



Cathie's Message

Dear Friends,

Anticipation. Waiting. Preparation. Longing. Expectation. Those are some of the things we associate with Advent, that holy season of four weeks before Christmas. The word "Advent" literally means "coming." It is a time in the church year when we look forward to celebrating the first coming of Jesus as a baby, and also prepare for the promised second coming of Christ sometime in the future. During Advent we are invited to grow deeper in our faith, and reflect on our relationships with God, others, and the world.

The central symbol of the Advent season is light, which we easily appreciate at this dark time of year. The promise of God is a wonderful one: "The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light" (Isaiah 9:2). Each week as another candle is lit on our Advent wreath we move closer to the fulfillment of that promise through the birth of Jesus, the Light of the world. By coming to us as God in human form, Jesus brought light to the darkness of our lives and illuminated a way of love and peace for us to follow. He calls us to bring light to others and to walk with them through their darkness, trusting that God's presence will touch them with grace and love.

As I write this, I am aware that this will be the last Advent and Christmas season I will celebrate with you before my retirement next June. I am grateful for all the Advent journeys we have shared together over the past years and trust that this December's will be a meaningful one. I invite you to join, as you are able, in some of the special events and worship services we have planned in our parish throughout this time. May the gift of this sacred season fill you with hope, peace, joy and love.

Blessings to each of you on your Advent journey,
Rev. Cathie



Christmas is the season of light, hope, and peace. Many think of light and hope as they prepare for special times with friends and family. For others, it is a time of quiet reflection, as they journey through some struggles or loss. We wish them peace.

As Rev Cathie leads our, Pembina Parish worship through this Advent season, we are aware that this Christmas is our last with Cathie. When she offered our congregations almost a year's notice of her retirement plans, next June seemed far away. Soon it will be 2020, and that early summer date will no longer be on the distant horizon. We will have some difficulty with this approaching change, and we know this adjustment is also on Cathie's mind. We will find personal and collective ways to share memories as we draw nearer to next June.

Any change is more challenging without proper preparation and planning. In our Parish we are fortunate to have people with the talents and dedication to manage a minister change and improvements to our church buildings, including a phased plan to reconfigure and repurpose St Paul's church. The people on these committees have "rolled up their sleeves" to work on these projects, and we thank them and all our Pembina Parish volunteers.

In our rural Parish, everyone has some connection to farming. This fall was beset with wet weather and an early October blizzard, making harvest progress slow and difficult in the soggy fields. The conditions led to some harvested grain of poor quality and/or requiring drying. Some farms have crop left unharvested in the field. Our farming families are experiencing stress and our prayers are with them.

May this Advent season bring everyone renewal and hope.

The Pembina Parish Leadership Team, Brian Saunderson, chair.

On Tuesday, December 10th the Sunday school will travel to St Matthews Maryland Community Ministry in Winnipeg to help set up the Christmas Store for 2019. We are looking for donations of **new, unopened** toys, games, stuffed animals, books and crafts to take with us. You can also donate **new, unworn** winter wear for all ages. As well, donations of beauty products, jewellery, chocolate, candies and gift wrapping supplies are gratefully accepted. We will be collecting items in the Narthex up until December 8th.

Thank you for your support!



We invite you to share in our Christmas Poinsettia Ministry at Pembina Parish. Each year we send Poinsettias to the folk that have lost a loved one and those in the congregation who are homebound.

If you would like to contribute financially to this ministry, please use a specially designated envelope (available at the church). We would also be glad if you were able to help with their delivery on Sunday December 15th after the worship service at St. Paul's. If you are interested, there will be a sign up sheet on the bulletin board.

About Becoming an Affirming Ministry

A key requirement to becoming an Affirming Ministry is the need to make a **public** and **explicit** welcome to people of all sexual orientations and gender identities (the LGBT community) to join in the life and work of our Church.

But it's important to understand that **Affirming churches don't focus on the LGBT community to the exclusion of other people who are disadvantaged** by virtue of race, age, ethnicity, ability, income level, etc.

The Affirming Ministry Program seeks to live into a **vision of justice and inclusion for all God's people**. Simply put: justice is a concern for fairness, peace and genuine respect for all people.

