

PRAIRIE SPIRIT UNITED CHURCH

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Forest Bathing... Faith Building!

Over the past few weeks, we have witnessed leaves returning to trees, tulips in bloom, lilacs and fruit trees blossoming, providing a sweet scent to our spring air. This is such a special time as we see nature come to life with the nourishment of rain and warm rays of sun! Just today, as we drove just outside the city, we saw beautiful lady slippers at the side of the road. What a gift to find these very rare flowers!

It is my hope that this reawakening of nature will help to lift your spirits after a long time of isolation due to the winter months and the COVID-19 virus. As we look to July and August, many of us spend time at cottages, in parks or in the country. Immersing oneself in nature, has recently been called forest bathing. There has been research done which has indicated that spending time in nature actually improves a person's mental health.

"One of the most intriguing areas of current research is the impact of nature on general wellbeing. In one study in Mind, 95% of those interviewed said their mood improved after spending time outside, changing from depressed, stressed, and anxious to more calm and balanced. Other studies by Ulrich, Kim, and Cervinka show that time in nature or scenes of nature are associated with a positive mood, and psychological wellbeing, meaningfulness, and vitality." (University of Minnesota)

My experience with time spent in the summer watching waves lap into the shore, gazing at summer sunsets and just being with nature, strengthens my faith and brings me peace.

Summer will bring some changes to Prairie Spirit as we bid farewell to Rev. Ken DeLisle, our Interim Transition Minister. We thank him for his leadership guiding us forward as we became a new faith community. His energy, compassion and ability to challenge us will be remembered! We wish him well.

We are pleased to advise you that Rev. Paul DuVal will be continuing as our Minister over the summer and into the fall. He will continue to work on a half time basis. He will provide summer services online in July and return after holidays in August. Our community of faith is encouraged to check out services at St. Charles Headingley during the month of August because Prairie Spirit will not have services.

As we reflect on our recent reality, it has required us to be patient, resilient and faithful as we encountered a challenge which we, as a generation, have not had to face. On behalf of the Oversight Council, I wish you a safe and faith building summer and hope that we will be allowed to meet in person in the fall.

Respectfully submitted by:
Joycelyn Fournier-Gawryluk,
Chairperson, Oversight Council



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Farewell Prairie Spirit

Dear, dear friends and my Christian siblings;

The time has come for farewells and best wishes. I have done at least eight Intentional Interim ministries as well as gap ministries and calls. But saying good-bye is never easy.

I have made relationships with loving, caring and powerful folks who worked together to build, create, launch and bless Prairie Spirit. But my appointed time has come to an end and so we part.

Deep, deep thanks to all who made this an exciting, challenging, hopeful and blessed time.

To my church team staff, Paul, Alison, Cindy, Renate, Terry and Candace. Paul, especially, was a cohort, mentor, supporter and a true colleague. It seems we matched in several ways (including shirt colours). We discussed all aspects of our work and shared the same goals for Prairie Spirit.

And I deeply appreciated the strong dedication of our leadership team. Val, Marilyn, Dennis, Doris, John and so many others who dedicated hours of their time to shaping and strengthening the foundations of the congregation.

Joycelyn had a difficult, demanding, challenging and, at times, chaotic job as Chair. But she led with patience, clarity, strength, hope and compassion.

I am at a lack of words on how to describe the wonder of the Transition Team. We started late, but made up for it in dedication and devotion. Actually, in less than twelve months we achieved all of our six goals. They were not afraid to try new things, to hope, to dream and to work! The worship questionnaire summary was an endeavour above and beyond the norm and they welcomed it.

We were a true team supporting each other. We were Prairie Spirit with three roots. We shared traditions and dreams without demanding "our" way was the right way. We modeled three-in-one – three roots, one tree. We welcomed and recognized the gifts of each other. And we laughed. We celebrated.

I will miss Anne, Shirley, Betty, Patrick, Tom, Stewart, and Judy.

