

St. Paul's Summer Page

St. Paul's United Church 11526 76 Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta T6G 0K7
780.436.1555 stpaulsunited@telus.net

June 2013 - August 2013

a spiritual home to go out from

Rev. Dr. Catherine MacLean

Senior Minister

This week I read Dan Brown's new book. *Inferno* is a race through art, literature, history and science. Like his other novels, it is a page-turner. Pick it up and you will not sleep till you're through. He writes from the passion he has for *The Divine Comedy*. Guess what is next on my reading list ...

Dante's fourteenth-century poem gave our world vivid images of divine wrath, punishment and misery. What kind of summer reading will it make? The grim 14,000-line pilgrimage through *The Divine Comedy* will be good for me. Why? Because it's there, of course. And because I want to tackle a heritage of mythology in order to confront it.

You know that I don't believe in this mythology, this medieval poetic vision of punishment. But despair, entitlement, abandonment and fear are all too real. I believe the world needs the loving, trustworthy, hopeful, celebrative, thoughtful and hard-working faith we live. Each of us needs it. Our neighbours, in church and outside church, need it. Our city needs it.

The City of God is a metaphor for God's intention for us to live in relationship. The Holy City is a biblical image of people, animals, beauty, feasts ... and peace. We've gone deep into these biblical messages this year. Together since September we have thought about Paradise, from the Garden of Eden to Babel when the common understandings of the city burst into many indecipherable languages. We built a temple in worship and remembered Solomon who built the grand Temple in the city of Jerusalem, and then the military forces that destroyed it. Then came Restoration - but things are never the same and when they rebuilt the city and the Temple, *the people could not distinguish the sound of the joyful shout from the sound of the regretful weeping*: we learned that things are rarely simple. We read parables of and about Jesus, stories of Jesus going to the city and accounts of his death and resurrection.

Now in these spring Sundays we return to Paradise: on May 26 our choir led our communal life in song, and through June we return to joyful scriptures celebrating God's good intentions for us.

Indeed, this is no *Inferno*!

Yet we look the burning issues of our lives straight in the face here at St Paul's. We have been gathering to consider pipelines, we keep on talking about Alzheimer's, we continue to challenge the false myth of redemptive violence, we show up when friends are sick, we send blessings of joy on life-transforming occasions, we accompany our dying with love.

St. Paul's is more than a place ... it is relationship; it is learning, joy, comfort ... It is a *spiritual home to go out from, more than just wood and stone*. As we draw a *breath in the city*, we keep on answering the question: *Who is my neighbour?*

St. Paul's is a community where we integrate our heritage and discoveries, our individual lives and our common life, our thinking and our living. Beginning in September, we will reflect on our *soul grounding* in the love of God – and neighbour – and this earth, this Paradise.

Now I will read poetry, old translated, gorgeous, scary thick poetry. Wish me luck.

As for you, enjoy the summer weeks. May the books you choose, the roads you follow, the friends you greet, the fresh foods you prepare, the games you play, the worship you share, and the quiet you seek bless you with God's loving presence.

Peace,
Catherine

Denise Davis Taylor, Diaconal Minister

Minister of Faith Formation

One year ago I was on a silent retreat that began my sabbatical and set the tone for this year of ministry with you in St Paul's community of faith. What a rich year it has been. We have been deepening relationships and strengthening our community. Each week one of the youngest members of St Paul's runs to greet her "best friend" at the sound booth. Belonging to a community is no longer a given in people's lives. Communities of multiple generations that focus on the wellbeing of its members and enables them to care for all people and creation near and far is one of the greatest gifts churches have to offer today. At St Paul's creating community among families with children and youth has been a major focus this year. Parents are grateful that their children are forming friendships across generations and look forward to going to church events. The monthly family dinners have included church grandmas and grandpas who enjoy the energy of our children. Nursery families gather to share their common joys and challenges of being parents. Youth have begun to weave friendships with children at several Friday evening playtimes.

One evening the youth group baked cookies. At the end of the evening we wondered what to do with all of the goodies. It just so happened that one of the elders in the congregation was having her birthday the next day. (They knew her from family dinners.) At 9.30 pm we knocked on her door and sang her happy birthday. She was surprised and touched by their gift. In youth group we all are learning how to live in loving community while we skate, snowshoe play improvisational games. Here we are learning to focus on building up one another in a world where we are always competing with others.