Why is there a need to make a special welcome to LGBT people?

Because:

- the LGBT community continues to face discrimination and violence in society
- this community has historically faced specific and deliberate rejection and condemnation in places of worship; they are shunned, excluded and made to feel unwelcome; their families have often been rejected and refused solace in times of need
- many churches "welcome everyone" but their intent is to "fix" perceived problems
- we believe every person is a child of God, as God created them
- Jesus' ministry included all who were excluded for any reason and the Bible tells us to do the same
- Jesus said "Do not judge." He also said "Love your neighbour."

Process to become an Affirming Ministry

1. support for the idea by Leadership Team and formation of an Affirming Conversation Interest Group in 2016
2. go through an educational/discernment process on what it means to be inclusive; evaluate our openness to being intentional about how we include others within the life and work of our ministry
3. develop a vision statement explicitly including "people of all sexual orientations and gender identities" in the life and work of our ministry
4. have an inclusive Marriage Policy which identifies that couples of "all gender combinations" are treated equally
5. develop a Plan of Action that will be undertaken once Affirming status is obtained
6. seek approval to become an Affirming Ministry by a congregational vote

Activities we've done to help people form an opinion about becoming Affirming

- study series on homosexuality and the Bible
- two film nights on LGBT issues with discussion afterwards
- public workshop on homosexuality and the church with guest presenter Rev. P. Woodbeck
- participation in PRIDE Parades in Steinbach and Morden
- two worship services developed with the theme of inclusion and messages related to the LGBT community
- attendance at regional Affirm workshop and visit to United Church Affirming Ministry in the area to learn of their experience

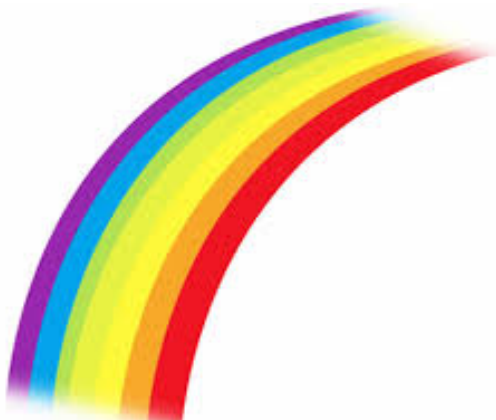
If Pembina Parish becomes Affirming

Does that mean we'll be a gay church? Our church will continue to “have a wide diversity of members and adherents...Typically in most Affirming Ministries LGBT people are usually more visible, out and active than average because they're in a safe and supportive place. Often same-sex families want their children to be part of an Affirming Ministry because of the supportive, non-judgmental atmosphere they find. But many heterosexual people choose Affirming Ministries because for the same reason—it's a place where children, youth and adults can grow in faith in an atmosphere of respect and justice for people from all walks of life.” *(from Open Hearts, 2017, p.27)*

Will we have to fly a rainbow flag? It's not a requirement, but a choice, as it is with the display of rainbow candles. These are symbols of support and welcome.

Will the Affirming process be over? While becoming a designated Affirming Ministry is a milestone, we will continue to learn, grow and seek ways to support justice, wholeness and inclusion for all of God's creation.

Information provided by Pembina Parish's Affirming Conversation Interest Group, Nov/2019
Kathryn Luger and Kaye Lyng, co-chairs



Learning after Sunday School

If you are like me...I was actively involved in Sunday school when I was growing up. Sunday school lasted about an hour before Sunday worship service. I was also a member of the AWANA program and went through the various levels and ended up being a leader.

If you are like me...Youth Group started when I was a pre-teen. We met on Sunday evenings outside of the church – it was normally at our leader's home – occasionally at the church. We had a program that we followed and it was LOTS of fun. We joked around a lot, played practical jokes, went to week-long retreats at colleges.

