



Galatians 5:22 and 23.
“²² ..., the fruit of the Spirit is love,
joy, peace, patience,
kindness, generosity,
faithfulness,
²³ gentleness, and self-control.



Welcome to Summer!

The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines faithfulness as (being) : “faithful, loyal, constant, staunch, steadfast, resolute... firm in adherence to whatever one owes allegiance.”

“**Faithfulness**” seems like an appropriate focus, during this month when we at St Paul’s are marking the 100th anniversary of the formation of the United Church of Canada.

In this issue, you will be reading memories shared by several people about their time being part of this St Paul’s United church congregation. I think it is a testament to steadfast perseverance and faithfulness, that our St Paul’s community of faith not only survived and grew during those early pioneer years (as McQueen Presbyterian) but also made it through the aftermath of contentious church union voting. St Paul’s thrived during those baby-booming post-WWII years, when church attendance was the social norm (and even a place to build business connections) and transitioned into the decades when going to church was truly a choice for the faithful, in spite of the many competing activities and obligations which became the norm on Sunday mornings.

I am grateful that St Paul’s has not merely survived, but has continued to grow over these many decades, and has emerged as:

- a voice in this community for progressive Christian theology and faithful action,
- a place of welcome and affirmation of all persons wishing to build community together
- a people open to learning together and supporting each other through faith, love and acceptance.

I hope you appreciate the memories shared in this newsletter. If you are inspired to jot down your own memories of St Paul’s, we will be happy to include them in our August/Fall Newsletter.

Karen Scott – Editorial Team

Summer Office Hours: Tuesday–Thursday 9-noon and 1-3

Occasional Fridays 9-noon – please call to ensure someone’s in the office.

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Please send comments, ideas,
photos, or articles for inclusion in
the next newsletter to
communications@stpaulsuc.ca

Submission deadline is August 3rd.

The theme for the Fall issue is

Self-Control.

Faithfulness. What does that mean? How does one measure it?

I think faithfulness is one of those words where we just “know what it means” without giving it a lot of pause. We know it when we see it. We know when it has been violated.

For me faithfulness is closely linked with trust and trustworthiness. To be faithful is to show trust and also to keep trust. In fact I am sure that without trust faithfulness becomes almost impossible. Without trust we are always hedging our bets, always making back-up plans, expecting to be disappointed. Nothing about that is faithfulness – unless the faith you have is that the other will disappoint/fail you.

In his book *The Heart of Christianity* the late Marcus Borg talks about faith as the way of the heart. He suggests that in the life of church people we sometimes think faith (as in making a faith statement) means giving intellectual assent to a statement or doctrine or dogma. This makes faith, and faithfulness, about how we think. Borg suggests, and I tend to agree, that this takes us in the wrong direction. At its heart, Christianity is an invitation to follow a way of living, not an invitation to subscribe to a particular set of philosophical statements. It is a matter of the heart more than a matter of the head.

When we trust in God we can be faithful. When we trust that God is with us faithfulness follows. It allows us to relax into the arms of God, not because we think God will make everything right but simply because we know those arms will always be there. We trust in God who is trustworthy so we can have faith.

Faithfulness as a matter of the heart also links, in my mind, with words like commitment, loyalty, and allegiance. Where we are faithful, where we put our faith and trust, shows where our true center is, it shows what pole we use to ground ourselves, what we orbit around. To be faithful to the God we meet in Jesus is to center ourselves on the teachings of Jesus, to ground ourselves in the promise of Resurrection life (and that in abundance). We are most faithful to those things and people that are most important to us. To be faithful is to be loyal and committed. When God, known as Parent, Son and Spirit, holds our primary allegiance then we can not help but remain faithful to The Way Jesus lays out, the path that he invites us to follow. When something or someone else claims our primary allegiance we fall prey to idolatry, we wander from the path. We have trouble being faithful.



So why is faithfulness one of the overtones of the fruit of the spirit whose main flavour is love? I can think of a couple of reasons. One is that it sustains us, the trusting in God sustains, comforts, and emboldens us. Maybe when we sink into faithfulness we sink into a more healthy place, a place where we can feel the abundant life promised by Jesus. The other reason is that it keeps us grounded. Being faithful reminds us what we orbit around, what the center of our circle is, what is most important. Both of these flow out of the knowledge (or trust or even faith) that we are Beloved children of God. And then they help us to be loving children of God to everyone we meet.

