

# *Our Living Faith Story*

*The following is a consolidation of the church profile documents of St. Paul's United Church, Perth. The profile has been approved by The Eastern Ontario Outaouais Regional Council of the United Church of Canada and resides on the United Church website, "Church Hub". St. Paul's is actively seeking a new Minister and offers this as an introduction to St. Paul's and encourages interested parties to login to Church Hub for further information.*

# Our Living Faith Story

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## VISION & TRANSFORMATION

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### Our Mission

**Our church is a welcoming, inclusive  
Christian community of faith on a journey  
that nurtures meaningful spiritual growth  
to make a difference in our lives and in our community.**

As a member of Affirm United/S'Affirmer Ensemble, the congregation of St. Paul's strives to offer a welcoming place to people of all races, cultures, abilities, gender identities, and sexual orientations, whether old or young, believers or questioners, or questioning believers. We seek right relations with the Indigenous peoples of Canada. We acknowledge that we live and work on the unceded territory of the Algonquin Anishinaabe people.

Both St. Paul's United Church and the beautiful heritage town of Perth have a rich and colourful history. The roots of our congregation date back to 1817, one year after the founding of Perth. Since 1854, when our place of worship was built, a community of people have met regularly to worship God and engage in activities which are designed to further God's purposes in their own and others' lives.

We faithfully recognize that celebrating 175 years in 2029 will not be without its challenges but the steps the leadership and congregation have initiated around our vision and transformation have given us energy and hope. This is our faith story and our efforts to be sustainable, to be able to celebrate 175 years of worship and to repurpose our building to better serve the needs of our community of faith and the greater Perth community. It is important to note that the congregation took ownership of the exercises you will now read about and the results reflect hours of discussion.

### Rebuilding St. Paul's - 2010

The journey began in 2010 when St. Paul's undertook, over many months, "Let's Talk" sessions resulting in a report called "Rebuilding St. Paul's". The foundation of this report was that our spirituality guides all that we do. The key to rebuilding rests on open communications, transparency and inclusiveness in every way we relate as a community of faith.

Perth, ON

## St. Paul's Identity Statement – 2012

Following 50 years of stable ministry at St. Paul's, we have benefited from interim ministry. Interim ministers have helped us rebuild and embark on a journey of organizational development and strengthening our role as a spiritual hub. As a congregation, again over many months, we were guided through an exercise to develop the following identity statement: ***A Spiritual Hub for creativity, discovery and growth.***

## Moving Forward Together 2017

In 2017 a strategic planning initiative entitled Moving Forward Together more explicitly synthesized values essential to refreshed vision and mission statements. A new mission statement was developed and the vision included the following values which continue to serve as guidance in all we do:

- A safe place where people can explore and express their spirituality through worship, discovery, service and outreach
- A nurturing community of belonging, friendship and fellowship for all generations
- Busy, vibrant and open for a wide range of church and community activities
- Appreciative of the time, talents and support offered by all
- Respectful of our heritage while embracing our future
- An appealing, multi-purpose, accessible building that is technologically up-to-date.

2017 also marked the initiation of a two-year period, where we completed the process of inquiry and conversation which culminated in the acknowledgement and celebration that we are an affirming church. There is a growing sense of openness to appreciate diversity and to create opportunities for dialogue.

## Creative Community Space 2018

For the first time in many years –and as a logical application of Moving Forward Together - in 2018 St. Paul's undertook a 'bricks and mortar' phase of rebuilding. The overarching rationale was accessibility and fire safety. It was funded largely by existing, designated internal reserves, and congregational contributions, as well as Presbytery and Conference grants.

Through ramps, elevator, washrooms, new air quality management, sound and projection technologies, our three adjoining buildings have become a flexible, versatile and accessible multi-use facility.

The Creative Community Space project delivered on our wish for St. Paul's to be a centre where people can continue to meet for enriched worship experience and in more casual ways to participate in social, recreational, educational and artistic initiatives that engage our members and the broader community. Thus our worship centre has become a hub, both for enriched services and more vibrant community space.

