

PRAIRIE SPIRIT UNITED CHURCH

PS NEWS • MARCH 2020



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PSUC responds to COVID-19

At the annual meeting held on Sunday, March 15, a decision was made to suspend worship services and all our mid-week groups/ meetings for 3 weeks.

The church office will be open twice a week from 9 am until 2 pm. The church office is presently open on Wednesdays and likely Thursdays, but there is a possibility that we may need to close depending on directions from government and the United Church of Canada. To contact the church office, email PrairieSpiritUC@shaw.ca or call 204-832-1000. To leave a voice message, please press 1.

The following steps have been taken to lower operating costs at Prairie Spirit:

- A fridge and freezer have been emptied and turned off (since they were older appliances, they were larger consumers of electricity).
- The temperature in the Sanctuary, Narthex, Sturgeon Room, and Rainbow Room has been reprogrammed.

Thank you to all the people who have dropped off or mailed in donations, increased their PAR givings, or became a new PAR donor.

- If you'd like to go on PAR, please contact the church office.
- You can also make a donation to Prairie Spirit online through CanadaHelps. <https://www.canadahelps.org/en/charities/prairie-spirit-united-church/>
- Or send an e-transfer to PrairieSpiritUC@shaw.ca. You will need to create a security question. In the message box, please indicate which fund(s) you'd like your contribution allocated to.

VISIT OUR NEW WEBSITE!
prairiespirituc.org

CONNECT WITH US ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Take a moment to connect with us on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter by searching "Prairie Spirit United Church" or "@PrairieSpiritUC"



WEEKLY UPDATE

Each week we send out an email to keep you informed on what's up at Prairie Spirit. This is one of our main ways of communicating with you.

Sign up at:

prairiespirituc.org



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Office Hours: Tuesday - Friday • 9 am - 2 pm

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We Are Community

Prairie Spirit United Church is an inclusive community of faith and as such offers care and support to each other and others in need. You are a valued person within our community. With the COVID-19 virus, all of us have a heightened awareness of the importance of the connections we have to family and friends as well as to various groups within the community in which we live. These connections are important to us as human beings; relationships form a part of who we are. The Oversight Council (formerly Leadership Team) is aware of this need to be in touch with others.

“People may forget what you said, but they will never forget how you made them feel.”
- Carl W. Buechner

While we know you are likely touching base with those closest to you via the phone, internet, or via social media, we plan to reach out to you as well.

In partnership with the ministers, we are in the process of developing a communication network within our community of faith. More information will be forthcoming on this very shortly since it is still in the developmental stages. As part of our faith community, we believe it is more necessary than ever before to contact others; asking how they are doing and if there is anything we can do to be of help in these challenging and extraordinary times.

We hope that you are checking out the weekly messages from our ministers and leaders within our congregation. They are there to provide hope and courage at this time of uncertainty.

As our New Creed states: “We are not alone, we live in God’s world”.

Take good care,

Joycelyn Fournier-Gawryluk,
Chairperson, Oversight Council

Help Next Door MB

This Manitoba Government initiative, powered by North Forge, is a platform built to empower local communities to come together and provide assistance to those in need during the COVID-19 crisis. If you are a volunteer ready to provide your support or someone who needs a helping hand through these difficult times, this platform can connect you. Visit www.helpnextdoormb.ca



Wellness Checks

During these challenging times, individuals and families may require additional support to help navigate this journey. Aulneau Renewal Centre is facilitating wellness checks to help address the anxiety people may have due to COVID-19. Via a phone call, a counsellor will be able to provide information on coping tools, strategies, and resources during this difficult time. This is not a counselling session, but a check-in that will be used as an opportunity to educate people about what they can do to help address the anxiety they are experiencing. Please note that this is a free service.

For a wellness check, call Aulneau Renewal Centre at 204-987-7090. Leave your name and phone number and that you would like a check-in. A counsellor will call you back. The reception line is being monitored regularly. You can also provide this information through an online form at <https://aulneau.com/wellness-check-covid-19/>

When We Can't Worship Together

Ezekiel 37:1-14, Psalm 130, John 11:1-45

We missed church last week. We will miss church this week, and probably a few more after that. Truth be told, we don't know when we will be able to gather for worship. Each of us misses something a little different. For some, the heart of worship is the scripture and reflecting on the word. For some, it is the music, the combination of melody and poetry. For some, it is the gathering of friends that lifts our spirits.

