



Advent message from the minister

The season of Advent is upon us once again; a season that begins with the prophets crying out in the wilderness and ends with the Prince of Peace crying out in a manger (I refuse to think that Jesus didn't cry). This is a sacred season and there are times when our Christian tradition of four weeks of preparation for the coming of the Christ child feel at odds with the full out celebration of Christmas that emerges earlier and earlier each year. But it seems to me, our approach to Christmas is less a challenge to Advent than it is the heart of its message.

There is a reason that we seek candles and twinkle lights, cozy blankets and plaid pajamas, Christmas trees and wreaths of pine, holiday treats and mugs of hot chocolate, gatherings of friends and family. Beneath their external packaging, they are all signs of our internal longing. Longing for light on nights that feel dark. Longing for comfort and safety in a world that feels chaotic and unsafe. Longing for life in a season of dormancy and death. Longing for fullness and warmth when we feel empty and cold. Longing for togetherness and joy when we feel lonely. All worthwhile longings.

And some of you may also be holding back from Christmas. Perhaps out of respect for the season of Advent – to give it time, to pause for reflection before partaking (that's what ministers are supposed to do). Perhaps out of fear –if your heart is grieving and you anticipate the celebration will intensify the grief. Perhaps as an act of resistance to materialism and the consumer impact Christmas has on the environment. All worthwhile reasons to pause.

Wherever you find yourself right now, I encourage you in this season to reach for Christmas and to reach deeply. To reach beyond the hurry for tangible Christmas joy and beyond the hesitancy to receive it, to the Advent longing that lies beneath. Because it is there that you will grasp the hand of the child and have the opportunity to hold tenderly his seemingly fragile, yet infinitely resilient body, filled with life and hope.

May hope find you this Advent,

Rev. Carrie



The Peace Table Storybook Bible
If there are other folks interested in purchasing a copy of The Peace Table Storybook Bible, we have an additional 7 copies available for purchase at the office. Copies are \$42. These make a wonderful Christmas gift.

INSIDE - Caring

Worship at Zion-Calvin (9:30am) and St. Paul's (11:00am)

Nov. 26 – Crossing into the Promised Land (Eternity Sunday in which we light candles for those who have died)

Dec. 3 – First Advent and Communion

Dec. 10 – Second Advent

Dec. 17 – Third Advent Worship led by our Sunday schools. Please note that the service will start at **10:30am** (Note time change) at St. Paul's, and 9:30 am as usual at Zion-Calvin.

Dec. 21 – Longest Night service. 7:30pm at St. Paul's. This service is a space to step out of the busyness of Christmas preparations to make room for the grief, loss, and longing that we carry and is often at odds with the joy we are told to feel in this season. Heather Menzies and Fay Carruthers will be providing our music.

Dec. 24 – Fourth Advent worship in the morning as usual.

Dec. 24 – Christmas Eve! 7pm service at St. Paul's led by Rev. Carrie.
7pm service at Zion-Calvin led by members of the Zion-Calvin congregation.





Advent Labyrinth – December 18-19 we will have a labyrinth set out in the St. Paul's sanctuary. This is an opportunity to step out of the hurry of the season and walk in step with God in prayerful reflection. Times for the labyrinth will be announced closer to the date.

Advent Opportunities!

Please contact the office (phone or email) by November 24 th if you would like us to print one or more of the following for you. Cost is covered by our Christian Education budget.

- Advent Calendar from Illustrated Ministry with helpful conversation prompts for each day leading up to Christmas. For example, "If you connect the dots of stars in the sky, you can find shapes that do not change. Shepherds, under starry skies, became familiar with constellations. On a clear night, can you spot any constellations?" We can print one per family or one per child if they would like to colour the calendar.

-Advent Booklet created by Jesus, Glue, and Glitter (UCC ministry). This is an excellent resource including Advent teachings, colouring pages, Snowflake prayers, word search, constellation activity, story of Joseph's Dream, hot chocolate recipe etc.

- Advent Scripture Calendar with a passage that you can look up and read for reflection each day in preparation for Christmas.