## Sustainability 2019

After many years of deficit budgets 2019 marked the beginning of a longer-term sustainability project with the first step being an all member/adherent budget forum designed to educate, engage and seek assistance in the development of financial strategies that would lead to a more balanced budget for 2020 and longer-term sustainability. Two of these meetings were held in rapid succession and set the stage for the creation of a team to study various options designed to address our sustainability.

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## Sustainability 2020

On June 3<sup>rd</sup>, St. Paul's Council approved the formation of the "Alive in Twenty-Five" ad hoc committee with the mandate, approved by the Congregation, "to develop options for consideration by the congregation to take St. Paul's to a level of sustainability".

At its meeting on June 3<sup>rd</sup>, St. Paul's Council recognized that action is needed in order to ensure St Paul's sustainability. Factors considered were that a) our congregation is aging, b) it is becoming more difficult to find volunteers to fill necessary positions, c) our numbers are declining which translates into reduced givings and d) we no longer require such a large building to serve God and our faith community. The significance of 2025 was not lost on the Alive in Twenty-Five Team as it is also the 100th anniversary of the establishment of the United Church of Canada.

In addition, the Trustees recommended and Council approved a strategic partnership with the Perth and District Community Foundation (PDCF) whereby St. Paul's investments are now invested with the Foundation. Not only does this action benefit St Paul's, it also contributes to PDCF's community outreach through its granting process.

Over the course of the study period three Congregation meetings were held supported by regular communication and a congregation survey. Reports were shared regularly with all members and the Congregation voted on the prioritized recommendations at the 2020 Annual Congregation Meeting held in February 2021.

## Sustainability 2021

One of the recommendations from the Congregation meeting was to continue the good work of the Alive in Twenty-Five committee with the formation of an ad hoc committee to address the feasibility of the Congregation's approved considerations.

A new committee was established and with vigour and optimism chose the name "Beyond Twenty-Five". After working with Eastern Ontario Outaouais Regional Council's Visioning and Transformation team, a grant application was submitted and approved. In the approval letter EOORC stated: "The Vision and Transformation Leadership Team was impressed with the desire of St Paul's to think beyond the preservation of the building to seek ways that it can better serve the community."

Beyond Twenty-Five has engaged Toronto United Church Council (TUCC) to assist with the Feasibility study related to use of church buildings and leverage the great skills available within the wider church. Our goal for our beautiful, historic multi-purpose building is that it continues to serve the known and emerging vital needs of our community as both a Spiritual and Community Hub for creativity, discovery and growth.

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## Our Dream

As a congregation our dream for 2029 and beyond is to be a strong, vibrant, welcoming and affirming congregation offering spiritual enrichment, fellowship, outreach, and channels for social action for people of all ages.

St Paul's has experienced 10 years of Vision and Transformation but our journey is not over. With a renewed faith and a creative, open-minded approach, and with God's guidance, our congregation will continue to grow into its mission.

## THE LIVING SPIRITUALITY STORY

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### In our Spiritual Hub for Creativity, Discovery, and Growth

As a postscript to the description of our journey of vision and transformation, let it not be thought that life at St. Paul's has been all meetings and deliberations, important as they are. We are indeed a spiritual hub, filled with joy, purpose and fellowship and we are carrying on with creativity in expressing God's love, discovery of new insights, and growth - not in numbers perhaps but in wisdom.

During COVID times, St Paul's continues to demonstrate that it is indeed a spiritual hub for spirituality, creativity, and growth. Our congregation adapted well to the challenges of COVID by continuing worship through Zoom and YouTube formats. This was made possible by a strong volunteer A/V presence and the purchase of necessary equipment and providing access to print copies. This is indicative of the determination of our community to continue our Faith Journey.

This is our living spirituality story and reflects our efforts to grow spiritually both now and over the past many years and our hope and determination to continue this journey.