For today, I want to lift up the lections for March 29. The fifth Sunday of Lent. Take a moment to read these, if you have time. If you have access to online worship this Sunday, they may be the readings. They focus on death and destruction. In Isaiah's case globally, in John's case personally. In John's story, Jesus is in relative seclusion and safety, but he turns and heads back into danger, just like he does in all the Lenten Gospel lessons.

The readings suggest to me two big questions. You may have more.

1. Is there life in these situations where we find ourselves? And if so, where? What are the signs of that life?
2. What does it mean to walk in the "Light"?

It would be nice to talk about these questions, but for now let's see if asking them has the power to shift something in our community.

Lots of things are happening at Prairie Spirit despite our individual segregation. By Palm Sunday, April 5, we are hoping to have a form of online worship, watch for that. We will be working on ways to get information updates out to all our members. We don't have much experience with this new way of being church, but we are learning fast.

Peace be with you, and with all who you love!

Rev. Paul DuVal

Building Resiliency in Times of Uncertainty

We are living in a complex world with change all around us. Naturally, this can make you feel uncertain or fearful about the present and future. The good news is that resiliency – the ability to thrive in times of change and uncertainty – is learned, and you can start building your resilience today. Use the tips below to take on a more flexible, resilient mindset.

Accepting what's out of your control. Focusing on that which you have no control over will leave you feeling frustrated and exhausted. There are certain circumstances or decisions that are not in your power to control. Let go of them. Doing so will help you move on and focus your energy more positively. Remember: though you may not be able to change these realities, you can change how you respond to them.

Embrace change. There will always be change. Instead of concentrating on the disruptive aspects, take a flexible approach and accept that change is a fundamental part of life that can also bring opportunities and positive outcomes.

Staying focused on the big picture. It's easy to get so wrapped up in the details of an event that you blow it out of proportion. Avoid "catastrophizing" and focus in on the real (or most realistic) impact. Looking at it from a broader perspective can help you more accurately assess its significance.

Maintain a positive attitude. Resilience doesn't mean you have a positive feeling about every negative situation. It means that despite something going wrong, you believe you can and will do your best to deal with the situation and move forward.

Connecting with others. Having people around you with whom you can share feelings, discuss problems, and receive advice is an essential part of weathering life's storms. It's also important to reach out for help when you feel overwhelmed by a situation.

From *Tips for coping with COVID-19* - Morneau Shepell



**The smile on my face
doesn't mean my life is
perfect.**

**It means I appreciate
what I have and what I
have been blessed with.**

I choose to be happy

Worship Online

Moderator Richard Bott will be offering an online worship service each Sunday for the duration of the COVID-19 outbreak. This will be a video-recorded service you can join on the United Church of Canada website or Facebook page. The prayers, hymns, and reflections from the Moderator's online worship will also be available in audio and text form.

Numerous United Church communities of faith are live-streaming Sunday worship services during the COVID-19 pandemic. Here's an interactive worship map for links to some of them: <https://bit.ly/2UaDxUm>



Essential Needs in this time of COVID-19

The community ministries and Portage Avenue Food Bank (PAFB) have dramatically changed and so have their needs. The number of individuals needing assistance has not dropped and maybe will increase. The drop-ins have changed to primarily giving bagged lunches to their clients. PAFB is also serving their clients in pre-packaged hampers with minimal contact. However, the need for food has not changed. Prairie Spirit will place receptacles for the Emergency Food Cupboard at St. Matthews-Maryland Community Ministry and also for Portage Avenue Food Bank inside the south parking lot entrance.

Required items are as follows:

- Dry pasta
- Rice
- Pasta sauce
- Peanut Butter (500 g - 1 kg)
- Cans of soup (large & small)
- Cereal (350 - 450 g)
- Instant oatmeal packages
- Chef Boyardee (large & small)
- Sidekicks
- Cookies and snacks for kids
- Chili and beans in tomato sauce



Donations are most helpful for the community ministries and PAFB.