Look to the Stars!

As we begin our Advent journey, you will notice stars hung in our churches. We encourage you to take them in as you arrive and as you leave, but also to look at the stars in the sky in your coming and going throughout the week as a way of seeking the mystery of the incarnation this Advent. On Epiphany each of you will receive a star with a word on it as a guide for the year to come.

Baptism, Confirmation, Membership Transfer - if you are interested in any of these and have not already spoken with Rev. Carrie, please contact her. We are looking to have a service of celebration on January 14th. So far we have 2 youth and 2 adults for confirmation and 2 adults for membership at St. Paul's. All are welcome!

Pastoral Care

Rev. Carrie will be leading First Advent worship at Legion House on Nov. 29th and Homestead South on Dec. 3rd. Members of Worship Interest Group and our Visitation Group (led by Cathy Sandercock) will be assisting.

OUTSIDE - Sharing

From our United Church. Please support calls for an immediate ceasefire between Israel and Hamas. Urgent action is required to prevent further mass death of civilians in Gaza. The United Church and many other groups are [calling for an immediate ceasefire in the battle between Israel and Palestinian paramilitary group Hamas](#). 2.3 million civilians are trapped in the middle, including over 200 Israelis and international citizens taken captive by Hamas October 7.

Ecumenical Climate Action Group - We will most likely be hosting a COP28 vigil on Dec. 9 as a way of reflecting and sharing our love for our planet, our concern for all creation, and our hopes for truly transformative action to happen at this year's global climate conference. Look for confirmation of date and time.

Non-perishable food collection - we regularly have a basket for collection for Caring and Sharing and Many Hands in the foyer at St. Paul's. When you're out getting groceries, pick up a bit extra if you're able and bring it by the church or leave it at one of the other community drop-off locations. If you have not made your donation to the food bank basket this month, please keep these ideas in mind.

- Peanut butter, canned meats, breakfast foods, canned vegetables, powder style baby formula



Question: What is the best-selling Christmas song ever?

Answer: "[White Christmas](#)" by Bing Crosby.



UPSIDE DOWN - Exploring

Sunday school - given the situations of conflict happening around the world, you may find yourself discussing the topics of war and peace with your children. The Peace Table story Bible has Peace Paths on Page 16 to help you explore these themes through out the Bible. you can also check out the various ways we are invited to be a people of peace with God, self, others, and creation on pages 348-355.

The Mod's Book Squad

Brew a cup of tea or pour a glass of your favourite drink and snuggle in with a good book. Oh, and you can discuss the book with at least two friends - The Right Rev. Dr. Carmen Lansdowne, Moderator of The United Church of Canada, and her guest - in one of Canada's biggest book clubs. Talk to the office on how to register.

November's book is called *The Wall Between: What Jews and Palestinians Don't Want to Know About Each Other* by Raja G. Khouri & Jeffrey J. Wilkinson. Our moderator will discuss the book with guest, Raja Khouri on Nov. 30, 5:30pm Central.



Candy canes were invented to keep kids quiet in church

In 1670, a German choirmaster (a person who leads a choir) asked a sweet shop to make sweets (in the shape of a shepherd's hook) for the children at his church to keep them quiet during the Christmas festivities

Christmas Cookie Walk

Choose your favourites from dozens of varieties of cookies and dainties

\$8.00 per dozen

Friday, Dec 8th 2:00pm – 4:00pm

Join us for Tea/Coffee and Cookies too



Sign up sheets
in the Narthex
for donations of
cookies

St.Pauls United Church

353 Thornhill St, Morden

Proceeds go to local charities



This year the St. Pauls Sunday School will be collecting items for Genesis House and for Many Hands. They would like all donations by Dec 17.

