



The United Church of Canada Call reflects the core of our purpose, sharing who we seek to be in “such a time as this” (Esther 4:14).

**Deep Spirituality**  
**Bold Discipleship**  
**Daring Justice**

The United Church of Canada vision reflects what the church aspires to be over a 5- to 10-year span.

**Called by God, as disciples of Jesus, The United Church of Canada seeks to be a bold, connected, evolving church of diverse, courageous, hope-filled communities united in deep spirituality, inspiring worship, and daring justice.**

- from <https://united-church.ca/community-and-faith/welcome-united-church-canada/our-call-and-vision>



### Welcome to the Lenten Season!

For the last few years of this newsletter, we've been making our way through the “fruit of the spirit” listed in Galatians to give each issue its theme. Having come to the end of that list, we thought this would be a good time to consider again the statements adopted as the United Church of Canada Call in October of 2021: **Deep Spirituality, Bold Discipleship, and Daring Justice**. At the same time, General Council came up with a more extensive vision statement, on the right above.

As we move into the season of Lent, one of the deeper mysteries of faith, may we consider ways to deepen our own spirituality, and how that may lead us to work for justice and step into discipleship, both individually and together as the community of St Paul's.

- Scott Maitland, for the Editorial Team



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Submission deadline is April 12  
The theme for the Summer issue is **Daring Justice**.

Let us start with a story...

Jane looked at the time. Listed office hours were over. There was nobody else in the building. With a deep sigh she pulled out her phone, turned it off and put it back in her pocket. Then she stood up and made her way to the sanctuary.

There Jane turned on the sound system and started playing some gentle instrumental music. Then she turned off all the lights, letting the space soak on the sunlight streaming through the stained glass windows, and made her way to the chancel. Jane flipped open the big Bible on the communion table till she found the passage she was looking for. She read it aloud into the empty space, letting the words resound off the walls, then she flipped open the book of poetry she had brought from the office and read aloud one of her favourite pieces. As the last line of the poem echoed across the room Jane set the poetry down and sat silently in the choir loft.

4 or 5 minutes later she stood up and made her way down the chancel steps. Slowly, reflectively, even meditatively, Jane started weaving her way through the rows of seats. Carefully she passed between the rows, back and forth, like it was a very basic labyrinth. As she walked Jane allowed her mind to drift. For a while she reflected on the passage she had just read. For a while she replayed the poem. Then she started to quietly murmur words of prayer. Finally she fell silent and walked on, down one side of the sanctuary then back up the other, until she found herself standing again at the foot of the chancel steps.

There Jane settled into the front pew. She sat with her eyes closed, letting the music flow over her, silently lifting up her joys, her worries, her confusions, her hopes to the Holy One.

Suddenly she heard the church door slam and a cluster of voices in the hall, calling out her name. Then a group of people, the Social Committee, burst into the sanctuary. "Oh good! You aren't busy!" the chair called out. "We need to have a quick meeting to discuss next month's pancake supper!"

Jane grimaced. Then, as calmly as she could, she said: "Actually I am in the middle of something. If you go to the library I can join you in about 15 minutes." The group left (though she could hear some grumbling as they went) and Jane tried to find that quiet calm place from which she had been dragged. But alas the moment was gone. She gathered up her book, turned off the sound system, grabbed what she needed from the office and joined the group in the library.

The next day there was a phone call from the chair of the personnel committee. They were concerned that when a group of people had come in (unannounced) and asked to talk Jane had made them wait even though she had clearly had only been resting in the sanctuary. Jane explained that she was working, she was doing the work she needed to be ready to serve, she was taking care of her Spirit. The call ended with a rather brusque "Well don't let it happen again".

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Back in 2022 the General Council released new vision and mission statements. Embedded in those were three pairs of words: *Deep Spirituality, Bold Discipleship, Daring Justice*. We were all invited to embrace those ideals as ways we live out our Christian faith. This year our newsletters will invite us to reflect on them. As it happens I have also chosen them as the launching points for three of our Sundays in Lent this year.



## Deep • Bold • Daring Toward 2035

We start with the most foundational piece – *Deep Spirituality*. This is, in my mind, what we build on if we are to be bold disciples. It is what gives us the courage to dare and take risks for justice (as I write these words I think of the people of Minnesota where dozens of clergy were arrested this weekend as part of protests against the terror inducing activities of ICE). As people of faith we are invited and encourage to intentionally take time and sink into God’s presence. As people of faith we feed our spirits/souls to allow us to live out our faith.

Christopher Grundy has a song called *By the Stream*. Within that song are these lyrics (I think inspired by Psalm 1)

“Blessed are those who trust in God  
they will be like a tree by the water  
and sending out its roots by the Stream”

Listening to the song, reflecting on those lyrics reminds me of the importance of attending to our spiritual needs. There we get nourishment. There we get what we need to be able to live out our faith.

