

# As The Seasons Change

St. Paul's Autumn Newsletter

August 26th, 2022



## BLESSED TO BE A BLESSING

Blessing is a word that gets thrown around a lot. Usually, we hear the world blessing in relationship to success, health, family, wealth or work. An unexpected gift or opportunity comes, we say "what a blessing". The doctor gives a clean bill of health – "I'm blessed". Athletes have been known to say after winning the game "God blessed us today". The common understanding of what it means to be blessed by God is that good things happen to me. I know I have thought "what a blessing" when the parking spot right near the door is free when I am running late. This kind of thinking equates God's blessing with good fortune, comfort, and prosperity and it fosters the idea that the more faithful you are the greater your worldly place. The problem is this isn't a biblical model of blessing especially if you look through the lens of the book of Job.

When blessing is used in the bible it is less about this transactional engagement and more about relationship. In our Hebrew scriptures, there is usually an intimate relationship between the blesser and the blessed. Jesus proclaims blessing in the Beatitudes. This blessedness is a spiritual state of well-being and prosperity — a deep, joy-filled contentment that cannot be shaken by poverty, grief, famine, persecution, war, or any other trial or tragedy we face in life. God's presence is at the heart of this blessing, which helps us through these difficult times. It is God's blessing that allows us to celebrate the joy and success within the wider view of God's purpose for our lives. It is that deep peace and comfort of knowing "We are not alone" and that we matter.

We are inheritors of the promise to Abraham in Genesis 12 where God proclaimed, "I will make you a great nation and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing." This pattern has always been in play, God's relationship, and favour rests with us, not solely for our own benefit but so that we can be a blessing to God's world in turn. Which only brings greater joy and connection - blessings multiplied!

This year, as we worship, work and serve others as St. Paul's United, let us focus first on the blessing of God's presence, mercy and grace. When we start to feel negative, let us turn our thoughts to what we do have and ask God to open our eyes to ways that we can be a blessing to each other, our congregation and the wider community. Amen (Let it be so)

- Rev. Michelle Armstrong

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### TOGETHER IN FAITH

- Wednesday Bible Study will start September 7th @ 11:15.
- Membership, Baptism classes will take place this fall. For more information contact Rev. Michelle
- Lunch time meal and workshops on September 25th and October 23rd to dig into our missional call
- Our eNews contains important reflection for our congregation and upcoming event details, please read these emails. If you do not have email contact the office to get a printed copy.



## FALL KICK-OFF



Growing up I knew that Summer was ending when my mom put on the Labour Day Classic, coming from Alberta, that meant Calgary and Edmonton were going to be going head-to-head on the field. The excitement was palpable as people tuned in to seek the kick-off. This year we are excited for the return of a proper fall kick-off here at St Paul's. We know that COVID is still with us, yet we are called to be the church—faithful people who worship, grow in faith and serve together. Therefore, we are looking forward to seeing you on September 11

@10:30am as we bless backpacks and briefcases, start regular Sunday School and wrap-up the morning with a BBQ lunch and cake. Our kick-off is a great day to reconnect and start the year off right!

*For everything there is a season and a purpose for every matter under heaven  
Ecclesiastes 3:1*



## EMBRACING CHANGE

It has been said that the only thing that stays constant is change. While we affirm that God is constant and unchanging, us humans and the world are a different story. At the heart of our life of faith is the changes that allow us to become more Christ-like in thought and action. Throughout our scriptures is the notion that things come to an end, so that new things begin. As we are limited beings, this is good. The problem is that most of us, if not all of us, like the comfort and predictability of things being the same. Therefore, making change is hard. This is true even when it is the best idea and even if the way things are, no longer serve the purpose they once did and are hurting us.

One of the sad things is the number of changes that fail to take hold because of this human tendency to resist change itself, both consciously and unconsciously. The adoption of change takes effort, not just to physically do something differently but mental and emotional effort. Having a clear understanding of why you are making a change and what you will gain all increase the chances change will stick.