The following are ways to donate:

1JustCity - online: <https://www.canadahelps.org/en/charities/1justcity-inc/>

If you'd like your contribution to be directed to a specific program or one of the member charities such as Just a Warm Sleep, St. Matthews-Maryland Community Ministry, West Broadway Community Ministry, or Oak Table, please indicate this in the message field.

or by cheque to: 1JustCity 109 Pulford St. Winnipeg, MB R3L 1X8

Portage Avenue Food Bank - online: <https://www.canadahelps.org/en/charities/prairie-spirit-united-church/>
Please select "Food Bank" from the drop-down menu.

or by cheque to: Prairie Spirit United Church with attention for PAFB or Portage Avenue Food Bank.

Thank you in advance for your assistance at this difficult time.

Pilgrimage with Moderator Richard Bott

Moderator Richard Bott is taking an "internal pilgrimage" through 2020 and invites you to join him on the journey. Each day of the pilgrimage, the Moderator will use his Facebook page and Instagram to share reflections on the themes and daily scripture readings, along with photographs and other media to illuminate the way. You can join in and share what is happening for you through this pilgrimage experience using the hashtag **#ModeratorPilgrimage2020**. The full schedule of themes for April can be found on pages 5 and 6 of this newsletter.





Pilgrimage with the Moderator 2020

Exploring: With God
With Each Other
With Ourselves

April

We're taking a five part "internal" pilgrimage this year:

- Part One: Reading through the bible over the year;
- Part Two: Reflecting each day on a focus word;
- Part Three: Entering into intentional conversation with God (through prayer or meditation) about the reading and reflection;
- Part Four: Intentionally living into my discipleship, by daily actions that show love to God, to my neighbours (near and/or far);
- Part Five: Exploring my day through "Examen" questions

If, at any time, you would like to share what is happening on the pilgrimage, or you have questions, you can post a comment on the Moderator's social media, or use the hashtag **#ModeratorPilgrimage2020**. If you've got pictures, writing, or other creative things that the pilgrimage calls out of you that you'd like to share, please make sure you post them!

4/1	peace	Joshua 1-4; Psalm 143; Luke 14
4/2	forever	Joshua 5-8; Psalm 14; Luke 15
4/3	love	Joshua 9-13; Luke 16
4/4	lover	
4/5	broken	
4/6	focused	Joshua 14-17; Luke 17
4/7	hope	Joshua 18-21; Psalm 15; Luke 18
4/8	exhilarated	Joshua 22-24; Psalm 116; Luke 19
4/9	true	Judges 1-3; Psalm 16; Luke 20
4/10	child	Judges 4-6; Luke 21
4/11	humorous	
4/12	harmony	
4/13	caring	Judges 7-8; Luke 22
4/14	hope	Judges 9-11; Psalm 17; Luke 23
4/15	insightful	Judges 12-16; Psalm 146; Luke 24
4/16	acceptance	Judges 17-18; Psalm 21; Acts 1
4/17	belonging	Judges 19-21; Acts 2
4/18	calling	
4/19	lamenting	
4/20	searching	Ruth 1-2; Acts 3
4/21	wise	Ruth 3-4; Psalm 37; Acts 4

4/22	alive	1 Samuel 1-2; Psalm 120; Acts 5
4/23	questioner	1 Sam 3-5; Psalm 23; Acts 6
4/24	comforter	1 Sam 6-8; Acts 7
4/25	empowering	
4/26	tender	
4/27	social	1 Samuel 9-10; Acts 8
4/28	faithful	1 Sam 11-13; Psalm 38; Acts 9
4/29	calming	1 Sam 14; Psalm 124; Acts 10
4/30	reconciliation	1 Sam 15-16; 1 Chr 1; Ps 39; Acts 11

The words may or may not connect to the scriptures. They're just another way for one to reflect on God – Creator, Christ, and Holy Spirit – or on what it means to be a disciple of Jesus.

The questions I often find myself asking as I read scripture are:

- What surprises or shocks me as I read this?
- What do I agree with? What do I disagree with?
- How might earlier audiences have understood these words?
- What can I take into my day from what I've read?
- Is there some action I would like to take, out of what I have read?
- Is there something more that I'd like to learn from, or about, this text?
- What do I hear of, or about, God in this text?

**As you wander through your day,
keep your senses open for where you might be meeting God.**

Closer to the end of the day, I'd invite you to reflect on or pray the *examen* questions. Here are the words I tend to use – feel free to change them as you need to.

Thank you, God, for all that is in my life. I realize that everything – all that I am – is part of the gift that comes from you.

Take a moment to speak or write about the things from your day for which you are grateful.