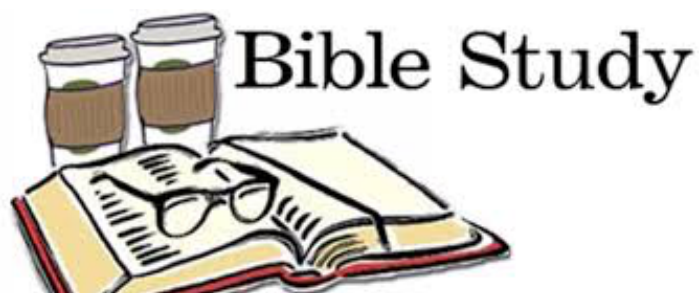
If you are like me... that was the 'end' of my Christian education. I attended Sunday worship services when I could but for worship only. It seems that the opportunities were not there or I thought I didn't know enough of the Bible to be able to join in an adult Bible Study. What I know now, is that it couldn't be further from the truth.

Bible Study is for EVERYONE St. Andrew's College, University of Saskatoon

After I was baptized in June, I thought about what course to take to learn more about Christianity. And where better to go then to St. Andrew's College. They offer some of their courses online. In September I started the History of Early Christianity course which covers the beginning of Christianity to the medieval era. It has been an extremely rewarding and enjoyable experience. It's a period of history I knew very little about and it really has broadened my understanding. The course runs through to mid-December – yes...with a final exam. I have already registered for another course that will start in January on the Hebrew Scriptures and I can't wait!

We are very blessed in Pembina Parish to have Rev Cathie who is not only leading us as a faith community but also has a wealth of knowledge to share. If you are looking for the next stepping stone in learning more about the church and life as a Christian, I would encourage you to register for the next Bible Study. And if you are up for the challenge, think about taking advantage of online learning through one of the theological colleges.

I am happy to share with you my learning experience...please feel free to contact me, Laurie Wiebe (In the Office)





Zion Calvin Sunday school sold Bird Seed Muffins, Fudge and Candy Cane Ordainments at the Darlingford Craft Sale with the profits going to Siloam Mission. Alyssa, Brianna and Addison Bruce, and Hope Charles with the help of Ella and Tyler Griffin and Jack McElroy sold out and made \$145.25 for the Siloam Mission Christmas Meal Campaign! Karen Ching and Myra Amy-McElroy look after the Sunday school at Zion Calvin.



Advent Carol Singing at St. Paul's
Every Sunday of Advent starting
Dec. 1 @ 10:45am

If you have a favourite Christmas Carol from Voices
United, please give your request to Laurie in the
Office!



Book Club

The book club meets once a month in members' homes the last Thursday of the month. The books are available at the Morden Library. We are book club number 6. New members are always welcome, join us every month or just now and then. We discuss the read of the month and share dessert and conversation.

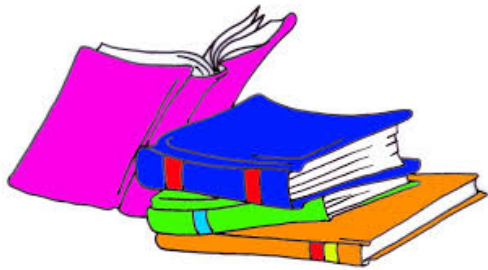
If you would like to receive information about upcoming reads please contact Sue Nelson 204-822-6357 sue.nelson@mymts.net

We are reading:

By Chance Alone- by Max Eisen - meeting Thursday Jan 30

Bear Town by Fredrick Backman - meeting Thursday Feb 27

The Sunday Philosophy Club by Alexander McCall Smith - meeting Thursday Mar 26



Soup and Dessert Outreach

Mark your calendars for the next soup and dessert lunch Friday January 17, 2020 from 11:30-1pm. Soup and Dessert lunches are on the third Friday each month. There will be a variety of homemade soups, biscuits, buns and a great selection of desserts. \$8.00 per person. Proceeds go to a variety of Outreach and Church projects.

If you would like to help prepare soup, serve or help clean up please contact Sue Nelson 204-822-6357 sue.nelson@mymts.net

Thank you to everyone who supply desserts, help prepare, serve, clean up and come to break bread with us. Your support is very much appreciated.



Cookie Walk

Friday Dec 13, 2019 2:30-5pm at St.Pauls

Pick your favourites from a wide selection of yummy treats.

\$10.00 for 2 dozen

Proceeds for church and Outreach projects.