We are people of Faith, Hope, and Love. We are challenged to be faithful in all things. May God help us live into that reality.

--Gord



Memories from Margaret Bowes

What's your first memory of attending St. Paul's United Church?

My mother (who was widowed at 29 years of age with 3 preschoolers (the youngest just 2 months old) used to drive us from our farm near Beaverlodge to Grande Prairie for piano lessons, and we stayed with our grandparents Saturday night and always walked to church, and after church attended Sunday School. Mrs. Kowensky was the Sunday School Superintendent. Church always began with the Hymn "Holy, Holy, Holy".

Do you remember any previous ministers?

We had many good ministers, Mr Kitney, then Mr Pritchard, followed by young Bev Johnston who was very charismatic and led us through the process of raising money and building the new (1956) church. His children's stories were based on what the church mouse observed in church. I have his book of these stories. Mr Pritchard was the minister who married us in the 'old' white church. Our reception was a light lunch served by the women of the church in the 'new' Christian Ed. Building next door.



What was your favourite decade to be part of St. Paul's?

I suppose in the '50's and 60's when the congregation built the new manse on 94th Ave., built the Christian Ed building and the new church in 1956 (with a lot of volunteer labour), and had a congregation that filled the church.

Were you part of any special events?

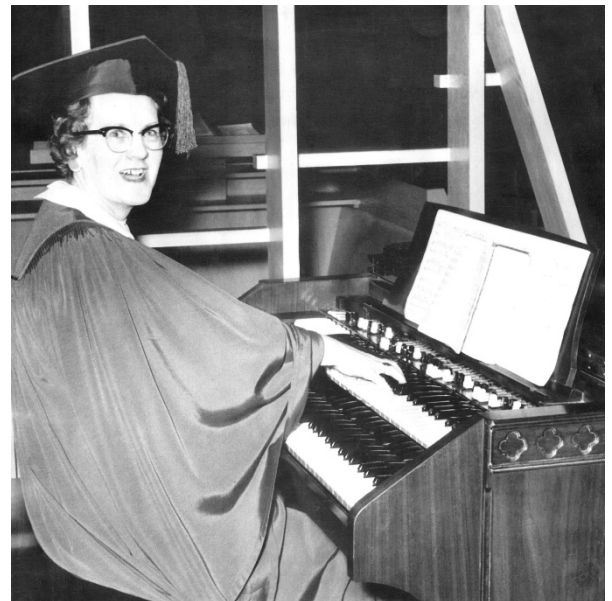
Our mother played the organ and led the choir plus junior choir, so my sisters and I never missed a Jr. or later a Sr. choir practice. Our 4 sons were baptised at St Paul's.

Did you volunteer, teach, or lead at any point?

In high school a friend and I taught a Sunday School class, later I arranged the meals for Cub Camp, sang in the choir, played the piano or organ for church (especially in summer holidays) and for many years played for funerals at Oliver's Funeral parlour or the church.

I was active in UCW and Sr. choir for many years.

The church had a Drama Group that was very active and fostered the group that developed GP Little Theatre (now GP Live Theatre). Jenny Tetreau was very active in this group.



Memories from Sherida Rossoll

I helped with Sunday School in the late 1960's. Rev Waite married Ken and I in 1972. Ken passed away in 2015 and I needed a support system, so I came back to St Paul's. Many of the same people I knew from the past were still here. They and many others really embraced me. I love my second home!!

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Memories from Betty Grunau

Changes over the years:

The turkey dinner changed to a beef dinner, which grew larger in attendance and then stopped due to COVID and a tired work force. It also changed from a UCW organized event to any members who wished to and felt able.

The same happened with the Garage Sale, and the days of preparation have expanded. There are way more items, and it is more business-like on the sale days. There is also a specialty items table.



The bell choir was formed and bless us with their music on special occasions.

St Paul's agreed with marrying LGBTQ2SIA+ couples and does so.

We also made it known that we welcome ALL people as members.

Favorite ministers:

Rev. Vern Wishart for his entertaining and meaningful storytelling and the Wednesday morning prayer breakfast. Mark Malek for his insight and friendship.

Favourite decade

Likely the 2000s, because I had retired from teaching, so had more time to be involved and was physically and mentally able to do more.