God, open my heart, and all of my senses, so that I can be honest with myself and with you.

Take time to offer what it is that you need from this intentional moment with the divine.

Help me to understand what has been happening in me, through me, and around me, today.

Share with God the moments of joy and the moments of sorrow from your day.

I know that there are times that I stumble, but you lift me with your love, helping me to carry on and grow.

Share with God the choices you made today that you believe were inadequate responses to God's love and call.

God, help me be hopeful about the day to come.

How do you hope to meet God tomorrow?

Sleep well – and let's see where tomorrow takes us.

Annual Plant Sale

Prairie Spirit participates in an annual plant sale with Glenlea Greenhouses as a fundraising event. The Social Justice Team organizes and promotes the sale. This year, the profit will be directed to the development of a Prairie Garden on the north-west green space at the front of the church. We anticipate the development of this garden to occur over a few years. If you would like to participate in this event and would like a catalogue, please contact the church office at PrairieSpiritUC@shaw.ca or 204-832-1000. **The deadline for paper orders is April 5 and April 15 for online orders.**



KAIROS Blanket Exercise

Saturday, May 23 • 1 - 3 pm in the Rainbow Room

The Social Justice Team is organizing this education event as a step to reconciliation, one of our goals for 2019 - 2020. It is a unique way to learn about the shared history of the Indigenous people of Canada through participation. This education program was developed in collaboration with Indigenous Elders, knowledge keepers, and educators. An Indigenous Elder will be present for the exercise. Reading about it only goes so far in understanding this shared history. Participation aims to foster a greater understanding.



During the KAIROS Blanket Exercise, trained facilitators guide participants through the experience. Participants stand on blankets representing the land now known as Canada. The facilitators give cards to participants who assume the role of First Nations and Métis indicating their fate in situations of pre-contact, Treaty-making, colonization, and resistance. The facilitators assume the roles of European explorers and settlers. The exercise concludes with a "talking circle" to give participants an opportunity to share their experience, ask questions, and process their feelings to deepen their understanding.

Bannock and tea will be served following the exercise. Because of the nature of the experience, participants will be limited to 40. A fee of \$5 is required to reserve your spot and to help offset cost.

Questions can be directed to members of the Social Justice Team. If you have already experienced this exercise, we encourage you to share the value of this exercise with others from Prairie Spirit in the spirit of reconciliation.

Please note: This event is currently pending due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

St. Patrick's Day Bash

A huge thank you to the Congregational Life Team and all helpers for a wonderful St. Patrick's Day Bash on Saturday, March 7. The ambiance was lovely, the food was very tasty, and the conversations were stimulating! These social opportunities are an important part of the life of our community of faith!

More pictures can be found at [facebook.com/PrairieSpiritUC](https://www.facebook.com/PrairieSpiritUC).



*Fear not, for I am with you;
be not dismayed, for I am your God;
I will strengthen you, I will help you,
I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.
(Isaiah 41:10 ESV)*

*Do not be anxious about anything,
but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving
let your requests be made known to God.
And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding,
will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.
(Philippians 4:6-7 ESV)*

A Prayer During Times of COVID-19

*In this time of COVID-19, we pray:
When we aren't sure, God,
help us be calm;
when information comes
from all sides, correct and not,
help us to discern;
when fear makes it hard to breathe,
and anxiety seems to be the order of the day,
slow us down, God;
help us to reach out with our hearts,
when we can't touch with our hands;
help us to be socially connected,
when we have to be socially distant;
help us to love as perfectly as we can,
knowing that "perfect love casts out all fear."*

*For the doctors, we pray,
for the nurses, we pray,
for the technicians and the janitors and the
aides and the caregivers, we pray,
for the researchers and theorists,
the epidemiologists and investigators,
for those who are sick,
and those who are grieving, we pray,
for all who are affected,
all around the world...*

*we pray
for safety,
for health,
for wholeness.*

*May we feed the hungry,
give drink to the thirsty,
clothe the naked and house those without homes;
may we walk with those who feel they are alone,
and may we do all that we can to heal
the sick -
in spite of the epidemic,
in spite of the fear.*

*Help us, O God,
that we might help each other.*

*In the love of the Creator,
in the name of the Healer,
in the life of the Holy Spirit that is in all and with all,
we pray.*

May it be so.

*- by the Right Rev. Richard Bott,
originally posted on Facebook*

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