And I will miss all of you who helped in the work, the goals, the dreams. Those who attended worship, filled out questionnaires, participated in meetings, workshops and our BBQ, made our work easier and grounded in who Prairie Spirit is.

The reason my work is done is because of what each of you contributed to the goals of creating Prairie Spirit. We have worked hard and celebrated. We have grown together and closer because you all decided to try it, do it and live it.

Go forth now to blossom. You are called to new life with new visions and new hopes. God is with you, beside you, in you and calling you forward.

Go, in God's peace and love.

And I pray in thanksgiving and gratitude that:

"God bless you and keep you,
God smile on you and gift you,
God look you full in the face
and make you prosper.

- Numbers 6:24–26 (The Message)

By Rev. Ken DeLisle,
Diaconal and Intentional Interim Minister



Pilgrimage with the Moderator 2020

Exploring: With God
With Each Other
With Ourselves

July

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!

7/1	immediate	1 Kings 8; Psalm 30; 1 Tim 3
7/2	patient	2 Chr 5-7; Psalm 121; 1 Tim 4
7/3	steady	1 Kings 9; 2 Chr 8; 1 Tim 5
7/4	inclusive	
7/5	connected	
7/6	healer	1 Kings 10-11; 2 Chr 9; 1 Tim 6
7/7	mother	Ecclesiastes 1-3; Psalm 45; 2 Tim 1
7/8	giver	Eccl 4-6; Psalm 125; 2 Tim 2
7/9	learning	Eccl 7-9; Psalm 46; 2 Tim 3
7/10	integral	Eccl 10-12; 2 Tim 4
7/11	resilient	
7/12	timeless	
7/13	delightful	1 Kings 12; 2 Chr 10-11; Titus 1
7/14	open	1 Kings 13-14; 2 Chr 12; Ps 47; Titus 2
7/15	connecting	1 Kings 15; 2 Chr 13-14; Titus 3
7/16	gratitude	2 Chr 15-16; 1 Kings 16; Philemon
7/17	loving	1 Kings 17-18; Psalm 119; Jude
7/18	unwavering	
7/19	humble	
7/20	servant	1 Kin 19-21; 2 Chr 17; Ps 129; Matt 1
7/21	highest	1 Kings 22; 2 Chr 18; Matt 2

7/22	greatest	2 Chr 19-20; 2 Kings 1; Psalm 20; Matt 3
7/23	kind	2 Kings 2-3; Psalm 48; Matt 4
7/24	holy	2 Kings 4-6; Matt 5
7/25	rewarding	
7/26	steadfast	
7/27	righteous	2 Kings 7-8; 2 Chr 21; Matt 6
7/28	awe-full	2 Kings 9-10; Psalm 49; Matt 7
7/29	enabling	2 Chr 22-23; 2 Kings 11; Ps 131; Matt 8
7/30	guide	2 Chr 24; 2 Kings 12; Psalm 50; Matt 9
7/31	curious	2 Kings 4-6; Matt 5

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.

Minister's Moment

It's the end of June 2020. Like all Junes, it is a time of transition, and a moment to mark milestones. Like grad 2020, some of the milestones are unlike any we have ever experienced.

I was trying to find a verse or an aphorism that would sum up this transitional moment. First I thought it might be, "*Summertime, and the living is easy...*", somehow that didn't quite fit. So I looked at:

***If you can keep your head while all about you
Are losing theirs and blaming it on you,***

That wasn't exactly it either. Perhaps you can find a better way to capture the moment we are in.

2020 is the year our congregation finished the transition goals. It was a truly significant achievement.

2020 is the year we finished our congregational profile, and ministry statement, and began the search for a new minister.

2020 is the year we had to ramp up our digital presence and learn about worship online.

2020 is the year COVID-19 taught us how to be a church in exile, and how to stay focused, and how to stay connected.

As Canada Day approaches, a few things are shifting again. Some of us can get haircuts, a few small meetings can happen in the church (with appropriate physical distancing), and some of us can hit the golf course, or head for the cottage. This is not business as usual. None of us really knows what we will face in September; none of us really knows what the "new normal" will look like.

