

THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA

St. Paul's Pastoral Charge

March 23, 2025

PRELUDE

ANNOUNCEMENTS: Lisa Houston

WELCOME

INTROIT: The Choir

LIGHTING OF CHRIST CANDLE:

GOD GATHERS US TOGETHER

ACKNOWLEDGING THE TERRITORY

We acknowledge and give thanks to the land on which we live, work and play, and to the people who have cared for it. This land is the traditional territory of the Anishinaabek, Haudenosaunee and Attawandaron peoples.

CALL TO WORSHIP (responsively)

One: Today is a day to sing praises to God!

All: God continually blesses us, each and every day.

Adelaide: Even in the midst of cold and darkness, the warmth of God's love is real.

All: We can count on God to be here for us.

Adelaide: Let your hearts rejoice and your voices shout praise to God.

All: For God is great and worthy to be praised. AMEN.

OPENING HYMN: VU # 378 "Spirit of God, Descend Upon My Heart"

Spirit of God, descend upon my heart;
Wean it from earth; through all its pulses move.
Stoop to my weakness, strength to me impart,
And make me love you as I ought to love.

I ask no dream, no prophet ecstasies
no sudden rending of evil clay.
no angel visitation, no opening skies,
but take the dimness of my soul away.

Have you not bid me love you, God and King?
All, all your own, soul, heart and strength and mind.
I see your cross; there teach my heart to cling:
O let me seek you and O let me find!

Teach me to love you as your angels love,
One holy passion filling all my frame;
The baptism of the heaven-descended dove,
My heart an altar, and your love the flame.

PRAYER OF APPROACH

Jor-El: Dear Lord, we bow before you in reverence. You are the King of kings and Lord of lords.

All: **You have control over everything in the heavens and on earth. Yet you still care about even the smallest details of our lives. That's why I want to rejoice in you every day. You are worthy!**

Jor-El: As a Father, you demonstrated a love unlike anything this world has to offer.

All: **Because of that love, we will get to spend eternity with you.**

Jor-El: Lord, thank you for this ultimate gift. Without you we would have no hope.

All: **We love you with all our heart, soul, and mind! We lift up our praises as we worship today. In Jesus' name, Amen.**

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (in response)

Amelia: God, you know who we are. We struggle with being both good and bad. Our hearts often do what is not pleasing to you.

All: **We do the wrong we shouldn't and fail to do the right we should. Only you fully know us and love us despite our failings. Search our hearts, and cause us to follow only your example in our world we pray. Amen.**

(A time for silent prayers of confession.)

Assurance of God's Forgiveness

Amelia: God is at work in us and with us! Hear the promise of God: when we confess our sins, he forgives us and in Christ we are set free.

All: **Amen! We are forgiven in Christ! Thanks be to God.**

A TIME WITH THE CHILDREN

Prayer

The Lord's Prayer

CHILDREN'S HYMN: VU # 577 "I've Got Peace like a River" (vs. 1)

I've got peace like a river, I've got peace like a river,
I've got peace like a river in my soul. I've got river in my soul.

WE HEAR GOD'S WORD

PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION

SCRIPTURE: Psalm 27 (VU p. 754-755)

Refrain: God is my light and saving health, I shall not be afraid.

Margaret

God is my light and my salvation, whom then shall, I fear?

God is the stronghold of my life, of whom

shall I be afraid?

When the wicked close in to devour me,

**it is they, my enemies and my foes, who
stumble and fall.**

If an army should encamp against me, my heart shall not
be afraid;

**if war should arise against me, even then I will
not be dismayed.**

**Refrain: God is my light and saving health, I
shall not be afraid.**

One thing I have asked of God, for which I long: that I
may dwell in God's house all the days of my life,

**to gaze on your beauty, O God,
and to seek you in your temple.**

For in the time of trouble you will give me shelter;

**you will hide me under the cover of your
tent, you will set me high upon a rock.**

Cindie

And now you have raised my head above my enemies
round about me.

