

Towards Resurrection

It is said that we Christians are an Easter People, but what does it mean to be an Easter People? As the heart it means that we believe that the resurrection of Jesus shows us that suffering, disappointment, even what brings death can be transformed into new life. As an Easter People we believe that this pattern is present in our lives now and that it will continue after death. This ultimate focus on resurrection, brings hope and joy in the face of a world that sometimes seems to be dealing only death.

But before we get to the Easter Celebration, the Highest of High holidays in the church, we go through Lent. Which is a 40 day season of the church which traditionally involves prayer, fasting (abstaining from something to reduce distractions and increase focus on God) and almsgiving. It is also time of preparation and has a penitential nature, as we acknowledge our need for God's forgiveness in a more intense way.

I have always thought of Lent as a season for meaning making. As we focus on God and Christ's role in our lives, as we are intentional about practicing our faith, these practices influence our thinking. We start to see the world through different eyes, we start to understand Christ's sacrifice for us more deeply and we start to see our place in God's plan. Like Jesus who went into the desert for 40 days prior to starting his public ministry, the testing and reflecting that happens during this season prepares us for our ministry in the world too. This is one of the blessings of Lent, which for me always brings joy.

We don't often talk about joy during Lent, it sometimes gets buried with the Hallelujahs not making it's appearance until Easter Sunday. But if we truly are an Easter People, then shouldn't joy be part of our conversation always? May this Lent bring you closer to the heart of God where we find pure joy and peace.

Blessings on your Lenten Journey - Rev. Michelle



Inside this issue

Change VS Transition.....	2
Change as Part of life.....	2
Change at St Paul's.....	2
How we use Property.....	3
A note from Outreach.....	4
Downtown United Info.....	4
Invitation to Join.....	4
Sabbatical Time.....	4
WICC Update.....	5
Why Lent is Bes.....	5
Upcoming Events	6

Bonus: Lenten Spiritual Practice calendar for your use!

Changes Verses Transitions



We often use the words change and transition interchangeably but in the world of change management they have different meanings:

Change - the act or instance of making or becoming different. Change is time limited/specific and an outward or visible event.

Transition - is a passing from one place, state condition, to another. It is the ongoing pro-

cessing after a change, ones emotional, psychological, mental and spiritual response to change. Transition is inward and spiritual (although may have outward manifestations.)

As way of an example: Change is the physical process of moving from one house to another. Transition is the process of the new place feeling like home.

When everything else in the world seems to be changing, we can hold onto the fact that “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow.” (Hebrews 13:8)

Change as part of Life

The God of creation is constantly working; therefore change is a normal part of life. From the day we are conceived our bodies are constantly changing, the seasons move in cycle and our God of resurrection is always making things new. This doesn't make it easy and sometimes when change is rapid or there is much change it can seem like too much. The story of Exodus can help us see God is always with us and working for us in times of change and transition.

Thanks be to God!

Changes at St Paul's Over the Last 5-7 years

- Staff Changes (18 different configurations of staffing)
- Intinction (coming forward) for communion introduced
- Screens and Zoom becoming part of worship
- Saints and Sinners (little band) started
- Re-development of office space and creation boardroom
- Shift from Sr/Jr to team ministry model
- Downtown United named and engagement expanded
- Land acknowledgement
- Shift in Lectionary used for Sunday scripture
- New piano in Sanctuary
- Restructuring of the United Church of Canada governance
- Updated the nursery space
- Changed VBS to Full Days
- Dramatic Reading of Scriptures
- Children's handbells started
- Out of the Cold program ran for 2 years
- Introduction of weekly e-news and seasonal newsletters
- 5 changes in board chairs
- COVID Responses (closing, zoom only, masks, vaccination requirements, distancing, and canceled events/programs)
- Biblical quotes on church walls
- Explicitly added same sex couples to our marriage policy
- Creation of church website and social media presence
- Introduction of financial reimbursement form
- Giving by Canada Helps and E-transfer
- Increase in and then drop off of young families attending
- Increased knowledge of building financial needs
- Deaths of influential members

Reconsidering How We Use Our Property

The St Paul's Board and Trustees have obtained independent legal advice and, with the support of our Fundy St. Lawrence Dawning Waters Region, have voted to investigate property development with **Kindred Works**.