Special events I remember

My own baptism, and enjoying confirmation classes with Daniel Alsted. That was a privilege.

I very much enjoyed the picnics and the camp outs. Meeting people in a different circumstance is interesting. I'm sorry I am no longer able to camp.

Volunteering

Being on the Property & Maintenance Committee for years allowed me to get involved without a huge time commitment to begin with, and to get to know the skilled and interesting committee members which I would not have otherwise.

I joined the UCW after I retired from work, and was president for one term. This allowed me to be involved in many events and to get to know a wise, energetic and caring group of ladies.



I've also helped supervise Youth Group activities on occasion.

Memories from Brenda (McCubbin) Stouffer

What's your first memory of attending St. Paul's United Church?

One of my first memories was attending St. Paul's to start CGIT in 1969. We arrived in February, so I was starting the group halfway through the year and that's tough as a teenager. Sherry Howarth and Trina Johnson were the grade 7 "Super Screwballs" leaders and were welcoming and made the transition easy. I have memories of doing babysitting in the nursery as part of our "Serve Others" activities. And of hosting wonderful Mother/Daughter banquets complete with Silver Tea Service by a few moms.



Do you remember any previous ministers?

My one minister story goes back to the early '70's when I convinced my then boyfriend to come to church with me. He came wearing clean, PRESSED jeans, a white shirt and tie. I thought he looked wonderful and was so pleased to have him come with me. Sadly, that was the one and ONLY time he came, as he was reprimanded for wearing jeans to church and never came back. Just an example of how we valued his appearance (even though he made an effort to be "properly" dressed) more than the fact he came to worship. I'm so thankful we are a "come as you are" church now.

Were you part of any special events?

Gary and I were married in 1975 by Bill Hunter and will celebrate our 50th Anniversary this year.

I was a proud member of the "Teen Choir" under Ann Macklin, who always made it a fun time. I played guitar with Patti Trottier in church as well as for the CGIT Vesper Service as a girl.

CGIT Candlelight Vesper Services were ALWAYS a highlight of each year. Seeing Girls, Leaders and Alumnae circle the sanctuary with light was always magical. Rosamund Wilson was Superintendent through my years as a girl and was a wonderful role model and one of the reasons I became a leader in later years.

I have fond memories of the fun we had for St. Paul's 100th Anniversary. With a carnival, bouncy house, fishpond, popcorn and BBQ along with displays and a potluck supper made for a memorable weekend rounded out with a special Church Service on Sunday.



Did you volunteer, teach, or lead at any point?

After attending CGIT for 6 years as a girl I came back in 1976 as a leader. It was a privilege and a joy to lead the "Love Bugs" and "Care Bears" each through their 6 years of CGIT. I also co-superintended with Valerie Jenner for a couple of those years. In 1990 I moved over to leading Explorers and managed to be a feeder group of graduates from that program to CGIT until 2025. CGIT/Explorers and St. Paul's have always gone hand in hand for me. The unconditional support and love from this congregation has been a true blessing.

Memories from Karen Scott – the 1980s

I arrived in Grande Prairie in August 1979, having accepted my first job as a Speech-Language Pathologist, and moved from Southern Ontario. Like so many Grande Prairie-ites, I planned to stay a couple of years and then explore another part of Canada, before settling down. But within two years I was settled in here, and here I stayed.

My first Sunday at St Paul's United set a good tone for St Paul's becoming my extended church-family. It was Rev. Archie and Betty Birse's first Sunday, and Betty introduced she and I to everyone during coffee time. I was "home".

The 1980s were turbulent years for St Paul's. By early 1980, the GP fire department condemned our 3 story Christian Education wing, which housed baby fold in the basement, meeting rooms on the middle floor, and Sunday school on the top floor. They said we could continue to use it, only because we committed to undertake a building campaign to replace it within the next few years. Rev Archie decided he couldn't lead St Paul's through a building campaign, at this late point in his ministry, and regretfully resigned.

Fred Hoberton, a long-term staff lay-person working in Alberta and Northwest Conference office, accepted a one year appointment to St Paul's, while we searched for a new minister. Fred initiated Lenten "Faith-Lift" programs which continued for many years, and confirmed perhaps the largest adult confirmation class, in preparation for calling our next minister.