There are two things I know. First, Rev. Ken Delisle will not be with us after July 1. Ken has been the primary guide and mentor for our transition process since October 2018 and has spearheaded some amazing work. I will miss him a lot as we go forward, but I am also very grateful to have had the opportunity to share this past year and a half working in team. Thank you Ken, for your sense of humour, for your support, and for your wisdom in the transition process.

Second, Prairie Spirit is a deeply caring and committed group of people. I want to thank Joycelyn Fournier-Gawryluk who has chaired the Leadership Team and now the Oversight Council during some complicated and challenging times. I also want to thank Val Goodridge and Marilyn McCorrister, Val who managed reports and minutes and information, and Marilyn who has wisely overseen financial matters. These are our table officers, but they represent all who have served on committees, who have helped in the kitchen, who have lead worship, who have visited in homes and hospitals and on phones, who have looked after building maintenance, and who have reached out to the community. Without you there is no church. With you there is no limit to what we can accomplish no matter what the world throws at us.

Summer is a time of rest and renewal, and I hope that is something we can all get a bit of.

Perhaps our motto is:

We have an anchor that keeps the soul, steadfast and sure while the billows roll...

Close, but not quite. I'll keep working on it.

Rev. Paul DuVal

Ways to Get Involved at Prairie Spirit

Worship Online

During the month of July, we will continue to collectively worship together online on Sundays at 10:30 am through Facebook, YouTube, and our website. These pre-recorded videos continue to remain available for viewing during the week. During the month of August, we will not have services. We encourage you to check out services at St. Charles Headingley at <https://headingleyuc.wordpress.com/sunday-worship-2/>

Online Coffee Time

This Sunday, grab a cup of coffee and join us at 11 am (after our online worship service) for our Online Coffee Time with video and audio using Jitsi Meet. Contact the church office to receive instructions to join.

Have you been missing baking for Prairie Spirit?

We have decided to provide cookies for West Broadway and St. Matthews-Maryland Community Ministry. These inner city ministries have continued during the pandemic to provide bag lunches for large numbers of people. This is one way we can support their efforts in the community! **The next date is Monday, July 13.** Please bring your cookies to the church parking lot at noon. We need them wrapped in saran wrap, lunch bags, or tin foil in groups of 3. To help or to arrange for pickup, please contact the church office.

Prairie to Pine Regional Representative

Prairie Spirit is part of the greater United Church of Canada. For many years there were Presbyteries and Conference level decision making bodies. As of approximately two years ago, these two levels of governance became one and we are now part of the Prairie to Pine Region. Just as in the past, there are regular annual meetings of the Region. The first one took place in June 2019 in Brandon, Manitoba. This year, due to the COVID-19 virus, the meetings have been postponed and will be held virtually at the end of September over two sessions. So, you don't even have to leave your home to participate!! If you are interested in being the representative from Prairie Spirit at these meetings, please contact Joycelyn to indicate your interest in serving our community of faith in this way.

For more information, contact the church office. Email PrairieSpiritUC@shaw.ca or call 204-832-1000. To leave a voice message, please press 1.

Ways to Continue Giving

Although we are unable to worship at the church, our expenses are continuing. Your continued financial support is welcome, needed, and encouraged. There are a number of ways in which you can continue to contribute financially to Prairie Spirit.

- Donations can be dropped off at the church mailbox or mailed in.
- If you'd like to go on PAR, the form can be found at:

<https://www.united-church.ca/sites/default/files/resources/par-brochure.pdf>

Please complete this form and mail it along with a voided cheque to Prairie Spirit United Church.

If you'd like to change your PAR givings, please email PrairieSpiritUC@shaw.ca.

- You can make a donation to Prairie Spirit online through CanadaHelps.

<https://www.canadahelps.org/en/charities/prairie-spirit-united-church/>

(For step-by-step instructions on how to donate through CanadaHelps, visit our website:

<https://prairiespirituc.org/giving/>

- You can also 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.

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