We need Christmas cookie donations of all types. Please sign up on the sheet in the Narthex if you are able to supply Christmas baking.

Coffee, tea and of course cookies will be available , so come for your afternoon coffee break with us.



Mission and Service

As the end of the year approaches, we are inundated with requests for charitable donations. Our local church is especially in need of funds for a new roof. That is part of the “Inside” of our Mission statement. Please remember that there is an “Outside” in our Mission statement too. Both pieces are important parts of our charitable giving. Mission and Service giving is the heart of what we do.

***Attention Ladies Ivy League
Friday Nov 29th at 6pm at
St Paul's.***

***This will be the Christmas gathering
please bring
festive appetizers, desserts and other yummy
things to share.***

The Fall Supper Interest Group

The 6th Annual Fall Supper was a great success. They say it takes a village to raise a child; it was a village of volunteers that came forward to make this event a great triumph. We sold 346 tickets to our church members, neighbours, family and friends. Looks like a \$4,600 profit, pending final report.

The CEU was once again transformed into a beautiful dining area, with its lovely table clothes and center pieces. We are so blessed with a bountiful of local fresh vegetables. Thank you to each one of you who contributed, through your donations of time, food and money.

A big thank you to the committee members: Sue Nelson, MaryAnn McElroy, Lois Dudgeon, Lori Willcocks, Bev Murray.

Submitted by

Lesley Andrew

BREAKING NEWS

I am pleased to announce, an anonymous donor has graciously covered our expenses for the Fall Supper. We are very happy to report a profit of \$5,816.55 !



Looking for some ideas on how to celebrate the Advent season at church and home? Check out the United Church's "Advent Unwrapped" website for interesting ideas, projects and resources at www.united-church.ca/worship-theme/advent-unwrapped



Blue Christmas Service
Sunday, December 15th at 7:00 p.m.
St. Thomas Anglican church, Morden

Although Christmas is a time of celebration for many people, it can be difficult for those who are experiencing loss, grief, or other struggles during this time. Sometimes life's realities: the hardships of the past year, or the sadness and pain we carry, take some of the joy out of the Christmas season.

The Blue Christmas service is a quiet, reflective service for those who may be feeling low at this time of year. It is also an opportunity to pause for a while in the midst of a busy season. By coming together and sharing in music, silence, candle lighting, prayer and Scripture we will reflect on God's presence with us, and the hope that the Christ-child brings to our lives.

This year we are pleased to be sharing our Blue Christmas service again with Rev. Diane Guilford and the congregation of St. Thomas Anglican's church in Morden, who will be hosting it. We hope you will join us for this special time as we acknowledge both the sadness and hope of this season. Please consider inviting someone you know who might appreciate or need this time to come with you.

White Gift Sunday
Sunday, December 8th

White Gift Sunday dates back to 1904 in Ohio. The wife of a Methodist minister and her two daughters came up with the idea of giving gifts wrapped in white paper at Christmas time to people in need. Gifts were wrapped in white so that they would be anonymous. People who could only give a little would not be embarrassed.

There is also a Chinese tradition in which all the people gave their king a gift wrapped in plain white paper so that every gift would look the same. People gave the king what they were able to, and the king welcomed them all.

The White Gift tradition shares in the spirit of Christ and the God of love at Christmas. We give gifts of love to people in need. These gifts include toys, clothing, and non-perishable food items that are distributed to people in the community.

This year the Zion-Calvin congregation is invited to bring gift and food items for local Christmas Cheer, and the St. Paul's congregation is asked for donations of toys, games, books, crafts, winter wear and other items for the St. Matthew's Maryland Community Ministry Christmas Store. Please help us spread the light of God's love to others!

Gifts with Vision

Looking for a meaningful gift for someone on your Christmas list? Consider picking up one of these giving catalogues produced by the United Church. In it you'll find all kinds of thoughtful gift ideas starting as low as \$10 that go to support projects from our Mission and Service partners. Your gift helps God's work of mending the world. Catalogues are available in the church office or go to www.giftswithvision.ca.



Minister Search Preparation

As you know Rev Cathie has announced her retirement plans, with her last days at Pembina Parish the end of June 2020.