**Therefore, I will offer in your dwelling a
sacrifice with great gladness. R**

**Refrain: God is my light and saving health, I
shall not be afraid.**

Hear my voice, O God, when I call; have mercy and
answer me. Your face, O God, I seek.

**Do not hide your face from me; do not
reject your servant in anger, you who have
been my helper.**

Do not cast me off, or forsake me, O God my saviour.

**Though my father and mother forsake me,
my God will take me up. R**

**Refrain: God is my light and saving health, I
shall not be afraid.**

Teach me your way, O God,

**lead me on a level path, safe from those who lie
in wait for me.**

Do not give me up to the will of my enemies,

for liars and false witnesses arise against me.

I believe that I shall see God's goodness in the land of the living.

**Wait for God; be strong, and take courage;
yes, wait for God! R**

**Refrain: God is my light and saving health, I
shall not be afraid.**

Gospel: Luke 13:31-35 pg. 77 read by Lisa Houston
Reader: This is the Word of the Lord.
All: Thanks be to God.

MESSAGE: "Don't Be Afraid" Rev'd Karlene Brown-Palmer

SELECTION: The Choir

WE RESPOND TO GOD'S WORD

OFFERTORY PRAYER (Unison)

**Covenant God as we come, we have brought our gifts. We are
mindful of your promises to us and our responses to your promises.
May we share the gifts of this covenant with our broken world.
Receive our pledge and gifts we pray Amen.**

Presentation of Candidates for Sacrament of Baptism

The Minister: The sacrament of baptism proclaims and celebrates the
grace of God. By water and the Spirit, we are called,
claimed, and commissioned: we are called God's own,
welcomed as children of God; we are claimed by Christ,
united with Christ.

The Chair of Council: On behalf of the St. Paul's United Church, I present
the following persons for initiation into the body of
Christ through baptism: Robert and Sylvia Holbeck.

Minister: Robert and Sylvia I ask these questions that you may
publicly profess your faith.
Do you believe in one God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit?

Candidate: I do, by the grace of God.

Minister: Desiring the freedom of new life in Christ, do you seek to
resist evil, and to live in love and justice?

Candidate: I will, God being my helper.

Minister: Will you follow the way of Jesus Christ?

Candidate: I will, God being my helper.

Minister: Will you join with your brothers and sisters in this congregation to share in the life, work, and ministry of Jesus Christ?

Candidate: I will, God being my helper.

Minister: Jesus Christ calls us to make disciples of all nations, and to offer God's gift of grace in baptism. Do you, who witness and celebrate this sacrament, promise your love, support, and care to *those* about to be baptized, as *they* live and grow in Christ?

Congregation: We do, by the grace of God.

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

Prayer of Thanksgiving and the Pouring of Water

Minister: As the water is poured, we recall Isaiah's promise: "waters shall break forth in the wilderness and streams in the desert"; Ezekiel's declaration: "I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean"; the Psalmist's testimony: "Beside the still waters, God leads me"; and Jesus' words: "whoever gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones— truly I tell you, none of these will lose their reward." May God's Spirit be upon us and these waters of daily use, which we now use to baptize and to welcome.

Baptism

Minister: What is your name _____ Why are you here?
_____ I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit.

Congregation: **Amen.**

The Blessing

Minister: May the blessing of God, Source of Love, Jesus Christ, Love incarnate, and the Holy Spirit, love's power, be with you today and always.

Congregation: **Amen.**

Marking with the Sign of the Cross

Minister: Robert and Sylvia with the sign of the cross, you become one with Christ, the Anointed One.

Congregation: **Amen.**

Laying of Hands

Minister: May the Holy Spirit, Love's power, guide you, inspire you, and work within you, all the days of your life.

Congregation: **Amen.**

Lighting of Candles

Robert and Sylvia you have chosen to hold the light of faith. As you receive this candle, lit from the Christ candle, it is the light of Christ. Let it shine through you so others may be led to Christ. As you blow it out today and the smoke rises know Christ is with you. As often as needed, relight your candle to be reminded of your mission in Christ.