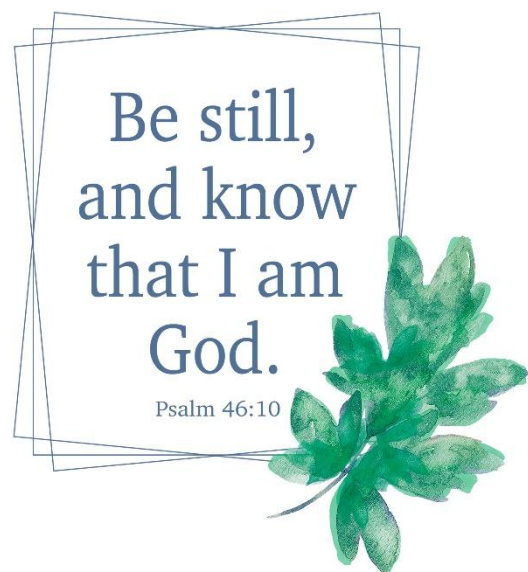
The story about Jane up above is a work of fiction. It started writing itself in my head a couple of days ago. It is not a “names changed to protect the innocent” thing it never happened to anyone I know. In fact it is based on an old joke about the minister in their study praying and someone comes in and says “oh good you aren’t busy”. I just expanded it a bit. But the story (and the old joke) tells us a lot about how we sometimes see the work involved in deep spirituality.

Sometimes we see those quiet, “non-productive” times as less important, a thing that can be knocked off the calendar in favour of more important “productive” work. With all the important things to do can we really take time to sit quietly, or walk along the creek, or watch the birds, or sing random hymns? I think we have to. I think that when we don’t take that time it is so much harder to keep doing the “important” things.

As people of faith our guidance and strength comes from God. If we don’t attend to our spiritual health, if we don’t sink deep into God’s presence and love we suffer. We might become exhausted. We might lose hope. We might start to think it all depends on us. Deep Spirituality may not always prevent such things but it can help avoid them, it can help us recover when they hit.

I close with one of my favourite verses, one that I have used as a bit of a mantra at times to sink into God’s presence: “Be still and know that I am God” (Psalm 46:10)

--Gord



Around St Paul's

Kayla Sims' Re-Affirmation of Faith, November 30<sup>th</sup>.



Below: CGIT Alumni Vespers Service, also November 30<sup>th</sup>.



Building a nativity in Kid's Corner



Above: Christmas Eve anthem



Grandmothers to Grandmothers Coffee Party

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### Coming Events

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Explore upcoming events at St. Paul's United Church and in the Grande Prairie community.

#### **Black History Month - Sharing and Traditional Dances**

**Saturday, February 28 – 2 to 5 PM**

Location: Grande Prairie Public Library, Rotary Community Room.

An immersive evening dedicated to traditional dances and cultural expressions, reflecting the richness of heritage, cultural diversity, and intergenerational dialogue, while strengthening community ties and the vision of an inclusive future.

### World Day of Prayer

Friday, March 6<sup>th</sup> – 7 PM – Christ Church Anglican

Join us for an evening of worship, with participation from various churches in our city. Snacks and fellowship will follow the service.

This year's theme, "I Will Give You Rest: Come," was prepared by the **World Day of Prayer Committee of Nigeria** and is based on **Matthew 11:28-30**:

*"Come to me, all you who are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. <sup>29</sup> Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. <sup>30</sup> For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."*

All are welcome to attend!

### The Bells of St Paul's

Sunday, March 22 – 10 AM – St Paul's Sanctuary

Our bell choirs will be sharing their talents several times through Lent and beyond, particularly during Holy Week services, but beginning the Sunday before.

**Celebrate PIE Day!**  
Saturday 03 14



**Public, Intentional, and Explicit inclusion of the LGBTQ2SIA community and their Allies**  
**Details coming soon**



Weekly Events:

Sunday, 10 am – Worship in the Sanctuary

Tuesday, 7:00 – ZOOM Bible Study

Thursday, 10:30 to 11:30 – Music Mornings

– Kids' Corner

Thursday, 6 pm – Tai Chi – East Basement

Thursday, 7:30 pm – Choir practice – Choir room



Wednesday to Saturday, 5 to 11 pm –

Card's Board Game Café is open – West Basement



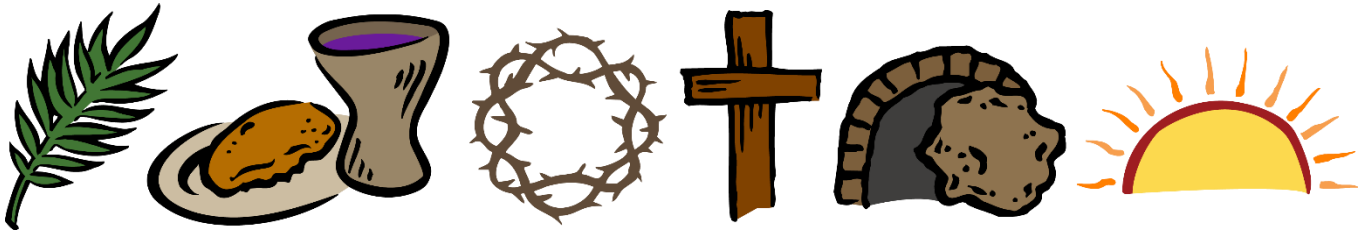
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## Holy Week Services at St. Paul's

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As we prepare for Easter, join us in telling the story of Jesus' last days in Jerusalem, from his unusual entry, to Passover with his friends, to the sorrow and joy-filled days beyond.