Kindred Works is an independent company governed by a Board of Directors and staffed with experts with a variety of expertise. It established with an initial grant by the **United Church of Canada**.

The mission of Kindred Works is to create and manage long-term market-rate and affordable housing (rents costing no more than 30% of tenants' income) with the goal of housing 34,000 people over the next 15 years. Other objectives include:

- ◆ Providing an income stream for communities of faith,
- ◆ Producing 80 per cent less carbon in construction than today's industry standard,
- ◆ Having 30% of all housing units accessible by all people regardless of their age or ability.
- ◆ Using 10% of its labour from equity-searching groups, and
- ◆ Sourcing 80% of its labour and materials locally.

Kindred Works will work with a committee of 4 congregants, who represent the interests of the congregation, to create a **Development Plan** for our property. This at no cost to St. Paul's.

The plan will be presented to the congregation. If accepted, Kindred Works manages all the construction and assumes long-term property and tenant management. Upon completion, St Paul's will be provided with a steady income stream that does not impact our charity status. If the development plan is rejected, a debt of about \$50,000 would be put on our financial records, payable only when the property was sold.

For more information, please check the web page <https://www.kindred.ca> or speak to a member of your Board or Trustees. The link and password for the recording of the presentation made to the congregation on January 25th is available by contacting the Church office.



Caption describing picture or graphic

Thank You

As costs for everything continued to climb we have seen an increase in people accessing the pantry and brown bag programs. These programs have been helping to ensure people do not go hungry and your continued support through financial donations and food stuffs help to ensure that we can continue to offer support. Did you know that this year already we have already had _____ households access the pantry and handed out _____ brown bags.

As we seek to lessen the environmental impact of our church as part of our call to care for creation, the brown bag program is shifting away from plastic utensils to wooden alternatives.

Invite to join: Lenten Reflection Practice

Looking to engage and deepen your faith this lent? You are invited to join in a small group circle for individual reflection and spiritual practice facilitated by Rose-Hannah Gaskin. This group will meet for three weeks on Saturday March, 11, 18 and 25th from 12-2pm.

No previous experience is required, just an open heart and your curiosity.

Gatherings will be held in the Parlor at Wilmot United Church.

Each week will begin with a potluck as we break bread together and engage our faith.

To register, please contact Rose-Hannah at rosehannah.gaskin@gmail.com

Downtown United Project

Work continues towards the Downtown United Project. January 8-25th the Downtown United Survey went live. If you had requested an individual interview you should have been contacted by now.

Thank you to everyone who took the time to complete the survey and attend an individual or group interview.

The information gathered will not only help our congregation as we seek to tell the story of who we are, but also will be used as the foundation for discussions on where we

could work together more effectively.

If you would like to participate in this information gathering it is not too late: contact Amy Obeng-Nsiah consulting assistant at amy@credenceandco.com



We can be more effective when we work together

Conversations that Matter

The Downtown United Consultants will be joining us in person in March to lead gatherings that will explore more deeply themes that arose from the surveys and help guide us as we continue the process of discovering where God is calling us. You are invited to attend one of two workshops either March 18th from 9-12 here at St. Paul's or March 19th from 12:30-3:30 at Wilmot. Please choose to attend one of these gatherings. Lunch will be provided free of cost at both times. To register contact the church office.

March 19th will also be a joint service at Wilmot with our consultant team providing the Sunday preacher. Don't miss these great events!

Sabbatical Leave for Rev. Michelle

After serving in a congregation for at least 5 years ministry staff are entitled to a 3 month Sabbatical for learning and renewal. Rev. Michelle will have completed her 6th year as our minister on May 1st of this year. We are happy to announce she will be taking sabbatical starting June 6-September 6th. She will be engaging in deeper learning about leading congregations through change, taking part in a retreat and learning to play some hymns on the Ukulele. Worship, and M&P have been preparing for her time away finding coverage for the congregation. The Region will also appoint a pastoral charge supervisor for us.