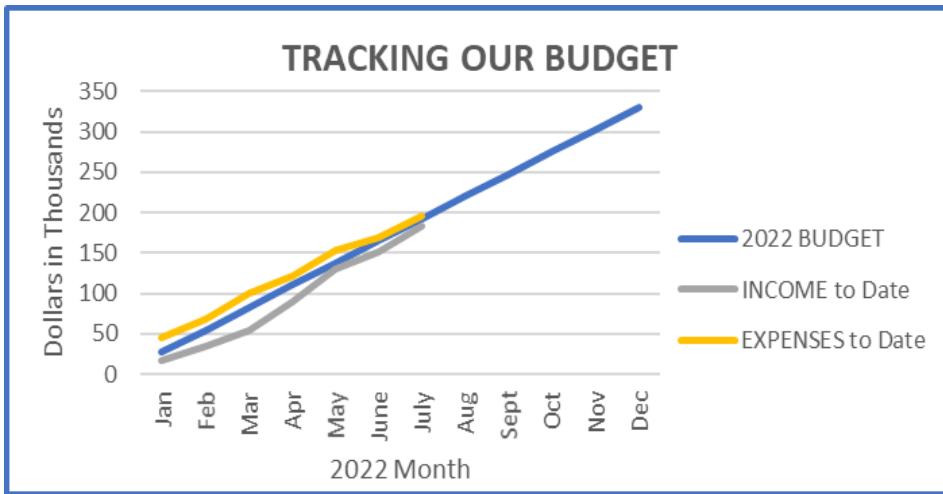
With good planning, change does happen. Take our shift last year, to reading scriptures with multiple voices. This has enriched our service by bringing scripture to life. However, when the idea was first brought forward, many thought it would be too much work to find readers and people wouldn't like it. Yet, as we head into fall, more than once we have been asked when it is starting again.

Here is the one thing that I can say for certain about change – "If you don't like the results you are currently getting, you need to change and do something different." This holds true if the "result" you are looking at is your bank account, your health, or your faith life. In our efforts to continue to live faithfully in God's ever-changing world, may we open our hearts to the changes God is calling us to make. As we do, may we draw from Socrates who said "The secret of change is to focus all of your energy not on fighting the old, but on building the new"



## FINANCE UPDATE

As the summer is winding down, I can report that our budgetary situation is improving. We are getting closer to achieving our goal of a balanced budget. And our investments are doing as well as the stock market allows. THANK YOU for you continued generosity.



While the Finance Committee (Cathy Davis, Mel McGuigan, Meghan Roebuck, Rev Michelle, and I) continues to monitor both income and expenses, we are also turning our attention to the 2023 budget.

A budget is a tool that works to balance finances with ministry. We need to put our money where our heart is, so we'll be asking for your input. But one key measure of financial stability is having a financial cushion — a cash reserve. In recent years, we have not been able to put anything aside for unexpected expenses. Let us pray that time is now.

Alanna Palmer, Treasurer

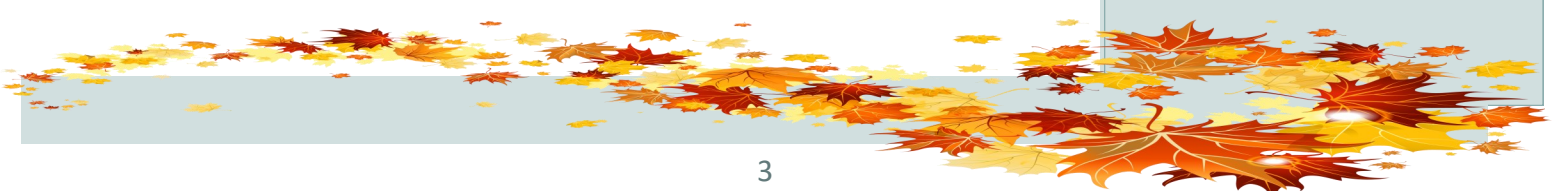


Stewardship is about intentionally using the resources that we have personally, and as a congregation, for the work and glory of God. Stewardship is about being intentional about how we use our gifts of time, talent and treasure. Keep an eye out for more information about stewardship later this fall! - Resources and Heritage Committee

## NUTS AND BOLTS

Meghan has been busy in the office. Check out a few of the things she has been up to:

- ◆ Building Security tightened with the re-issuing and cleaning up alarm and door codes
- ◆ Updating our membership database
- ◆ Organizing the office filing cabinets
- ◆ Sorting and identifying keys in key storage box. Purging keys that don't work on any door!
- ◆ Updating and redesign of our website
- ◆ Arranging snow-plowing for winter
- ◆ Consolidating envelope numbers and identifying who will need to change envelope numbers
- ◆ Requesting rent increases from government for rental housing project to help cover costs of the units.





