



**ST. PAUL'S PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**  
A National Historic Site: Hamilton, Ontario, Canada

## **Sunday Service – Christmas Sunday** **December 21<sup>st</sup>, 2025. 11 am**

### **WELCOME TO ST. PAUL'S**

*We are so glad that you've come to worship the Lord with us today, and we hope that you will experience the presence of Christ among us. In the pew are the following tools for participation in this service. The blue "**Book of Praise**" contains our hymns, the red "**Book of Psalms**" contains the responsive psalms, and the blue "**New English Bible**" contains the scripture passages. If an item has an asterisk (\*), then please stand if you are able. **Large print Hymnals** are available in the back of the Sanctuary. An usher would be happy to help you. All are welcome to join us for Coffee hour in St. Andrew's Hall, immediately following the service today.*

### **WE COME TOGETHER BEFORE GOD**

Prelude "Carols" Wilbur Held, Paul Manz

\*Call to Worship

\*Opening Hymn **159** "Oh come, all ye faithful"

Welcome

Prayer of Approach and Confession

Assurance of Forgiveness

Response to Forgiveness Gloria Patri

### **WORD OF GOD READ AND PROCLAIMED**

Reader: Branden Moffat

\*Responsive Psalm **80**, ref. I, v. **1-7**

Isaiah **7: 10-14** (page **817**, OT)

Matthew **1: 18-25** (page **3**, NT)

\*Reading for Advent 4

\*Hymn **161** "What child is this"

Anthem "O Sing a Song of Bethlehem" Matthew Larkin

Sermon "And along came Joseph" Rev. Mark Gaskin

Silent Reflection

### **WE RESPOND TO GOD'S WORD WITH CELEBRATION**

\*Hymn **154** "Silent night"

Prayers of Thanksgiving and Intercession

The Lord's Prayer **831 Book of Praise**

Anthem "Gabriel's Message" Robert Benson

Announcements

The Offering

Offertory Solo "Gentle Jesus, Meek and Mild" Jack L. Hodd  
Soloist: Caren Donahoe

\*The Doxology **830 Book of Praise**

Prayer of Dedication

### **WE GO FORTH IN THE JOY OF THE LORD**

\*Hymn **139** "Hark! the herald angles sing"

Benediction

Choral Amen

Postlude "Noel #10" Louis Claude Daquin

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## LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

St. Paul's is situated on the traditional territories of the Erie, Neutral, Huron-Wendat, Haudenosaunee, and Mississaugas. This land is covered by the Dish With One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant, which was an agreement between the Haudenosaunee and Anishinabek to share and care for the resources around the Great Lakes. All peoples have been invited into this treaty in the spirit of peace, friendship and respect. We further acknowledge that this land is covered by the Between the Lakes Purchase, 1792, between the Crown and the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation. Land acknowledgments are essential as we move forward on a path to reconciliation and are guided by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's 94 Calls to Action.

## AN INCLUSIVE & AFFIRMING CONGREGATION

The church is called to be a welcoming, nurturing, loving and supportive community—a true church family. As affirmed by the 2021 General Assembly, all people whatever their sexual orientation or gender identity are equally beloved by God. The Session of St. Paul's endorses these truths and will strive to create a church where all people are included and affirmed.

## PLEASE NOTE: GALLERY SEATING IS CLOSED

For insurance reasons, the gallery seating around the top of the sanctuary is not open to the public. Only the individual who is coordinating the live stream will be in the gallery. We invite you to join us in the pews on the main floor of the Sanctuary as you worship with us today. Thank you.

## IN CASE OF EMERGENCY



An automated external defibrillator is available in the hallway outside the main office.