Rev Bill Beach arrived at St Paul's in 1981, and grew the church and donations enough that we hired Alice Lorenz to be part-time Christian Education coordinator. Interest in Rev Bill's Kerygma (intensive Bible study) course attracted over 40 committed souls, so two groups were offered!

Lori Crocker, Diaconal Minister built on Alice's foundation, and robust Sunday School and mid-week groups, were filled with the influx of the baby boomers' children. Rick Prieston, student minister spend a year at St Paul's, supervised by Rev Bill.

Rev Bob Hetherington arrived in 1984. The old CE building was demolished, and the new (current) CE wing was then being built. In 1985 (... or was it 1986?) Sunday school met on Sunday mornings at Avondale School. By September 1986, furnaces and the downstairs kitchen were being replaced and the new CE wing was being built. My Jessica was baptised in the fall of 1986 in a snowsuit, as none of the church furnaces were operational, and it was chilly that morning!

Pat Reid took over supporting Christian Development when Lori moved on, and that position came to a close in early 1987. Rev Bob moved to Edmonton that June, and Rev Gerry Hutchinson came out of retirement, to spend the 1987-88 year rebuilding at St Paul's while we once again searched for a new minister. Rev Gerry supported both Frank Lewis and Stephen Berube who chose to pursue studies and were recommended as candidates for ministry in the UCC, by St Paul's United.

In 1988, Rev Vern Wishart accepted St Paul's call. While he travelled from Montreal to Grande Prairie that fateful summer of 1988, General Council was meeting, and made the decision not to use sexual orientation as a reason to block candidates from pursuing ministry in the UCC. I'm truly grateful for that decision, but the next few years were tumultuous, as St Paul's, like many churches in the UCC, rose like a phoenix recovering from the loss of members, friends and reduced funds. We were certainly battered and a bit singed, but we survived. Thankfully Rev Vern stayed at St Paul's until his retirement in the mid 1990's.

Yes the 1980's were turbulent for the United Church, nationally, as well as right here at St Paul's. We got to know and learn from six Ordained and Diaconal Ministers, work with 3 lay-persons, and one student minister!

Memories from Bruce White – the 1990s

The 90's were a transformational decade for me. My company moved me to Grande Prairie in January of 1990 from Edmonton as I looked to establish myself as an adult in charge of my own destiny. I had grown up going to church regularly at First United in Wetaskiwin, however since I had graduated University and moved away from home I was looking for change, and became a non-attender more or less. When my Mom and Dad would visit me here on the weekends, I would do the right thing and go to the service with them at St. Paul's United, and Mom would ask Vern Wishart how they could make me come to church more often. I think Vern's answer was something like you can't make someone come to church if they don't want to. Vern was such a nice man!

Time passed though and eventually I felt that church was maybe where I should spend more time. I began coming more regularly and got to know a lot of the people at St. Paul's. I participated by greeting at the door, reading scripture, taking part in the social events for younger people and even spent time leading the youth group, this last item being something that I didn't feel I was very good at though. While my childhood experience at Wetaskiwin First United was very foundational being an adult that chose to attend church I had grown into a committed part of the congregation at St. Paul's. And it was near the end of this decade that I met a lovely girl named Alison at the church. We began dating and then we were married at St. Paul's the next year in a service officiated by the current minister at the time, Joanna MacQuarrie. Through the 90's the church became an integral part of my life and I am very thankful. Happy 100 years to the United Church of Canada!



Around St Paul's

Weekly Events:

Sunday, 10 am – Worship in the Sanctuary

Tuesday, 7:00 – ZOOM Bible Study

Thursday, 6 pm – Tai Chi – East Basement



Wednesday – Saturday, 5 – 11 pm –

Card's Board Game Café is open – West Basement



Several events took place at the church since our Lent newsletter, including 2 concerts – the University of Alberta Mixed Chorus and Handbells on April 29th, and our own **Bells of St Paul's with the Quintessential Winds** on May 23rd. (above)

Card's Board Game Café also held a **grand opening** downstairs on May 23rd, celebrating the 10th anniversary of their original grand opening downtown. (right)



Summer Office Hours

Starting June 2, the church office will be closed on Mondays and on occasional Fridays throughout the summer. Regular office hours will resume on September 8.

Carla will be away from June 23 to 27.

The office will reopen on July 2.

Rev. Gord will be in the office during this time, but please call ahead to confirm his availability.