You may have noticed that people hang around after church doing all manner of things. A very vibrant group "chews and digests" worship over coffee and about once a month young adults gather for lunch and conversation about where their lives and messages in worship intersect. This group is comprised of people finding their way back to church or checking it out for the first time. Lunch presentations after worship that have happened through the year bring people together to discuss and learn about issues that they care very deeply about. Holy manners helped us to listen deeply to one another even when we disagreed about general

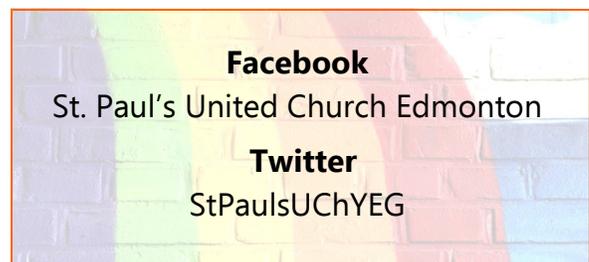
council and the proposed pipeline. These smaller groups together with the choir, quilters and others strengthen our larger community by forging meaningful relationships that support and challenge us to be the people we want to be.

St Paul's is a community that loves to learn. Sixteen people dove into Dominic Crossan's book *The Power of Parables; How Parables Jesus told became parables about Jesus*. This was no easy read and answered questions that many have been asking themselves for years and raised new ones too. Together we mined Crossan's wisdom and deepened our knowledge of the scriptures that are meant to guide our lives. A smaller group discovered how challenging and enlightening a small collection of stories can be as they discussed Mary Jo Leddy's *The Other Face of God*.

There are very few people who don't thrive better when they belong to a community that treasures them. As we learn to be community in family learning times, lunch'n learn, study and interest groups we are developing a valuable resource that we can share with the neighbourhood and the city where we live. Remember last fall when we explored the theme of paradise in the city in worship? Imagine us creating that reality? What would it look like? In the meantime this fall we will continue to develop ways of deepening relationships with one another and our world even as we begin to look at how we can share our resources and who we are outside our doors of St Paul's.

Have an enlivening summer, read good books, and savour your relationships as the gifts they are in your life.

With love and gratitude for the pleasure of being with you in faith
Denise



Rondy Kyle

Children's Programs Co-ordinator

It's almost summer, and with that, we switch from our regular church school to our summer activities.

We'll celebrate the end of the year on June 16th with our family BBQ.

As we have for the past few summers, we will be at St. Paul's through July, with church school each morning, and the service led by folks from Knox Metropolitan United. In August, we will meet at Knox Met, at 10:30 am where there will be programming for children provided by people from Knox Met.

We have our nursery each week, and this will continue through the summer. We are still looking for volunteers for most Sunday's through June and July. If you are able to help in anyway, the sign up sheet is in the nursery or you can email Rondy at rondykyle@gmail.com. It makes a big difference to the families that use the nursery each week.

In July, we are having a week of Parables and Play. This is a summer camp, running mornings 9am-12pm from July 22-26, for children aged 3-12. Children will learn and explore 5 stories (parables) that Jesus told. They will experience individual free play through arts-oriented centers of paint, crayons, clay, books and figures (Godly Play). The morning will include a snack and playtime (outdoors weather permitting). This will be led and coordinated by Rondy Kyle and Denise Davis Taylor.

The cost is \$25 per child, and registration forms are available from the office. We hope to see children from our own congregation and also friends, grandchildren, and neighbours are warmly welcomed.

Have a blessed summer.
Rondy



Worship Committee

This summer we once again look forward to sharing worship services with Knox-Metropolitan United Church. July worship services will be at St. Paul's led by Knox-Met, and August services will be held at Knox-Met and led by St. Paul's. We are thankful to those who have stepped forward to assist in leading these services. We are still looking for people who would like to contribute to these services perhaps doing a reading, a prayer or other supportive duties. If you are interested, please speak to Catherine or myself and we will help you connect with the worship leader for the particular Sunday.

We are currently exploring how social media can help us send the message that St. Paul's is a vibrant community with much to offer. How can social media and technology assist us to maintain connection with those for whom getting to church is not always possible (perhaps pod casting our worship services)? How can media help us connect with those searching for a faith community? How can we use media to engage in relevant and meaningful spirit filled conversation? Within the worship service, how can we use technology to enhance and engage? We also are looking to have added to our website, videos of some of our members sharing thoughts and experiences.

As we continue to work with other teams, we recognize the important role that worship plays in sharing messages of faith, stewardship, youth and children's ministry, music and social action. To this end we are looking how we can integrate the Affirm Statement in worship and also have tangible symbols of our congregation as an Affirming church present in our worship space. A future service will share insights into the Godly Play that our children experience each week. We are also working on integrating new meaningful ways of involving youth and children regularly into worship. We continue to integrate into worship, issues of current interest or concern and explore ways in which our faith community can engage in respectful dialogue. In the future we will engage the congregation in questions about Baptism, one of two sacraments in the United Church. We continue to look at how the worship space is respectful of all and therefore will be looking at creating other accessible spaces in the sanctuary by removing partial pews for easy access.