As considerable lead-time is needed, the work to find a minister to replace Cathie has begun. June Steiner, Marten Worrall, Marlene Holewka and Louise Gardiner are working to collect and prepare the required documents that are necessary to proceed in the search for a new Minister. The Prairie to Pine Regional Council's Pastoral Relations Commission has appointed Rev Melanie Kauppila (Altona) to be our support liaison. The posting for a United Church Minister is done on a website called Church Hub. We are required to have a Ministry Profile uploaded on this site prior to advertising in any other publications.

There is a manual with exacting guidelines to meet for the Ministry Profile. We have begun by collecting the required information and are working on Pembina Parish's Living Faith Story and revising the existing Minister position description to reflect our Mission, Vision and Values. We plan to have the Profile complete by early December so that we can meet with Rev Melanie Kauppila for review before we submit it to the Prairie to Pine Regional Council for approval at their January meeting. Our hope is that we will have all approvals necessary in place so that we can upload our profile by February. There are a lot of steps in this process and attention to every detail is important to ensure that we are successful in attracting a new Minister to our Parish. Please keep us in your prayers as we move forward in this work.

Louise Gardiner



The Best Is Yet to Be: Exploring the Abundant Life

What does “healthy aging” look like? As we grow old, is it true that “it’s all downhill from here”? Ought we really accept the advice of poet Dylan Thomas that “Old age should burn and rave at close of day”?

Developed and facilitated by Larry Danielson, and resuming in January 2020, this thirteen-session class will explore an alternate view of the meaning, purpose, value and direction of our final years and include reflections on such concepts as healthy aging; resilience; the Abundant life; and the changing balance of *Having*, *Doing*, and *Being*. While focused specifically on interests of adults in their senior years, the healthy-aging perspective is relevant to a broad spectrum of ages and any adult is welcome to participate.

Dates: Wednesday afternoons from 1:30 – 3:00 p.m.

January 15th to February 26th, 2020

St. Paul’s United Church, 353 Thornhill Street, Morden

No Charge – Admission by registration. Deadline: October 1st

For registration and/or further information, please contact

office@pembinaparish.com or 204-822-4508

Hosted by Pembina Parish United Church, in co-operation with St. Thomas Anglican, Morden Mennonite and St. John the Evangelist Roman Catholic churches.

Larry Danielson is an award-winning teacher, a writer, an editor, a public speaker, and an active community volunteer. During his 17 years of teaching at Garden Valley Collegiate in Winkler, Larry helped to pioneer on-line learning at the secondary level and traveled coast-to-coast in Canada, promoting the integration of technology in learning. As a writer and editor, he has engaged with a variety of projects, both personal and commercial. A long-time resident of Morden, Larry developed this “healthy-aging” course initially at the request of the education committee at Covenant Mennonite Church in Winkler. Subsequently, he shared it with a large adult class at Emmanuel Mennonite, during which time the course evolved considerably. This will be his third delivery of “The Best Is Yet To Be,” and based on his classroom experiences, he anticipates it will be the best yet.



Everyone welcome! It’s not necessary to have attended the first part of this course to come to this one!

Pembina Parish Financial Report

Pembina Parish United Church				
Statement of Income and Expenses				
For the 10 months ending October 31, 2019				
		Actual to Oct 31, 2019	Budget to Oct 31, 2019	Variance
Income				
	Givings	\$ 159,610	\$ 185,558	-\$ 25,949
	Fundraising	13,043	11,058	1,985
	Other	11,598	12,050	- 452
	Total Income	\$ 184,251	\$ 208,666	-\$ 24,415
Expenses				
	Salaries	\$ 85,887	\$ 114,841	-\$ 28,954
	Administration	20,513	31,880	- 11,366
	St. Paul's Bldg Expenses	29,578	41,158	- 11,580
	Zion-Calvin Bldg Expenses	9,520	8,425	1,095
	Interest Groups	2,387	13,578	- 11,192
	Total Expenses	\$ 147,886	\$ 209,882	-\$ 61,996
	Net Surplus (Loss)	\$ 36,365.04	-\$ 1,215.60	\$ 37,580.64