Women's Inter-church Council, Fredericton

St. Paul's has been a member of this body of Christian women since its inception. For many years their focus was on presentation of the World Day of Prayer service at various churches around the city on the first Friday of March. This was halted due to covid and the ban on gatherings.

Last winter when I heard that there were no plans for a service in 2022, I contacted Rev. Michelle and she agreed we should hold a service on a Sunday. The service was provided by the women of England, Wales and Northern Ireland. We used the outline and video provided by the national headquarters, but added our own twist to it with Rev. Michelle did a wonderful job on the tech side, mixing our UCW members with readers from other churches and help from Sharon and our Choir. Without Meghan in the office pulling together all the bits together we would have been lost. The theme was "I Know the Plans I have for you" and it was well received. A collection was received for WICC, which provides grants to projects that empower women and children in Canada and around the world. Many thanks to all who contributed by attending, reading, sing-



ing and to our staff for their enthusiasm and good work. May you be blessed.

This year we have agreed with the WICC executive to hold another World Day of Prayer service on March 12 @ 10:30am. The theme this year is "I have Heard About Your Faith" Ephesians 1:15-19 written by the women of Taiwan. We are inviting men and women from other churches to not only attend but take part. A reception will take place after the service. Please mark the date and tell your friends. -Ann Raper St. Paul's WICC rep.

"Lent comes providentially to reawaken us, to shake us from our lethargy" - Pope Francis

Reasons Why Lent is the Best Time of the Year

- Hallmark hasn't found a way to make money off of Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday or even Good Friday
- It's great to have an "excuse" to break up with cravings. To look at what I want, and then, instead of scheming about how to get it or praying about why I don't have it yet, lent invites me to do something else instead.
- Lent is the time of year when people who get labeled as melancholics and depressed get to shine, reflection on mortality is encouraged.
- The eighteenth-century German writer Johann Goethe allegedly wrote that "he who cannot draw on 3,000 years is living hand to mouth." Lent is a time for remembering where we come from as a sacred people, adding our 40 days journey to all the others in the bible.
- We get to remember Jesus in all the modes of living we don't like: being tempted, misunderstood, and ultimately betrayed and rejected. And knowing his sacrifice covers us as we face these too.

-adapted from Hilary K Davis, InterVarsity Feb. 10, 2016



Lenten Calendar of Events

February 21 –5pm Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper. book your space with Cathy 455-1129

February 22 –7pm Ash Wednesday reflection, ash and prayer. Start Lent right join us in the sanctuary as we worship and give thanks for this season.

February 26 - 10:30am Worship Lent 1

March 5 - 10:30am Worship Lent 2

March 12 –10:20 am Lent 3 World Day of Prayer Service led by women of St Paul's and the Women's interchurch council members. Service developed by the women of Taiwan.

March 18 –9am Conversations that Matter to Wilmot and St. Paul's see page 4 for more info.

March 19 - 11am Joint service as Downtown United @ Wilmot

- 12:30 Conversations that Matter to St. Paul's and Wilmot see page 4 for more info

March 26 –Lent 5 followed by AGM

April 2 –Palm Sunday and AGM Snow-date

April 6 - 5:30pm Downtown United Maundy Thursday Potluck and Worship (6pm) @ St. Paul's

April 7 - 11am Downtown United Good Friday Service @ Wilmot

April 9 -7am Easter Sunrise service by the river near the Library breakfast at Wilmot following
-10:30am Easter Sunday Service with Communion.

Keep your eyes open for Post-Easter events including

-Presentation of initial findings of the Downtown United Project team and discernment process plan

-Fellowship opportunities to connect and grow as a faith community.

St Paul's United Church

224 Your Street
Fredericton NB
E3B 3P1

Phone: 506-458-1183

Email: stpaulsoffice224@gmail.com

Website: www.stpaulsunityed.ca

Our Staff

Minister: Rev. Michelle Armstrong
Administrator/Bookkeeper: Meghan Roebuck
Organist: Dr. Sharon Pond
Custodian: Rusty Blakely

If you are not receiving our weekly e-news please sign up today through the office. Never miss an event and engage in our weekly spiritual reflection on a topic related to life or the church!