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## ST. PAUL'S VISION



**St. Paul's Presbyterian Church is a Christian community in downtown Hamilton, embodying Jesus' acceptance and love of all people and supporting the growth of God's people in faith and service.**

## ST. PAUL'S TEAM

Interim Moderator:	Rev. Dr. J. Mark Lewis
Guest Minister:	Rev. Mark Gaskin
Clerk of Session:	Jer Dubash
Director of Music:	Blair Havers
Chimer:	Branden Moffat
Custodian:	Ruparain Sydney
Office Administrator:	Gordon Swenor (Interim)
Today's Ushers:	Murray McDowall Trish Haycock

## ST. PAUL'S CONTACT INFO

Website:	<a href="http://www.stpaulshamilton.ca">www.stpaulshamilton.ca</a>
Email:	<a href="mailto:info@stpaulshamilton.ca">info@stpaulshamilton.ca</a>
Phone:	905-522-2792
Mail:	70 James St. S. Hamilton, ON L8P 2Y8

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## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Giving Tree –

Please consider looking through the Gifts of Change catalogue to learn about charitable projects that you can support with a donation to the Presbyterian Church in Canada. There are physical copies of the Gifts of Change catalogue on the piano in the sanctuary, and the catalogue can be found online at [presbyterian.ca/gifts-of-change](http://presbyterian.ca/gifts-of-change)

Donations can be made online at [presbyterian.ca/donate](http://presbyterian.ca/donate) or in-person by specifying what Gifts of Change project you'd like to support on your donation envelope. Once you've considered donating, feel free to write your name and donation amount on one of the star ornaments located on the piano in the sanctuary, then hang it up on the Christmas tree. More info can be found on the Giving Tree insert on the piano and please direct any further questions you may have to Gordon in the office.

### Year-End Fundraiser –

We have set a goal of \$50,000.00 for our **Year-End Fundraiser**. A portion of the Year-End Fundraiser will go towards offsetting our deficit, and a portion will go to Hamilton Out of the Cold.

Hamilton Out of the Cold is a not-for-profit, non-denominational program that provides meals for those in need in our community from November to March. Their mission is to provide hot nutritious meals served with dignity and compassion. To learn more about their program:

[hamiltonoutofthecold.ca/all-about-us/](http://hamiltonoutofthecold.ca/all-about-us/)

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## THIS WEEK AT ST. PAUL'S

### Sunday, December 21<sup>st</sup>

11:00am: Sunday Service

12:00pm: Coffee Hour

4:00pm: Hamilton Beat Harmonic

### Monday, December 22<sup>nd</sup>

9am-3pm: Church office is OPEN

7:30pm: Scottish Country Dancing in St. Andrew's Hall

### Tuesday, December 23<sup>rd</sup>

9am-3pm: Church office is OPEN

7:00pm: Session Meeting

### Wednesday, December 24<sup>th</sup>

9am-3pm: Church office is CLOSED

### Friday, December 26<sup>th</sup>

5:30pm: Friday Night Meeting in Centennial Hall

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### Refugee Committee Update –

Sandu's arrival date is scheduled for January 10, 2026. Their apartment is currently being prepared for their arrival. If you wish to help with their arrival there are items listed on the bulletin board that you could generously provide for them. These items can be left in the bin labelled 'Kitchen Items' on the stage in St. Andrew's Hall, thank you to all of those who have already donated. Please reach out to Ida deJong with any questions you may have regarding Sandu's family and their arrival.

### Books for Bus Tickets Fundraiser –

Our Books for Bus Tickets fundraiser will continue into the fall. Ida has taken over from Lydia. Please visit the book table in St. Andrew's Hall to view the entire collection. Thank you for your generosity and support!

## Fourth Sunday in Advent: LOVE

**Voice 1:** An angel of the Lord declared, “God is with us” – this is the greatest gift of love.

**Voice 2:** Yet even at Christmas, love is often measured by gifts and material things.

**Voice 1:** But God’s love can come through people: a king named David, a prophet named Nathan, and Mary and Joseph. In a baby, God’s love was made real among us.

**Voice 2:** Can we believe that God’s love is revealed through people? On this fourth Sunday of Advent,  
we light the candle of love, a light for our world.

*The candle of love is lit.*

### **Let us pray together:**

Living God, thank you for your deep and abiding love.  
May we see ourselves and others through your eyes,  
as we follow your way of love.  
Come, Lord Jesus.



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## **Esmý's Story of Entrepreneurship in Malawi**

In Balaka District, Malawi, Esmý Edward, a single mother of five, once struggled to feed her family and pay school fees for her two sons in secondary school.

