

# ST. PAUL'S ANGLICAN CHURCH

## LENT – EASTER NEWSLETTER, 2024

### ANNUAL VESTRY MEETING – FEB. 25

It is time to gather once again to explore who we are, what we have done, and what we hope to do, together.

This year's annual vestry meeting will follow 9:30am worship on Feb. 25<sup>th</sup>. This will enable us to enjoy breakfast together as we discuss the work of our church family.

Vestry reports will be available beginning Feb. 17<sup>th</sup>. Please contact the office if you would like a copy.



### WELCOME TO LENT

During this church season, we are challenged to be intentional in the ways we embody our faith. This time is an invitation to choose actions that help to nurture our awareness of God's work in the world and in our lives. This time is an opportunity to focus on our relationship with God and the implications this has for what we do each day.

What this looks like for each of us may be different. Some may use this opportunity to fast from something – intentionally choosing not to partake of a particular type of food, social media, television, or something else. The choice of that from which to fast is meant to challenge us to be aware of what we consume and how this can be a distraction. Fasting can create spaces where our desire for that item can become an opportunity for prayer, for gratitude that we have such things in our lives, and for awareness of those who go without.

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Some may use this time to do something that is new or different from their regular routine. This could be an intentional prayer time, a pause throughout the day to talk with God about concerns, thank God for blessings, and ask God for help. It could be a commitment to read, a portion of the Bible, or a book that is designed to inspire and invite reflection. The choice of reading should help focus our conversations with God. It could be an activity, a daily prayer walk, volunteering, or making phone calls to friends and family you haven't talked to in a while. Whatever the activity may be, it should be something that helps us recognise God working in us and in the world.

Some may use this time to engage creatively. Through art, journaling, music, and more, our gifts can create spaces for us to talk to God in prayerful ways. Imagine taking time each day to reflect artistically on where we saw God at work. How might that focus on where God is at work inspire participation in those everyday

miracles? How might the creativity of art enable us to talk to God in an alternative way?

The season of Lent challenges us to be intentional in the ways we live our faith. To help us focus this journey, we will have a sermon series that explores the petitions of our Baptismal Covenant. These promises we made at Baptism and continue to reiterate throughout our faith journeys are commitments to perpetually live our faith in all aspects of what we do, with God's help.

May we all observe a holy Lent, one which will help to strengthen our relationships with God, God's Creation, and each other.

## 2024 a Year of Invitation

St. Paul's is special. It is a place in which we seek to be affirming and inclusive, honouring the value and gifts of God's Beloved Children.

We offer diverse worship opportunities as meaningful ways to connect with participants. These are designed to create spaces for prayer, reflection, and conversation. Through worship we learn, we grow, we support one another, and we show our love for each other.

Holy Week offers particularly creative ways to engage the journey from the triumphal entry celebrated on Palm Sunday to the wonder of Easter morning. To honour this journey, this year we will have:

- **a dramatic reading of the passion story on Palm Sunday (Mar. 24, 11am),**
- **Taizé-style worship on Wednesday (Mar. 27, 7pm),**
- **a journey through the Last Supper on Maundy Thursday (Mar. 28, 7pm),**
- **a wonky worship style Good Friday Family service (Mar. 29, 11am),**
- **a traditional Good Friday service (Mar. 29, 3pm),**
- **and our joyful celebration of Easter with an Easter egg hunt (Mar. 31, 11am).**



This worship is intentionally diverse, creating unique opportunities to explore this powerful journey. It also provides important chances to invite people who may be

curious about who we are, or the journey itself. All are encouraged to pray, reflecting on who you know and how they might benefit from these worship opportunities. Who can you invite to participate in this journey? Cards will be available to help support invitations.

Know that the number one reason people check out church, is because they have been invited by someone they know. We are all called to be that someone this year. Who knows when someone will say 'yes' and find a home with us?

## World Down Syndrome Day – March 21<sup>st</sup>



John Rossiter was a cherished member of our congregation. By his gentle presence and beautiful smile, he taught us that God's gifts work in and through all God's Beloved Children. His presence changed this congregation, helping to

create the inclusive and affirming community we are today.

In memory of John, all are encouraged to celebrate World Down Syndrome Day. For the month of March, thank you bank contributions will go to Community Living as our thank you for their wonderful care of so many special people. It is a blessing to get to know at least some of these folks and their caregivers.

All are also challenged to mark the day as it is celebrated worldwide, with playful socks. Mismatched, colourful, and unique socks are encouraged to honour the unique, and wonderful individuals who have Down Syndrome. Send a photo of you wearing your playful socks to Rev. Chris via text, messenger, or email by Mar. 20<sup>th</sup> for a chance to win a Tim's gift card! These photos will be used for a social media post on Mar. 21<sup>st</sup> remembering John and celebrating World Down Syndrome Day.

## Pasta Dinners

**Mar. 1st & Apr. 5, 5-6:30pm**

**Good Food! Good Fellowship!**

**Thank you to all  
who volunteer and  
support these  
important  
fundraisers!**





### Plant Seeds, spread the word!

St. Paul's has a strong virtual presence through our website (<https://stpaulsessex.ca/>) and our Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/stpaulsessex>). Every view of our website or a social media post can be like a seed. It may start out small. The person who sees it the first time may not think much about it but the more seeds they encounter, the more curious they may become. Who knows at what point seeing our virtual presence might become inspiration for checking us out in person.