Rev. Gord will be away on holidays from July 17 to August 17th. During this time please call the office for Pastoral Care concerns and Carla will forward them to the right person.





Have you joined St. Paul's Recyclable program yet? St. Paul's has an easy fundraiser to help with any Church renovations. Just bag up all your empty bottles, cans and milk jugs and put our **church id # 1468-2415** visible on each bag and drop them off at the bottle depot. Check in with the cashier and let them know how many bags/boxes of bottles/cans you dropped off.

Are you interested in purchasing a St Paul's T-shirt?

Talk with Jill Harsch at ProSport Clothing Company, located at 11500-100 street, or call 780-814-6199.

Choose the colour, style and size of t-shirt from their stock and what message/logo you would like them to put on your shirt. They have the following options ready to go:

"God's love is totally inclusive"

St. Paul's logo (with green and blue, with or without text)

St Paul's logo (with rainbow dove, and black or white text)

United Church of Canada crest

Affirm United crest

Or you can add small versions of the UCC and Affirm United crests or St. Paul's logo to the "God's love is totally inclusive" message!

We're also working on working on a new design supporting right relations with indigenous peoples, which should be available shortly.



Let **love** and **faithfulness** never leave you;
bind them around your neck,
write them on the tablet of your heart.

PROVERBS 3:3, NIV



Sunday June 8th

10:30 a.m.

Saskatoon

Island

Amphitheatre

All are

Welcome!

Head to Saskatoon Island Park June 5th to 8th (**this Thursday to Sunday**) for a camping weekend, or come out for the Tri-Church Potluck Picnic in the Day Use Group Picnic Area on **Saturday the 7th**.

Join us for a relaxing evening of food, fellowship, and fun with our tri-church community! Bring a dish to share and your picnic spirit! Questions? Contact Patti Stebbing at 250-262-6173.

Our church service on **Sunday June 8th** will be at **10:30 AM** in the Outdoor Amphitheatre.



Coming Events

June is Pride Month, and the Grande Prairie Pride Society has several events planned.



The month will kick off with repainting the **Rainbow Crosswalk** sometime in the first week, dependent on the weather. Stop by for a barbecue lunch and help with the painting!



June 6th is the **Rainbow Bright Teen Dance** for ages 13-17, with free admission.

June 7th is their 18+ event, **Party in White**.

Finally, the **Family Carnival** will be **June 14th**, with free admission. As usual, St Paul's will have a booth at the Carnival – if you'd like to volunteer, speak to someone from the Social Justice and Affirming Ministry team.



The **Canadian Girls In Training** and **Explorers** programs officially ended this April after more than 100 years at St Paul's, the last of their kind in Alberta. Come join us on **Saturday, June 28th** from **1 to 4** for refreshments and a walk down memory lane to honour these programs and their impact on our lives and our community.

St Paul's **Community Garage Sale** will be August 21st-23rd at the D Company Armouries. If you have any gently used items you'd like to donate, please set them aside. They could be just the thing someone's looking for!

Drop-off Day is Monday August 18, from 2–8 PM. If you're moving or need to clear space before August, contact Karen Scott or leave a message with Carla in the church office at 780-532-2415 to make alternative arrangements.



We're also holding a **Clothing FunDrive** for Value Village, accepting bagged donations of clothes, shoes, boots, belts, purses, towels, and bedding. Look through your closet for things you'd like to donate before **Monday August 25th**, then drop them off between **4 and 7 PM** at the church.

CGIT & EXPLORERS

Are Honouring the end of this program in
Grande Prairie and Alberta



SHARE THE MEMORIES



Please join us on

Saturday, June 28th from 1 – 4 pm

for Refreshments and a walk down Memory Lane

Everyone Welcome!



St. Paul's United Church

10206-100 Avenue

Grande Prairie, AB 780-532-2415





**We will be accepting
bagged donations of**

Clothes - Shoes - Boots

Purses - Belts

Towels - Bedding

**So tackle that closet cleanout
you've been putting off!
Bag and donate items to
St. Paul's to support this simple
fundraising initiative!**

Clothing FONDriVe

Partnering with Value Village



DROP OFF DAY:

Monday, August 25

4 — 7 PM

St. Paul's United Church

10206 100 Ave GP

**If you have any questions or
require pick-up
please contact Brenda Stouffer
780-832-9371**