Congregation: **Amen.**

Presentation of Baptismal Certificates/Tokens

Presentation of Candidates for Confirmation & Reaffirmation of Faith

Minister: We are now to welcome into our congregation five persons. Two by the act of Confirmation and three by Reaffirmation of Faith.

Chair of Council: On behalf of the congregation of St Paul's United Church, I present Adelaide and Amelia Jackson, Margaret Betty, Jor-El, Cindie McCormack, who seek to affirm publicly the faith proclaimed in their baptism:

Minister: I ask these questions that you may publicly profess the faith proclaimed in your baptism.
Do you believe in God, who has created and is creating, who has come in Jesus, the Word made flesh, to reconcile and make new, and who works in us and others by the Spirit?

Candidates: I do, by the grace of God.

Minister: Will you follow in the way of Jesus Christ, resisting oppression and evil, seeking justice, and witnessing to God's love for all creation?

Candidates: I will, God being my helper.

Minister: Will you proclaim Jesus, crucified and risen, in your words and actions?

Candidates: I will, God being my helper.

Minister: Will you join with your brothers and sisters in this congregation to share in the life, work, and ministry of Jesus Christ?

Candidates: I will, God being my helper.

Congregational Commitment

Minister: Let us pledge to these six persons our continued support and care.

All: We will continue to support you, walk with you, and grow with you. With God's help, we will live out our baptism as a loving community in Jesus Christ: nurturing one another in faith, upholding one another in prayer, encouraging one another in God's work.

The Act of Renewal of Baptismal Faith (asparges)

Minister: "Remember your baptism and be thankful."

Laying On of Hands & Prayer for the Candidates

Minister: May the power of the Holy Spirit work within you, that being born of water and the Spirit, you may continue to be a faithful witness of Jesus Christ. Gracious God, giver of life, you have called us by name, and pledge to each of us your faithful love. We pray today for your blessing on your son and daughters, watch over them and guide them as they continue to grow in faith.

All: Amen.

Extend Right Hand of Fellowship
Presentation of Certificate/tokens

- St. Paul's Council Members:

Minister's Prayer:

Gracious God, Giver of life, you have called us by name and pledge to each of us your faithful love. We pray today for your blessing upon all these your servants who we have welcomed among us today. Watch over them and guide them as they continue on their faith journey. Remind us of the promises of our own baptism and renew our trust in you. Strengthen us to do your will and to serve you with joy through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Congregation: Amen.

Minister: In the name of Jesus Christ, we welcome you to the privileges and responsibilities of membership in this congregation. We give thanks to God for your witness among us.

IN JESUS' NAME WE GO TO SERVE

CLOSING HYMN: VU # 675 "Will Your Anchor Hold"

1. Will your anchor hold in the storms of life,
when the clouds unfold their wings of strife?
When the strong tides lift, and the cables strain,
will your anchor drift, or firm remain?

Refrain: We have an anchor that keeps the soul
steadfast and sure while the billows roll;
fastened to the Rock which cannot move,
grounded firm and deep in the Saviour's love!

2. It will surely hold in the straits of fear,
when the breakers tell that the reef is near?
though the tempest rave, and the wild winds blow,
not an angry wave shall our bark o'erflow? **(Refrain)**
3. It will your anchor hold in the floods of death,
when the waters cold chill your latest breath?
On the rising tide you can never fail,
while our hopes abide within the veil. **(Refrain)**
4. When our eyes behold, through the gathering night
the city of gold, our harbour bright?
we shall anchor fast by the heavenly shore,
with the storms all past for evermore? **(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 UCW and friends are hosting today.

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WELCOME SPRING MARCH 20!!!

Hyacinths, daffodils and robins we can't wait to see you!!! Flowers will be delivered to someone who needs to know we care.

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Happy Birthday wishes to

Margaret Vanderzweerde for March 27 – turning 89! and

Desmond Palmer celebrates his birthday on March 28.