## PRAYER FOR OUR CHURCH

Thank you God, for the beloved children who gather here. For the eclectic characters, who weave the fabric of this congregation. We are grateful for those who hear your call to serve and answer. Deep thought, food displayed, kindness extended and hands ready to move and serve these are just some of the gifts given in your name. Loving God, you know the plans you have for us, even when we do not see them. Thank you for being with us, even when we fight against your way. Continue to walk with us, guide us, enlighten and enliven us through your spirit as we walk into this new season boldly proclaiming your love. Amen.

## PROPERTY COMMITTEE

We have had a busy year keeping our church in tip top shape and during these repairs etc, we have learned some important features of our church building. Did you know that the huge chandelier above the centre of our sanctuary had dropped about 12 inches from the ceiling? A big thank you to Andrew Steeves who noticed it and another thank you to Kyle Mathers for finding an internal winch that lifts and lowers this chandelier for repairs... it is now in the correct position.

My personal thank you to Kyle for giving me a free summer for some important R&R while the breakdowns continued – the plumbing has been grumbling for some time now but this summer was completely obstinate and again, Kyle found a crawl space under the refrigerator in the basement pantry... thus avoided much jackhammering and cost as we had the system returned to working order.

Rusty has had his hands full attempting to keep the building pristine using ancient equipment to do the job. We were blessed to be coached by the custodian from Grace Memorial, Vonda Johnson. She visited Rusty to discuss what equipment and cleaners and put him in contact with the sales company she uses. As a result, we found the perfect vacuum on sale and another blessing, one of our parishioners bought it for the church. A

wonderful gift of churches of all faiths working together.

Our second concern was Doug Warman who used to mow our grounds but has his hands full with three little relatives who depend on him to babysit. Again, our existing lawnmower was very uncooperative even with hours of attempts (and possibly threats) from Rusty and his Dad trying to repair, it refused to work more than 15 minutes at a time. Again, a new machine was purchased on a sale and works like a charm. Our only appliance on our wish list now is a gas powered whipper snipper. With a little more equipment, maybe we can keep our premises a little neater.

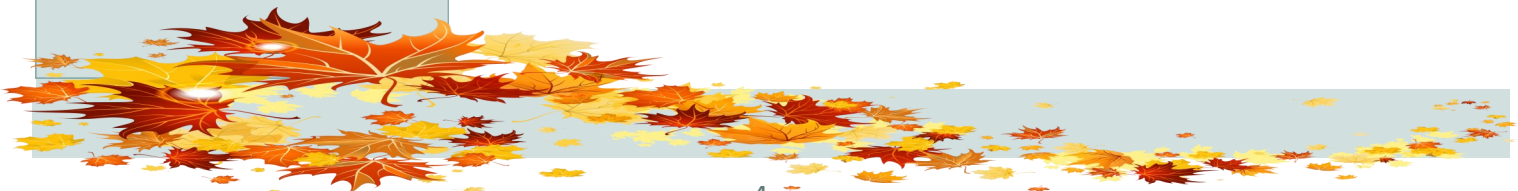
Also, Brad Webb has offered to replace our deteriorating Pantry sign next to the York St. door.

John, Rusty and I plan to get the wheelchair ramp on the Turner house stained before winter... hopefully the weather will cooperate with this job.

Walter Bidlake continues to repair, repair, repair and repair doors, windows etc. and has built some bat houses to discourage our flying friends.

We have a great team... don't forget to thank all those eager beavers.

Patty Trail – resting chairman





## THE NEW MODERATOR

On August 7<sup>th</sup>, as the 44<sup>th</sup> general council wrapped up it's meeting, The Rev. Carmen Lansdowne was installed as the new Moderator. In articulating her vision for The United Church of Canada, the Rev. Dr. Lansdowne spoke of a church committed: "To build new connections and rebuild old ones. To work towards social change that sees a world cared for, and human dignity honoured. To walk together every day in repentance and reconciliation. To march and fight and change unjust systems together. To pray together. To sing together. To discern together."