Trusting that God working in us can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine, all are encouraged to continually react, comment, and share social media posts to increase visibility. All are encouraged to email links to our website, to upcoming events, to sermons. All are challenged to keep spreading the word virtually and in person remembering that we are spreading seeds that God can nurture and grow.



There will be lots of opportunities to share during the season of Lent through Holy Week. Take advantage of these opportunities and show people you

love your love for St. Paul's and all that we do.

### A FATEful Gift

It was posted to social media before we knew it was happening. FATE, a local business had two generously donated gift cards that they were going to raffle off as a fundraiser to the St. Paul's clothing cupboard. We learned they have a connection, a family member who knows the story and values the work of the cupboard.

A little more than a week later, we met Krista Sweet, the owner of FATE, at the clothing cupboard. She handed over \$1120 and expressed gratitude for the generosity of her clients, the donor of the gift cards, and the work of the clothing cupboard. We are grateful for her initiative and the gift it is to us, enabling us to buy what is needed to fill in the gaps. Be sure to drop in to FATE to thank them for their generous support!



A graphic for an Easter Egg Hunt. It features a light blue background with several colorful Easter eggs (yellow, pink, blue, green) scattered around. The text reads: "Easter Egg Hunt! Following Easter worship Mar. 31st 11am. Come and find our Alleluia. celebrate that Christ is risen and then have fun searching for eggs with wonderful Easter treats."

### BUILDING COMMUNITY SPACES

Work continues to transform the choir loft into a community and gathering space. Thank you to the generous gifts of Andrew, who has been doing the heavy lifting, and Rheem who is doing the imagining. Stay tuned!



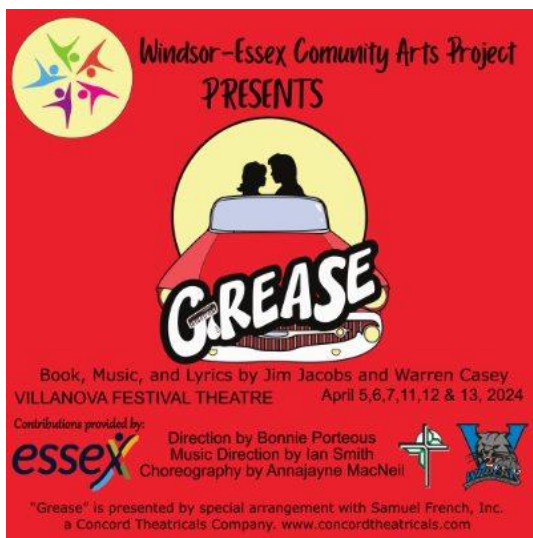
## SUPPORTING PRIDE

Last year, we offered support for a petition to install a Pride Crosswalk in Essex. This included two visits to Essex Council meetings. Unfortunately, the outcome was that no decorative crosswalks would be installed in the town. Wanting to ensure that those in the 2SLGBTQIA+ community feel welcome, the gateway signs are being updated to include the progress pride flag. Watch for these to be unveiled soon.

As well, an Essex Pride Murals Planning Committee has begun to meet thanks to St. Paul's to discuss all aspects of getting a Pride Mural in Essex. Fundraising has commenced with a pitch to 50 Queers & Allies. Planning is underway to bring the idea to the ACT (Art Community and Tourism) committee of Essex. And ideas around what a mural might contain are being explored. We continue to be active accomplices with the 2SLBTQIA+ community.

## Grant Funds

As a non-profit actively supporting the 2SLGBTQIA+ community, we were able to apply for a 'security grant' from the Ontario government at the end of 2023. We were awarded \$5000. These funds will be used to upgrade locks, and exterior lighting, and to add cameras.



## SELF CARE CORNER

Did you know? Trees emit chemicals that are good for calming the mind and body. The Japanese have a practice called "Forest Bathing", where time is spent among trees to support mental and physical health. Studies have shown that even staring out the window at a tree can have a benefit.



So, the next time you are feeling stressed, or struggling, consider spending time with trees. You don't have to be a tree hugger to benefit from this incredible gift of God's Creation.

## MARK YOUR CALENDARS

Feb. 14<sup>th</sup>, 7pm – Ash Wednesday worship. Come mark the beginning of Lent with ashes and Communion.

Feb. 25<sup>th</sup>, 9:30am Morning prayer worship followed by breakfast and Vestry

Mar. 1, 5-6:30pm Pasta Dinner

Mar. 24<sup>th</sup>, 11am Palm Sunday with dramatic reading of the Passion story

Mar. 27<sup>th</sup>, 7pm Taizé-style worship with simple music, scripture, reflection, quiet, candles, and prayer.

Mar. 28<sup>th</sup>, 7pm Maundy Thursday remembrance of the Last Supper

Mar. 29<sup>th</sup>, 11am Good Friday Family service – a wonky worship approach to the story.

Mar. 29<sup>th</sup>, 3pm Good Friday Traditional service with story, reflection, prayers, and a time to be present with the cross

Mar. 31<sup>st</sup>, 11am Easter morning celebration followed by an Easter egg hunt.

Apr. 5<sup>th</sup>, 5-6:30pm Pasta Dinner

Apr. 5, 6, 7, 11, 12, 13 WECAP performances of Grease at St. Thomas of Villanova Festival Theatre. For tickets go to: <https://www.wecommunityartspoject.com/events-and-shows>