuned!!! This is exciting!!!

There will be a celebration at the time we "Raise the Flag" for the first time - mid June we hope -STAY TUNED

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<p>DID YOU KNOW?</p>	<p>... that you know that we still collect used stamps for Leprosy Canada; Cowards Perks for purchases for the UCW Bazaar tables; pull tabs from pop cans for Tabs 4 Kids Wheelchair. Please place in the rotunda containers.</p>
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LicenSing #2401; CCLI: #239572