- Sunday, March 29 – 10 AM  
**Palm Sunday, Palm Parade**  
– The Bells of St Paul's playing
- Thursday, April 2 – 7 PM  
**Maundy Thursday, Communion**
- Friday, April 3 – 7 PM  
**Good Friday**
- Sunday, April 5 – 10 AM  
**Easter Sunday Celebration**  
– The Bells of St Paul's playing



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## Coming Events

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# REGION-CONNECT



Come for a weekend of *workshops, fellowship, and worship* with your neighbours.



**GRANDE PRAIRIE, AB**  
**APRIL 25-26, 2026**



### Region-Connect

All of Northern Spirit is invited to join us in Grande Prairie for a time of connection, learning, and worship.

**Saturday April 25<sup>th</sup>** will include workshops, a lunch, and time to gather together, followed by worship, fellowship and coffee as usual on **Sunday April 26<sup>th</sup>**.

### St Paul's Camping Weekend



**May 22<sup>nd</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup>** at Saskatoon Island Park. Join in the fun and fellowship!



The Bells of St Paul's concert, joined by Quintessential Winds

**May 23<sup>rd</sup> – 7 PM**, St Paul's Sanctuary.  
Admission by donation.

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## Coming Events

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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 12<sup>th</sup>** is the **Rainbow Bright Teen Dance** for ages 13-17, with free admission.

**June 13<sup>th</sup>** is their 18+ event, **Party in White**.

Finally, the **Family Carnival** will be **June 20<sup>th</sup>**, 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.



St Paul's **Community Garage Sale** is planned for August 20<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup>, with sorting and pricing happening the 17<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup>.

If you've given up something for Lent that it turns out you don't need back, or spring cleaning turns up items you're not in love with anymore, consider setting them aside for donation to the sale this summer. They could be just the thing someone's looking for!

## No Time To Pray

I got up early one morning  
And rushed right into the day;  
I had so much to accomplish  
That I didn't take time to pray.

Problems just tumbled about me,  
And heavier came each task,  
"Why doesn't God help me?" I wondered.  
He answered, "You didn't ask."

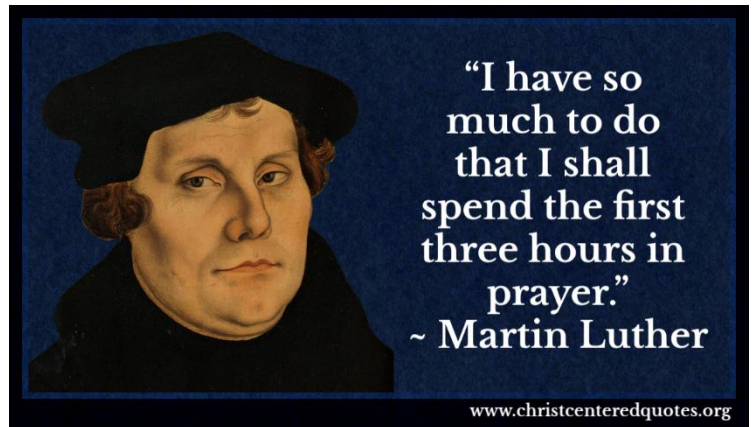
I wanted to see joy and beauty,  
But the day toiled on gray and bleak;  
I wondered why God didn't show me;  
He said, "But you didn't seek."

I tried to come into God's presence;  
I used all my keys at the lock;  
God gently and lovingly chided,  
"My child you didn't knock."

I woke up early this morning,  
And paused before entering the day;  
I had so much to accomplish  
That I had to take time to pray.  
– *Anonymous*



Feature photo by Colleen Geiser.



# POPE FRANCIS' Advice for Lent

Fast from **hurting** words and say kind **words**.

Fast from **sadness**  
and be filled with **gratitude**.

Fast from **anger** and be filled with **patience**.

Fast from **pessimism** and be filled with **hope**.

Fast from **worries** and **trust in God**.

Fast from **complaints**  
and **contemplate** simplicity.

Fast from **pressures** and be **prayerful**.

Fast from **bitterness**  
and fill your heart with **joy**.

Fast from **selfishness**  
and be **compassionate** to others.

Fast from **grudges** and be **reconciled**.

Fast from **words**  
and be silent so you can **listen**.



The *Spirit*  
searches everything,  
even the *depths of God*.

1 CORINTHIANS 2:10