### Growth and Discovery

- St Paul's is a traditional community of faith that is open to exploration of faith and engagement in a multi-cultural, diverse, post-Christian society. Christian education has been undertaken with leadership from lay people and from ministry personnel and we have evolved to appreciate and explore different ways of growing spiritually. Over the years, St Paul's has engaged in exploration of faith through studies of the Bible and theologians, as well as such diverse activities as drumming, labyrinth meditation, Healing Pathway, and anointing.
- Our children have enjoyed Sunday School lessons from Seasons of the Spirit and the Go Project curriculum. As well, during Covid, a weekly note is sent to each family with a lesson attached. Messy Church is also continuing during Covid.
- Our worship services are part of our discovery and growth with themes both traditional and issue-related, such as Black History, Affirming, Indigenous Rights, and more. Teams and individuals take responsibility for worship leadership - which happens in many churches, but possibly not as often as with us - for the last three years it has been seven services a year, suggesting commitment and skills in the congregation.
- We have grown in our awareness of some of the injustices of society, have participated in steps toward Indigenous reconciliation and have chosen to become an Affirming congregation.

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## Creativity

Music is a particularly important creative element of our lives at St. Paul's, uplifting spirits, strengthening bonds, and attracting people to worship with us and/or to participate in our musical events:

- Music enriches our worship services with a variety of musical genres and occasional contributions from invited musical guests. The Junior and Adult Choirs sing every Sunday.
- Our Director of Music plans the music in consultation with the minister and the Worship and Arts team to ensure that all the music supports and complements the theme of the service. Hymns are from both the older Voices United and from More Voices and the congregation is taught the new hymns to ensure their comfort with the new tunes.
- Not only do the Junior Choir youngsters learn about choral technique but they are exposed to lyrics which are inspiring and positive...and fun. Several times a year they have outings along with their parents to reward them for their good work and to build camaraderie.
- Every Christmas the choir has participated with the Anglican choir in their service of Nine Lessons and Carols and every spring St. Paul's choir invites the Anglican choir and musical friends from the Community to share in performing a concert at St. Paul's. Our most recent concert, Handel's Messiah, had a choir of 75, full orchestra and soloists and raised \$6,500 for St. Paul's. More importantly, it was a joyful, sacred rendition of the birth, death, and resurrection of Jesus which we were able to share with the community.
- In recent years we have also had the pleasure of performing two biblical musicals based on Old Testament stories. With sets, costumes, lighting, singing, dancing, and humour we have had fun and inspiration from these endeavours. Again, they have attracted an audience to St. Paul's to hear these bible stories. Those who participated in the productions had an opportunity, which they might not otherwise have had, to meet and interact with fellow members of the congregation. We hope to do another Bible-musical after the pandemic.
- St. Paul's Handbell Choir is comprised mainly of Seniors, most of whom are not St. Paul's members. They play in St. Paul's and other churches a few times a year as well as in long term care facilities and retirement homes. Every two years they perform a concert here. St. Paul's owns the handbells and supports the outreach of the Handbell Choir.
- Our love of music is evident at our congregational suppers too, where we have individual performances and a great sing alongs.

## Keeping our Spiritual Hub Rolling

The life of St. Paul's is enhanced by special fellowship activities and caring practices. These include:

- Remembering folks at the senior homes with visits, cards, and phone calls.
- Fellowship Coffee gathering after church every Sunday, organized by the Congregational Life Team. Every team takes turns hosting, providing a lovely opportunity to connect with each other.
- Dinners, potlucks and celebrating special occasions.
- A prayer shawl ministry- Our knitters give hand-knitted baby blankets at times of baptism, and comforting shawls at times of illness or grief.