Congratulations to both.

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Tim and Linda Stafford celebrate their 48th Wedding Anniversary on March 26. Congratulations.

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The **Lent special offering envelopes** are to support The Helping Hand Food Bank and the United Church of Canada World Development & Relief Fund.

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Tillsonburg and Area Ministerial invite you to our Lenten Services 12-12:30 p.m. March 26 – Avondale United Church - Pastor Ryan Hutchins

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The Friendship Circle (UCW) ladies are selling frozen rhubarb during coffee hour this morning for \$5 a bag. Why not pick up a couple of bags to have on hand for when you're in the mood to bake a rhubarb crisp or a delicious pie. Thank you for supporting our outreach programs.

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Last call to sign up for the UCW Friendship Circle meeting on Wednesday, March 26th. Pizza lunch at 12:30 (free will offering), followed by a fun program about Messy Church. All are welcome!

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**St. Paul's AOTS Fellowship Clubs
Annual Spaghetti fundraising dinner
Saturday March 29 5:00-6:30 p.m.**

Cost is \$15.00 for adults \$8.00 for children 12 and under. Tickets on sale now from the church office, AOTS members or online @ stpaulsaots84@ [gmail.com](mailto:stpaulsaots84@gmail.com). Hope to see you there!

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The summer camping season is just around the corner and enrollment has already started. The AOTS Fellowship club, UCW Friendship club and CD/Worship committee have 3 spaces available. **** If you would like to donate to the camp fund please make your donation out to St. Paul's United Church and mark summer camp in the memo. **If you have kids aged 5-13 that would be interested in attending summer camp please contact Dave Collis at stpaulsaots84@gmail.com or Brenda Marshall at fmbmarshall@sympatico.ca**

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BUTTER TART FUNDRAISER - first Butter Tart buyers' market - Sunday March 30th

We will be doing a fundraiser with homemade butter tarts made by members of the congregation that took on the challenge of trying to imitate 'Doreen's Butter Tarts' which were popular here for many years. We will be using her recipe.

This is a fundraiser for our general fund. We will be selling them after church on SOME Sundays in the friendship room when they are available.

Please give them a try and tell us how we did!

If you would like to make butter tarts in your home; you could ask us for the recipe - From Lesley Jackson or myself Karon Harris 519-842-8596.

Foodbank Drive – for March 60lbs of food was delivered to Foodbank



At this time, we are in **urgent need** of the following high-demand items:

- **Cereal, Oatmeal (packages)**
- **Peanut butter, Jam**
- **Pantry Essentials:** Crackers, condiments, canned fruits & canned vegetables



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Name Tags! Name Tags!

Lisa Houston is still taking Name Tag orders!

Let's celebrate the United Church 100th Anniversary events wearing a Name Tag. The Name Tags come with an option of magnet backing or pin backing, your choice! Price for either option is \$14.95 plus tax.

A sign-up sheet will be left on the table by the Friendship Room with the information required. call me at 519-409-1058. Lisa

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Chair Massage is postponed until after Easter. Details will follow...

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UPCOMING EVENTS:

REMEMBER the CELEBTATE 100 and your DONATION to CELEBRATE the UNITED CHURCH 100 years.



SAVE the DATE --- Further details will follow as the dates approach!!!



Community Kitchen is having a fundraising BBQ on Saturday **July 12th** at Home Hardware from 11am to 3pm. 100% of money raised will go directly to the Community Kitchen outreach program.

JULY 27 –Worshipping the SON in the SUN – our outdoor worship and Todd’s DOGS FOOD TRUCK lunch



SEPTEMBER 7--- FAMILY FIESTA-- LUNCH provided for all!!!! and a BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION!!!!

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You can drop off Yard sale items Monday to Wednesday 9-12 noon.



DID YOU KNOW?	... that teens can serve at our Messy Church and Community Kitchen programs and earn credit towards their Community Service hours.
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LicenSing #2401; CCLI: #239572