Pembina Parish - Summary of Restricted Fund Transactions - Jan 1, 2019 to Oct 31, 2019								
		Bldg Fund - Zion	Bldg Fund - St. Pauls	Opportunity Fund - Endowment	Opportunity Fund - Can Be Spent	Total		
Balance As At January 1, 2019		\$35,977.63	\$36,330.04	\$43,503.50	\$ 37,740.08	\$153,551.25		
Add - New Donations, Grants, Int, etc.								
Date Rec'd / Paid Out	Details - Of Transaction (from & why)							
	Total	\$ 1,230.42	\$ 4,613.75	\$ 3,680.00	\$ 4,338.51	\$ 13,862.68		
Less - Payments								
Date Rec'd / Paid Out	Details - Of Transaction (to and for what)							
	Total	\$16,246.25	\$26,347.78	\$ -	\$ 1,738.22	\$ 44,332.25		
Balance as at October 31, 2019		\$20,961.80	\$14,596.01	\$47,183.50	\$ 40,340.37	\$123,081.68		

The donations made for the St. Paul's roofing project or the Zion Calvin's painting project have been credited to the respective Building funds.

	Balance Sheet			
	Pembina Parish			
	As At October 31, 2019			
	ASSETS			
	Current Assets			
	Access Credit Union - Oper Acct	\$ 28,447.90		
	ACC Parish Share	5.00		
	Due From - Opportunity Fund	-5,184.75		
	ACU Platinum S/V	130,192.19		
	Total Current Assets		\$ 153,460.34	
	Opportunity Fund Bank Account	\$ 117,891.93		
	Opportunity Fund - ACU Share	5.00		
	Opportunities Fund GICs	0.00		
	Opportunity Fund - Due to Oper	5,184.75		
	Total - Restricted Fund Monies		123,081.68	
	TOTAL ASSET		\$ 276,542.02	
	LIABILITIES			
	Current Liabilities			
	Payable to M & S Fund/Flow Throughs		\$ 4,720.00	
	UCC Pension	\$ 84.37		
	UCC Benefits	35.20		
	UCC Group Insurance	14.91		
	Total Due - UCC		134.48	
	GST Payable on Purchases		-2,090.61	
	Soup & Pie Interest Group Payable		4,716.85	
	Total Current Liabilities		\$ 7,480.72	
	EQUITY			
	Retained Years - End of Prior Yr		\$ 109,614.24	
	Opportunity Fund - Zion Projects	\$ 20,961.80		
	Opportunity Fund - Endowment	47,183.50		
	Opportunity Fund - Avail to Spend	40,340.37		
	Opportunity Fund-St Paul's Building	14,596.01		
	Total Restricted Funds		123,081.68	
	Current Earnings		36,365.38	
	Total Retained Earnings		\$ 269,061.30	
	LIABILITIES AND EQUITY		276,542.02	
	Generated On: 13/11/2019			



Advent/Christmas Calendar of Events

- Sunday, December 1st** First Sunday of Advent.
The sacrament of communion will be celebrated at both
Zion Calvin and St Paul's
- Sunday, December 8th** Second Sunday of Advent. White Gift Sunday.
- Tuesday, December 10th** St. Paul's Sunday School travels to St. Matthew's Maryland
Community Ministry to help set up the Christmas Store.
- Friday Dec. 13th** Cookie Walk St. Paul's
- Sunday, December 15th -** Third Sunday of Advent.
Sunday School Christmas programs at Zion-Calvin &
St. Paul's.
Delivery of poinsettias
Blue Christmas service – 7:00 p.m. at St. Thomas Anglican
church
- Sunday, December 22nd** Fourth Sunday of Advent.
Worship services at Zion-Calvin and St. Paul's.
Christmas Carolling, meet @ St. Pauls 5:50 to Carpool
- Tuesday, December 24th** Christmas Eve services: Zion-Calvin at 6:30 p.m.
St. Paul's at 7:30 p.m.
- Sunday, December 29th** Potluck brunch at Zion-Calvin
Rev. Jean Carruthers will lead worship at St. Paul's
- Sunday, January 5th** Epiphany Sunday.
The sacrament of communion will be celebrated at both
Zion-Calvin and St. Paul's.

Merry Christmas

to all and to all a good night !