## Perth, ON

- A highly successful Mystery Friends program partnering approximately 30 children with 30 adults every year.
- Messy Church has been flourishing and attracts young families for fun and worship. They manage to carry on via Zoom.
- Creation of an endearing video featuring St. Paul's children for part of Camping Sunday Service on YouTube. Thanks to the Children & Youth team with help from the Communications & Technology.
- A vibrant Mom to Mom Sale – began as a fund raiser but now is also seen as outreach.
- Healing Pathway - A new-to-us ministry was just beginning at St. Paul's before Covid -19. Healing Pathway allows people to discover a different way to experience God's love. It enables them to develop the gifts and skills of healing within the Christian tradition and fosters the development of healing ministries in congregations and other communities.
- An active adult group which, over the years, has actively supported numerous outreach and fundraising activities. Perhaps the most significant was the hosting of community dinners. Over a seven-year period from 2010 to 2016 the group and members of the congregation provided over 6700 community dinners. When we became unable to continue, we were able to give \$1000 to The Table Community Food Centre which carries on with community dinners. While capacity for these large projects has decreased, the group is still enthusiastic and active in support of the work of St Paul's and community outreach.
- St. Paul's UCW, an active driving force in the church since the 1960's. Presently, however, due to an aging demographic, UCW membership is down, a problem shared with many churches. Although they are still very willing, their accomplishments will undoubtedly be decreasing. Meetings once a month in their Units, for worship and discussion, and several times a year en masse, keep them connected and uplifted. And undeterred by the pandemic, they now continue to gather via Zoom! Until Covid, The UCW catered lunches, dinners, had bake sales, rummage sales and Yuletide Fairs, made Christmas puddings and chicken potpies. Working together strengthened their friendships as well as enabling them to monetarily support St. Paul's, Mission and Service, Camp Lau-Ren, Food Banks, Church Library etc. As important as the sharing of their monetary gifts is, no less important is the sharing of time, the caring, nurturing and support of each other. Priceless.
- A Communications and Technology team which amazes us every week with new and better ways of sharing our worship services on YouTube and Zoom -including for example their assistance to the C&Y team, parents, and children to produce an endearing video featuring St. Paul's children.
- Church members who selflessly and quietly go about the many tasks that do keep us rolling - from collection of church stats, to tending our beautiful flower beds, and more.

St. Paul's, rising to challenges, and hopeful for a future in which we can continue to serve.

We are blessed!

Perth, ON

## POSITION DESCRIPTION: MINISTER OF ST. PAUL'S UNITED CHURCH

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This Position Description provides guidance on what we are looking for in terms of:

- General responsibilities and time allocation.
- Qualities including Experience; and
- Terms and conditions of employment.

### General Responsibilities and Time Allocation

#### **Worship Leadership (14 hours/week, 35% of time)**

We desire worship services which engage the congregation in a thought-provoking, reflective and learning experience, highlighted by sermons which confirm God's word and love, which provide messages to guide everyday life, and which speak to our different ages, cultures and experiences. Messages with a progressive theology, good use of humour and use of examples from personal experience are desirable. We appreciate services which weave together the day's spiritual theme through music, prayer, and message and strike a good balance between traditional practice and new ways of worship. We are comforted by prayers which address the concerns of the congregation and provide assurance of Christ's presence.

We are open to a variety of worship styles and formats. Advance preparation and explanation of new ways of doing things are appreciated to help people feel comfortable when trying new worship practices. We would like our minister to help us identify ways to provide worship opportunities for those people who cannot attend Sunday worship or whose worship needs would be better satisfied in a different way.

Responsibilities - Worship:

- a) Lead Sunday worship services.
- b) Prepare the children's message or arrange for a lay person to do so.
- c) Work collaboratively with the Worship and Arts Team and the Director of Music to plan worship by providing the worship themes to guide the integration between liturgy, preaching and music and, where appropriate, include the involvement of lay people, youth, guest speakers and varied music.
- d) Assist the congregation in exploring alternate ways of worship.
- e) Conduct weddings and funerals, baptisms and the sacrament of communion.

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**Pastoral Care Ministry (8 hours/week, 20% of time)**

Providing pastoral care support for our seniors is an important part of St. Paul's ministry that will continue into the future. Pastoral care support is also needed by people of all ages who experience stresses due to life changes and crises.

Pastoral Care encompasses visits and support in times of stress. We would like our minister to be welcoming to all and to be comfortable when meeting with people wherever they are. They need to be a good listener, have a kind, warm, friendly, humble, and empathetic manner, and be approachable.