Lansdowne is a member of the Heiltsuk First Nation and the first female indigenous woman to hold the position of Moderator. We are looking forward to hearing more during her three-year term.



*Rev. Carmen Lansdowne,  
44th Moderator of the  
United Church of Canada*

*Autumn is a season of paradox that invites us to consider what we are called to release and surrender — what no longer serves us or what gets in the way of being present to the holiness of each moment. Autumn also invites us to gather in the harvest, to name and celebrate the fruit of the seeds of dreams we planted months ago. In holding these two in tension, we are reminded that in our letting go, we also find abundance. - Christine Valters Paintner*

## HOSPITAL VISITS, WE DO NOT WANT TO MISS YOU!

Clergy can no longer walk-in off the street and check visiting lists to see if we have people in hospital. If you would like to receive a visit while you are a patient at the Doctor Everett Chalmers Hospital in Fredericton, please follow the following steps.

When you register at the hospital, tell the staff you would like to have a United Church Hospital Visitor. This is important as patient confidentiality and privacy reasons, consent for your name to be added to the spiritual care list must be authorized by you or your medical decision maker. Make sure to update

this field if you have said no to a visit from spiritual care in the past.

Phone Rev. Michelle directly at 259-7602 or the church office 458-1183 with your floor and room number OR Contact the Spiritual Care department of the hospital to arrange a visit.

Hospital visits can be a powerful support to you and your family and help you tap into God's strength and love. Don't miss out, reach out instead!



## COMMUNITY OUTREACH & PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMS



### ANNIVERSARY SUNDAY

You are invited to celebrate with us on November 6th at 10:30 am, as we invite Mike Bravener who joins us as we remember the past and affirm God's call to us, through special music and dynamic preaching.

Following service there will be a celebration fellowship.

Leading up to this service, we want to celebrate the ways that St. Paul's has been a lamp on a hill, shining Christ's light through the years. If you know a story we all should hear or were involved with a particular outreach please contact Carol Peacock as she is helping gather these stories!

St. Paul's volunteers were very busy over the summer months, serving the needs of people in our community through our community outreach and partnership programs.

From June through August 23rd, the Pantry program was accessed 123 times and the Brown Bag Lunch program disbursed 233 bagged lunches to individuals, bring the total lunches distributed for the year to date to 496.

The Cooling Centre had many visits by individuals both needing to get cool and looking for assistance or someone to talk to. A huge thank you to the John Howard Society and other downtown social service agencies, for their partnership on this venture, as well as all of the volunteers from Downtown United + and the community. We couldn't have done it without you!

The Back-to-School project was a resounding success, providing school supplies and gift cards for clothing & footwear for 8 children & youth who utilize our outreach programs. The kids are excited to return to school and their families are extremely grateful for the assistance and say thank you to all whom graciously supported the program.

We were also able to provide bibles, a new bed and a chair to individuals. We assisted 3 people with Housing issues, enabling them to maintain their accommodations, and helped an individual revise her resume in order to find a new job, with success!

It is because of the wonderful, giving, and encouraging individuals of our church and our community, that we are able to do this good work and have a positive impact on our community. Thank you to everyone for your generosity and continued support of our outreach programs!

### Contact Information

224 York Street, Fredericton, NB E3B 3P1

Tel. 506-458-1183 | Web. [www.stpaulsunited.ca](http://www.stpaulsunited.ca) | Email. [stpaulsoffice224@gmail.com](mailto:stpaulsoffice224@gmail.com)

### Staff Contact Information

Minster ~ Rev. Michelle | Tel. 506-259-7602 | Email. [michellenarmstrong@hotmail.com](mailto:michellenarmstrong@hotmail.com)

Organist ~ Sharon Pond | Tel. 470-3018 | Email. [sharonpond47@gmail.com](mailto:sharonpond47@gmail.com)

Church Administrator ~ Meghan Roebuck | Tel. 506-458-1183 |

Email. [stpaulsoffice224@gmail.com](mailto:stpaulsoffice224@gmail.com)

Custodian ~ Rusty Blakely | Tel. 506-292-2473 | Email. [russellblakely123@gmail.com](mailto:russellblakely123@gmail.com)