Her story took a hopeful turn when she joined a program to enhance climate resilience and improve income and food security through PWS&D partner, Churches Action in Relief and Development.

Esmý learned financial management, joined a village savings and loan group, and received training in climate resilient farming techniques. She received five goats, whose manure improved her crop yields. With care and sustainable practices, her herd has grown to 10, ensuring steady food and income.

Today, Esmý's thriving farm ensures the family has reliable access to food.

"I am grateful for the support I have received," Esmý says. "Now, I can provide for my children, and I envision maintaining my house and seeing my sons finish school without difficulties."

**This Advent season, faithfully respond to support farmers as they work to provide food for today and an income for the future.**

**WeRespond.ca**

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### **Welcome to the Rev. Mark Gaskin**

Mark Bennett Gaskin was born in Regina, Saskatchewan. When he was 5 years old, his mom and dad moved to Georgetown, Ontario, and Mark followed. He received his elementary and secondary education in Georgetown, and his post-secondary studies were at Trinity College and Knox College (U of T).

Mark has a long-time connection with Hamilton – many aunts, uncles and cousins live here. During his theological studies, he learned much under the mentorship of John Hibbs at New Westminster Church in the east end.

He received his Master of Divinity degree in 1984. In April of 1984, the Presbytery of Hamilton ordained Mark and appointed him to a pastoral charge in Prince Edward Island. In 1986, Mark convinced Kathy to marry him. Kathy and Mark have three grown children – and three grandchildren.

After PEI, Mark served pastorates in Exeter, Brantford, and Cambridge. He recently retired as the minister of Westside Church in Cambridge.

Mark enjoys cooking chilli, making jam and deviled eggs, travelling south to Louisiana, taking photographs, reading the Globe and Mail, and watching any movie with Tom Hanks. Mark is a fan of the CFL, and sometimes even cheers for the Tiger-Cats!

Mark Lewis is deeply thankful to Mark Gaskin for coming to preach on December 21 and 28. This is a busy time of year for everyone, and it is a significant sacrifice for Mark to be here. Mark Lewis is away celebrating Christmas with his family in Amsterdam and Edinburgh, and will be back at St. Paul's for Sunday, January 4.

(A note from Mark Lewis – Please tell Mark Gaskin that I recently impersonated the Bee Gees during a sermon, and that you fully expect him to do something equally entertaining when he is here.)

### **Thanks to St. Paul's for their part in this Christmas miracle. Sandu and her family will arrive in Canada on Jan. 10, 2026**

On Saturday, January 10, 2026, Sandu and her three children will arrive in Canada from a refugee camp in Israel. Their place of origin is the East African country of Eritrea, bordered by Sudan, Ethiopia and the Red Sea.

In June of 2024, St. Paul's received a request to help sponsor this family of four fleeing the dictatorship in Eritrea. The people of St. Paul's immediately accepted the challenge, with great love and enthusiasm.

In October of 2024, the application was completed, and the Eritrean community in Hamilton provided \$41,000 in financial assistance, which exceeded the \$30,000 required to support a sponsorship. The funds were invested in GICs.

The Refugee Committee applied for a two-bedroom townhouse through Kiwanis non-profit housing.

In November of 2024, we received confirmation from the Canadian Refugee Committee that the application had been received and approved. For a period of several months, there was no communication, and we worried about the status of Sandu and her family in the context of violence in the Middle East.

In October of 2025, we received word that all of Sandu's documents had been approved, including her VISA for travel to Canada.

In October of 2025, a two-bedroom apartment just a five-minute walk to Hess Street school was secured through Kiwanis. The people of St. Paul's have been generous in providing furniture and other provisions for Sandu's new home.

On December 7, 2025, a flight to Canada was arranged for Sandu and her three children. They will arrive in Canada on Saturday, January 10, 2026.

Thank you to all the people of St. Paul's who have participated in this wonderful mission. Particular thanks go to Ida DeJong, who has been St. Paul's faithful representative on the Hamilton Refugee Committee.

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