Responsibilities - Pastoral Care:

- a) Work collaboratively to provide leadership and support to the Congregational Life Team, Care and Share and Pastoral Care Team.
- b) Contribute to the pastoral care of the seniors in the congregation with visits at the church, in homes, hospitals, seniors' residences and nursing homes as well as by phone.
- c) Provide continuous ministerial pastoral care support in emergency and critical care cases and make referrals to other resources as needed.
- d) Provide home communions.
- e) Provide pastoral care and support to individuals of all ages, couples and families.
- f) Prepare and lead services in area retirement homes as necessary and in collaboration with Perth Ministerial.

**Christian Development (8 hours/week, 20% of time)**

The congregation benefits from opportunities to participate in groups that gather to study scripture and recent books, matters of faith and spirituality, and current issues. Engagement of our children, youth and young adults is important to us.

Responsibilities - Christian Development:

- a) Lead and/or support adult faith study groups.
- b) Support lay leaders working with children, families, youth and young adults.
- c) Support initiatives involving children, families, youth and young adults.
- d) Support other new ministry initiatives as they arise.

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**Ministerial Support for the Congregation (6 hours/week, 15% of time)**

Ongoing support for the congregation includes responding to phone calls and emails, conversations with congregants and attending meetings of the Council,

Responsibilities – Ministerial Support:

- a) Collaborate with the Church Administrator regarding day-to-day operations and review the minister's schedule and time commitments as appropriate.
- b) Nurture, support and strengthen lay leadership in the congregation.
- c) Serve as Ex Officio non-voting member of the Worship and Arts Team, Council, and Executive of Council, and other St. Paul's teams and committees as needed and as time permits.
- d) Provide support for the outcomes of the Beyond Twenty-Five committee as they emerge.

**Outreach (2 hours/week, 5% of time)**

- a) Support St. Paul's' vision of an inclusive, welcoming community.
- b) Help members of the congregation to put their faith into action by providing a dynamic example, by inspiring the congregation to reach out into the world.
- c) Provide suggestions and support for outreach opportunities for children, youth and young adults.
- d) Encourage local, national and global outreach by supporting the work of the Mission and Outreach team.

**Wider Church and Ecumenical Involvement (1 hours/week, 2.5% of time)**

- a) Maintain relationships with other local denominations through the Perth Ministerial Group.
- b) participate in Regional Council (EOORC).

**Professional Development (1 hour/week, 2.5% of time) (In addition to the annual Study Leave of three weeks)**

- a) We encourage staff to develop their skills and knowledge and participate in learning activities and professional development opportunities.

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## Qualities and Experience

### Qualities

- a) Is a strong and engaging speaker whose sermons are motivating, thought provoking and relevant to contemporary issues, guiding us to discover and re-discover God in our lives.
- b) Applies a keen, innovative approach to strengthen community outreach.
- c) Can work collaboratively, cooperatively, and respectfully with other church staff members, teams and groups including local communities of faith to embrace and strengthen our spirituality. Has skills in the areas of consensus building and conflict management.
- d) Is open and comfortable with our affirming policy and mission statement.
- e) Recognizes the sustainability challenges facing Communities of Faith and realistically and creatively promotes and plans for the future.
- f) Exercises strong oral and written communication skills and can relate comfortably with people of all ages and diverse backgrounds.
- g) Practices strong time management and leadership skills and is comfortable with using current technology in communication and worship services.
- h) Contributes to the pastoral care of the congregation, demonstrating good listening skills, empathy, humour, and compassion.
- i) Amenable to working and becoming a part of a small-town community.

### Experience

- a) Ministry experience in at least one congregation, preferably with a minimum of 5 years of relevant experience.
- b) Experience in providing meaningful preaching and worship experiences.
- c) Experience in providing pastoral care to people of all age groups and ethnic and social backgrounds.
- d) Experience working successfully within a team is an asset.

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## Terms and Conditions of Employment

Please refer to the St. Paul's profile on Church Hub for the Terms and Conditions.