We are thankful for the musical contributions of the choir and musical leadership of Susan and Tyson as well as the recent gifts of the Joyspring choir, Colin Ryan, Aleah Wielanga and Mxolisi Magagula, Christine Hanson and Keri Lynn Zwicker.

As always, we look to the congregation for input into the worship service and appreciate and encourage your questions, concerns, ideas and feedback

Respectfully on behalf of the Worship Committee
Janet Fast, Chair

St. Paul's Foundation

What a year it has been for the St. Paul's Foundation! The organization, founded when members of the congregation purchased, maintained, and eventually sold the three University Place apartment buildings that were located directly east of St. Paul's Church, announced at the June 2012 AGM that over \$1 000 000 in grants have been given to worthy organizations who provide housing for those in need. Wow! The initial investment of \$1 940 320 with the Edmonton Community Foundation is still intact (and in fact has grown to just over \$2 000 000) while a portion of interest is given out twice yearly to community organizations. This past year, the Foundation supported Habitat for Humanity, YMCA, Wings of Providence Society, St. Paul's Ministers' Benevolent Fund, Edmonton Do-Likewise Society, Seniors Association of Greater Edmonton (SAGE), Excel Society, and L'Arche.

On January 20, 2013, the Foundation hosted a luncheon to honour those involved with the Foundation from its inception and hear their stories about managing the apartment buildings. We were entertained with accounts of plumbing challenges, touched by testimonials of the community formed between tenants and owners, and awed by tales of the work that congregation members undertook to keep the apartments running smoothly. It was a truly delightful event that evoked laughter, awe, and a deeper sense of the faith of those who responded to the call for this social action. A special thank you to Coleen Falk for organizing the luncheon and to Susan Beach who moderated the panel discussions and captured the stories recounted that afternoon.

Looking ahead, the Board of St. Paul's Foundation is committed to ensuring that the presence of the Foundation is known to community groups eligible to apply for grants. As each member of St. Paul's United Church is also a member of the Foundation, we encourage all congregants to spread the good news that the Foundation exists and encourage potential applicants to access information about the Foundation through the St. Paul's website.

For the gift from the Founders, the dedication of Board members, and the opportunity to demonstrate tangibly our commitment to supporting housing in the city, we give thanks to God.

Respectfully Submitted,
Jennifer McKercher Rott, Chair

Notes from the Quilters

For the summer the Quilters have put their needles away and their sewing machines are in their cases, but come September, things will be humming again.

We've had another productive year with 7 – 9 Quilters busily assembling and putting the finishing touches on 4 - 6 quilts every Wednesday morning. The majority of the 122 quilts (yes, 122!) we have made this year were donated to Hope Mission and Bissell with the most (85) given to Bissell for their H2H program (Homeless to Homes). When setting up homeless people in an apartment Bissell provides them with our quilts which we're told warms their hearts as well as their bodies. We feel that this is an appropriate and important outreach project. In addition we donated two "special" quilts to Bissell's and the Racecourse School's fund raising silent auctions.

Once again we wish to thank all those kind women who have so graciously sewn quilt tops for us using the packages of precut squares that we provide. Our supply of sewn tops is at an all time low! We realize summer is not an ideal time to ask for more help but perhaps some of you would consider sewing a top or two for us on a rainy day when gardening or golfing is not a viable option. Packages are available from any one of the Quilters! We will be most grateful.

Betty Mullen
on behalf of the Quilters

Flower Committee

Working quietly behind the scenes the 21 members of the Flower Committee make sure there are flowers each Sunday to enhance the sanctuary and to add to the worshipful atmosphere of the service. Occasionally arrangements are left after a memorial service. These are gratefully acknowledged by letter to the bereaved family.

For the first time hydrangeas as well as lilies were offered to members of the congregation to place on Easter Sunday in remembrance of a loved one or to honour a special person. This choice was well accepted with twelve of each being ordered. Many commented that the church looked lovely with the added colour provided by the hydrangeas.

Now that the warm weather is here (almost) our thoughts turn to the Memorial Garden. The pots are planted and soon will be overflowing with an abundance of attractive flowers. Each week one member of our committee will see that the pots are kept watered and looking attractive. We hope that many of you will find an opportunity to visit the Memorial Garden and perhaps sit awhile to enjoy a quiet reflection or prayer.