Genesis House

Women's Wishlist

Colouring books
Colouring pencils
Face Masks
Coffee Mugs
Hot pads & Tea Towels
Cooking Utensils
Candles
Tea
Bath Bombs
Jewelry

Genesis House Kids Wish Lists

Lego sets
Playdough sets
Superhero Action Figures
Slime
Polly Pockets
Barbies
Bowling Sets
Kids Aprons

Many Hands

Top ten items:

1. canned beans
2. canned soups
3. cans/ jars of tomato sauce
4. canned chickpeas specifically
5. sugar (no opened bags please)
6. flour (no open bags please)
7. oatmeal (no open bags please)
8. pasta
9. Rice
10. toilet paper



Zion Calvin Sunday School

- will be doing their Christmas Program on Dec 17 at 9:30..... it will be their version of "The Little Drummer Boy"

St. Paul's Sunday School

-will be the Messy Pageant on Dec 17 at **10:30 am** please note the change in time



Poinsettia deliveries will take place on Dec 17 after church in St. Pauls and Zion Calvin..... Thanks for everyone who has helped out this year by donating to this wonderful outreach project and "thanks" in advance to all those who will take the time to delivery this beautiful plants!

What if Christmas, he thought,
doesn't come from a store.
What if Christmas, perhaps,
means a little bit more.



— Dr. Seuss,
How the Grinch Stole Christmas!

Zion Calvin is collecting for Manitou Christmas Cheer. Donations of non-perishable food, (please check expiry dates) toys or monetary gifts to be at the church by **Dec 8.**



Christmas Concert at
St. Paul's United Church
Thursday Dec 7th at 7pm

Entry by free-will donation
(tax receipt will be issued for all donations above \$25)

- St. Paul's Choir
(directed by Myra Amy-McElroy and
accompanied by Fay Carruthers)
- Carol singing
- String ensemble from Douglas Kuhl School of Music
- Refreshments

353 Thornhill Street, Morden [storm date will be Monday Dec 18th]



Protocol for church service cancellation (weather related)
A decision to cancel church service will be made as early as possible
and/or by 8am Sundays. Announcements will be made on:

CFAM Radio 950
The Eagle 93.5
CKMW Country 88.9

PembinaValleyOnline.com (- Road Reports and Cancellations)

Pembina Parish Facebook Page

To Leslie Andrews and her crew and the many hands that put on a delicious Fall Supper.....

Sue Nelson and Edith Lovatt and their crew for the great Soup and Dessert lunch (s).....

A Big THANK YOU!

To Myra Amy McElroy for taking on directing a Christmas Program.....

To Bernie Thiessen and Joan Peters for looking after us with their Car Care Clinic.....

To Karen Ching and Myra Amy McElroy and the Zion Calvin crew for the scrumptious lunch at the Darlingford Craft Sale and the jars of Christmas pudding.....

To everyone who has supported all our recent events.....

Christmas Office Hours

Monday December 18 – 9am to 1pm

Tuesday December 19 – 9am to 4pm

Wednesday December 20 – 9am to 4pm

Thursday December 21 – 9am to 4pm

Friday December 22 – 9am to 1pm

Closed December 25 and December 26

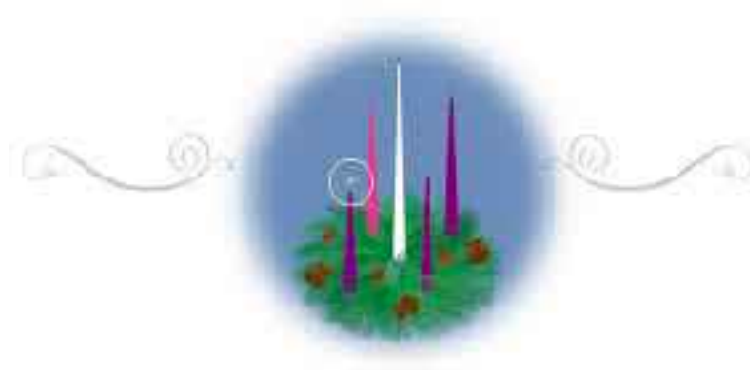
Wednesday December 27 – 9am to 4pm

Thursday December 28 – 9am to 4pm

Friday December 29 – 9am to 1pm

Closed January 2, 2024

Please remember the last day to drop off donations to the church office for a 2023 tax receipt is noon on Friday December 29 th .



Merry Christmas to all and to all a good night

