

St. Paul's Lutheran Church
12145 Laity Street, Maple Ridge, BC V2X 5A7
(604) 467-4343 Email: stpaul@telus.net

THE EPISTLE

Volume 68 Issue 1

January 2025

Council Corner – January 2025

Lessons From A Christmas Tree

Greetings to you all, from your Church Council. I hope you are all excited with anticipation as we enter a new year! We look forward to the future and pray that 2025 ushers in a permanent pastor for St. Paul's. Rather than list everything that has happened over the year – I want us to look ahead instead.

This past season can be a challenge for many of us...struggling to make it through our 'to do lists' and finding that perfect something for our special someones. Remembering to keep Jesus at the centre of what we are doing, can slip our minds so easily. We just get caught up in it...like my cat...in our tree. We become fixated on the sparkly ornaments, the twinkling lights and the mysterious packages below.

But we can learn something from the "tree" that we can carry into 2025. I came across this picture on Facebook and it has been on my mind:



Be a light in the darkness.

Matthew 5:14-16

"You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven." Just as we put lights on our

Christmas tree – we are to be those lights for others. Maybe a neighbour is grieving, maybe a friend is depressed, maybe someone we know is sick or in simply in need of a visit. Be the light.

It's OK to fall over sometimes.

Psalms 37:23-24

"The Lord makes firm the steps of the one who delights in Him; though he may stumble, he will not fall, for the Lord upholds him with His hand." God is not talking about our klutziness or our physical inability to put one foot in front of the other...He is speaking of our faith. God is always there to pick us back up, dust us off and plant us back on our feet. God is our tree stand.

Bring joy to those around you.

Proverbs 17:22

"A joyful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones." In this verse, Solomon is explaining that a person's attitude affects his outlook on life and even his health. If he is joyful, negative circumstances won't knock him off balance and cause him to despair. Without joy in our lives we become a tree that we forget to water and well...it dries up and leaves its needles all over the house. Be a watering can of laughter and joy to those around you. You never know who needs some heartfelt medicine!

Sparkle and twinkle whenever you can.

Psalms 34:4-5

"They looked to Him and were radiant. And their faces were not ashamed." If we keep our eyes on the Lord, He can make us sparkle. When we look to Him we reflect His image, His glory, His sparkle! In Hebrew "lightened" is the word, *nahar*. It only occurs one time in the Bible with the meaning: to shine; to beam; to light; to burn; be radiant. Jesus is the batteries in our Christmas lights, and all through the year! Without Him our lights dim and we lose our sparkle.

And remember, it's perfectly fine to be a little tilted.

2 Corinthians 12:9

"But He said to me, My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is made perfect in weakness." Our imperfections make us who we are and that is fine. Yes, we should strive to be better, to do better with His help, but our humanness gets in the way. Sometimes we feel rejected by others due to our uniqueness...or because we see things in a different way....or well, we are a little weird! Be the Charlie Brown tree. Be You. God loves you just the way you are!

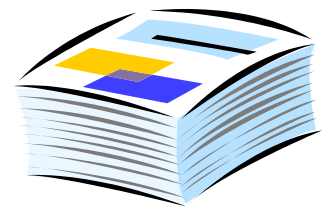
We shall all reflect on what we have accomplished and learned over the past year and prepare for what is in store for 2025. Your Council will be doing the same. Blessing to you and yours over this season of light and sparkles. O Come O Come Emmanuel ALL YEAR LONG!

Shawna

**ANNUAL GENERAL
MEETING REPORTS**

Group reports for ELW, Quilters, Altar Guild, Admin, Personnel, Outreach, Worship Committee and Church Council are due into the church office by Sunday, January 26th.

If possible, please send reports to the church office by email as an attachment.



Stitchery/Scrapbooking



Looking for something to do in the New Year? How about motivation to finish some projects?

I need to get my scrapbooking done, and I get it done when come to the church with a large table to spread out. So we will start again, just not every week.

We start again on January 14th, meeting every 2nd and 4th Tuesday of the month.

Join us with projects you are working on and chat as you work. we would love to have you.

Snow and ice, stay home. We also want you to be safe.

St. Paul's Annual General Meeting Sunday, February 23rd – 11:30 am

Celebrate another year of ministry and talk together to make decisions for the future of YOUR church.

This is also the time for you to help select new leaders for your church. If we want our congregation to grow and be a positive force in our community, it is absolutely necessary to select leaders that bring the right priorities, a positive attitude and a willingness to serve.

Sometimes God chooses us when we least expect it – so if you are “chosen” by the Nominating Committee – please prayerfully consider whether this is God “calling you” to do his work in ways you may not have thought of before!

You don't have to wait to be asked! Talk to Allyson, Susie, Cheryl, Sarolta and Shawna for more information.



RIDGE MEADOWS
MINISTRIES
GIVING • HOPE • TODAY



THANKS TO YOUR GENEROSITY

We raised \$725.00 which will be split equally between the Friends In Need Foodbank and the Caring Place Salvation Army.

Worship Schedule

Sunday, January 5th - Corinne Love and Shawna Van Aert

Sunday, January 12th - Pastor Cliff Reinhardt

Sunday, January 19th - Pastor Nic

Sunday, January 26th - Pastor Vickie Wong



THANK YOU and A BLESSED NEW YEAR!

As we come to the end of the calendar year we want to thank each and every one of you for your stewardship of God's blessing and the way you have shared your time, talent and treasures to further the mission and ministry of St. Paul's Lutheran Church. We have celebrated in worship, gathered for fellowship and learned together in various settings. We give God thanks for your faith and love and generous spirits! God Bless!



Thanks to all who purchased gifts for the residents of Beckman House, and to those who came to share fellowship when we delivered the gifts. Your support is appreciated



All will bow down before Him - All will serve Him

P S A L M 7 2 : 1 1