Betty Mullen
on behalf of the Flower Group

“An Exercise in Reflection” by a participant in the *Faith Lift* Revisioning sessions January—March 2013

This past winter I was involved with the re-visioning for Faith Lift which was initiated by Chaplain Denise Davis-Taylor and the Advisory Team. For me the re-visioning wasn't about changing Faith Lift, rather it was an exercise in reflection and being open to changing it if that was required.

Those who participated were from the United Church community in Edmonton and surrounding area. All in attendance had various levels of experience with Faith Lift; some even admitted that they didn't know what it was, but they had come out to learn more. We all shared the common understanding that Faith Lift is important to the wider United Church community, and our exercise in reflection helped put that importance in perspective.

We started by reflecting on the past. Not necessarily Faith Lift's past, but our own. We shared personal reflections of an experience when youth or young adult ministry had a significant impact on our lives. While we listened to each other share, we were asked to write down the values that we felt were expressed in each other's reflection. Once that was complete, we assembled all of our sticky notes and place them on a wall. Without talking, we organised all of these sticky note values into six groups. From these six groups came the core values of Faith Lift. 1. Open and Inclusive Community 2. Personal and Spiritual Growth 3. Serving Others 4. Leading and Mentoring 5. Life Long Relationships 6. Fun and Fellowship

Keeping the core values of Faith Lift in mind, we imagined ourselves in the future reflecting on past experiences of Faith Lift. This part of the re-visioning really pushed me out of my comfort zone; but in some respects it was the most fun, because I got to use my imagination and make up stories. The neat thing about these *made up* stories is that these stories could become reality because we were doing this re-visioning. It gave me great hope for the future of Faith Lift.

In small groups we composed what we thought the vision and mission statements should be for Faith Lift. Considerable refining and discussion about what words meant led to these statements:

Vision: A spiritually inspired and creatively engaged world.

Mission: To provide open, inclusive opportunities and support for Young Adults to explore community connections, spirituality and personal wellbeing.

The re-visioning was a really important task for the Edmonton and area United Church community to take part in because it demonstrated that they value young adult ministry. I told the Thursday Night dinner group that it was heartening to see these people branch out from their home churches to come together and do personal reflection in order to re-vision Faith Lift. They came out for us and to ensure that Faith Lift will continue to be a positive force in young adult ministry.

Now that Faith Lift has a vision and a mission our next step will be to for us to put them into practice and as the re-visioning showed, we will not walk alone.

Summer Calendar

June

- 2 **10 am Worship with communion**
 8:45 am Social Justice Team meets in the Nursery - all are welcome!
 11:30 Chew and Digest with the Spiritual Nurture committee
 11:30 Nursery family potluck BBQ at Belgravia Park
- 4 7 pm Board Executive Meeting
- 6 2 pm South Terrace Worship Service
 6:30 pm Worship Committee Meeting
 7 pm Creative Spiritual Self Expression
- 8 **10 am Worship with Catherine MacLean**
 11:30 Gilchrist Tea
- 10 1:30 pm Memorial Service for Norma Edgar
- 13 7 pm Creative Spiritual Self Expression
- 16 **10 am Worship with Godly Play**
 11:15 St. Paul's Family BBQ
- 20 2 pm South Terrace Worship Service
 7 pm Creative Spiritual Self Expression
- 22 **10 am Worship with Catherine MacLean**
 11:130 St. Paul's Foundation Annual Meeting
- 30 **10 am Worship with Catherine MacLean**

Please note the locations and times for worship in July and August when we worship with the Knox Metropolitan congregation.

July

- 7 **10 am Worship at St. Paul's** with Knox-Metropolitan led by Carol Loewen
- 14 **10 am Worship at St. Paul's** with Knox-Metropolitan led by Gerda, Ken and Kristy Miller
- 21 **10 am Worship at St. Paul's** with Knox-Metropolitan led by Rev. Steven Johann
- 22 - 26 Parables and Play at St. Paul's
- 28 **10 am Worship at St. Paul's** with Knox-Metropolitan led by Rev. Steven Johann

August

- 4 **10:30 am Worship at Knox-Metropolitan** with St. Paul's led by Lee Foote
- 11 **10:30 am Worship at Knox-Metropolitan** with St. Paul's led by Jun Trinidad
- 18 **10:30 am Worship at Knox-Metropolitan** with St. Paul's led by Rev. Dr. Catherine MacLean
- 25 **10:30 am Worship at Knox-Metropolitan** with St. Paul's led by Sheila Brown



Summer blessings from the staff at St. Paul's

Catherine MacLean, Denise Davis Taylor, Rony Kyle
 Susan Farrell, Tyson Kerr, Joan Townend and Diya Gervalla