

Message from your Session

We boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.

And not only that, but we also boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.

Romans 5:3-5

Greetings,

I began the last newsletter with my astonishment that the summer had passed so quickly. Yet last week I found myself basking in a balmy 20 degrees, sunshine filled, leaf strewn day. And today, the yard is covered with snow! The seasons aren't quite as predictable as they used to be!

I suppose nothing is as predictable as it used to be these days. We find ourselves in a holding pattern, caught between the threat of illness and the longing for community, and wondering when things will get back to normal.

If there ever was a time that we would begin to understand that 'normal' is dynamic and fluid, it is now!

As you are aware, we had planned to reopen the church for public worship on Thanksgiving Sunday, but realized that the 2nd wave of COVID was making folks a little uncertain about the weeks ahead. We postponed with the hopes that a few more weeks would help us discern more clearly when it would be safe and prudent to reopen the church.

I know it is difficult to be apart and out of the regularity of worship. For many, going to church to sing together, hear the word, and pray together provides the framework for faith and faithfulness. When this isn't possible, perhaps you find yourself deeply grieving that loss and wondering where the shape of your faith went. Not only is there grief at not being

able to worship together, but perhaps there is a bit of unspoken guilt as well. Many of us grew up in an era when going to church was the sign of what it meant to be faithful. Aren't we supposed to go to church? How can we be faithful Christians if we don't go to church every Sunday?

Closing the church has had consequences for the way many of us deepen and express our faith. Initially, when we thought the closure would be short lived, I expect most of us believed we could just ride it out and things would get back to normal soon enough. Now, after eight months, it might be time to rethink that notion!

The reality is that we have no idea how long this situation will continue. While the Session will continue to reassess the situation with the hopes of being able to reopen, there are no guarantees.

My encouragement to you is to actively seek out ways you can continue to grow as a faithful Christian. Some of you are attending worship at other churches – keep it up as long as you are comfortable! We are all a part of the same body of Christ. Some of you have found online worship options. Some of you have found daily devotionals and prayers helpful. Continue in your faithfulness! If you have found something that has been particularly edifying, please share it with others. This is one way we can continue to encourage one another during these difficult times.

With Advent and Christmas approaching, encouraging one another will be extra important!

Please know that even though we haven't been together, every member of our congregation has been prayed for and deeply missed! It is my hope that we will be together again very soon!

Come the New Year, there will be a new Interim Moderator for the congregation at St. Paul's. I have announced my resignation as Interim Moderator to the Session and the Presbytery, effective

December 31st, 2020. The last two years with you have been truly wonderful and I have enjoyed being with you. Unfortunately, the other commitments in my life make it increasingly difficult to provide the leadership and focus that St. Paul's needs at this time and moving into the New Year. Your faithfulness and kindness have been of great support to me. Thank you.

With you in His service,
Rev. Dana

Session and Board Update

The reality of COVID-19 and the risk factors associated with it have had an unprecedented impact on the way we conduct our daily lives within our community. Our perspectives on health risk and safety have been irrevocably changed. The economic, social, physical, and spiritual impact of physical distancing and communal anxiety around the unknown has been significant. In light of this, we can hardly expect our lives together as a worshipping community to return to the way things used to be! The Session and the Board of St. Paul's is committed to reopening the church for public worship when it is safe to do so. We will endeavor to take all reasonable precautions to safeguard the health of those who come to worship. We understand that significant changes will have to be made to accommodate the various recommendations we are subject to by the Public Health Unit, as well as our Provincial and Municipal governing bodies. We understand that there are varying degrees of comfort among our members as we contemplate returning to worship together.

The Board continues to faithfully ensure the church is in good repair and that the bills are being paid. If you are not already on PAR, please consider whether you might register for this method of making your offering. This ensures a regular and predictable income for the church during a time when there are still bills to be paid.

In addition, one of our renting groups has returned to rent the hall on a weekly basis. They are being very diligent in ensuring the thorough cleaning when they are finished. And our cleaners continue to keep the church clean and free of cobwebs!

Call for Elders

The office of ruling elder is an essential one for the work of the congregation. The Session, comprised of ruling elders, is responsible for all of the decisions that are made with respect to the life of the church. They govern the times and places of our worship and are also responsible for overseeing the work of all other committees, including the Board of Managers, Christian Education, and pastoral care. Two of our current elders will complete their active term this year. In order to ensure that the Session continues to represent the congregation well, and to offer spiritual and practical leadership to its members, we will be seeking new Session members as soon as we possible. More information will be forthcoming. In the meantime, please prayerfully consider whether this is an area you feel called to offer your gifts. For more information on the office of ruling elder, check out this link: <https://presbyterian.ca/elders/>

Christmas Hampers



Again this year, the churches in the area have agreed to do their best to support the Salvation Army Christmas Hampers. St. Paul's will again collect spaghetti sauce. If you are able to contribute

to this cause, there will be someone at the church on Saturday December 5th from 9:00-11:00am to receive your donation. Many thanks!

2021 COMMUNITY SPIRIT CALENDARS

On Saturday, Dec. 5 from 9 to 11 a.m. the calendars that St. Paul's sells as a fundraiser will be at the church for pick up. If you have not received yours yet, please plan to drop by the church and get your order. Betty will be there to take your payment. \$10 per calendar and give you the calendars. If you can not be there that day, please let Betty know and other arrangements will be made. 519-371-1635 or e mail ladyslipper@gbtel.ca Thanks.

This is the same day and time as the "spaghetti sauce" drop off for the Christmas Hampers.

Some Links to Check Out:

Light of the world: A Beginners Guide to Advent: In advent 2020, Presbyterians across the country are invited to join a denomination wide book study on Amy-Jill Levine's *Light of the Word: A Beginner's Guide to Advent*. [Click here for more information.](#)

Central Grey Bruce Presbyterian Cooperative - Weekly worship services on YouTube.

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCeQhwhT3qD1QsBKF1iLGrnw>

Presbyterian Church in Canada – a number of online worship services and daily devotionals. There is also a link to Presbyterian Churches across the country which are live streaming worship service.

<https://presbyterian.ca/online-worship/>

[Our Daily Bread: Daily devotional.](#)

Don't forget to check out St. Paul's blog:
<http://blog.stpaulswiarton.ca/ourchurch/>

If you have found another resource that has been helpful for you, please feel free to share it on the blog. Get in touch with Linda Lamont for more details.

Get in touch:

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