

## GROWING YOUR LEGACY

### What is a legacy?

We're all familiar with the concept of a legacy — something of value passed down or received from someone who came before us. Traditionally, a legacy would be a monetary gift, basically a gift of money or other personal property that's granted by the terms of a will.



But in a much more expansive sense, a legacy can be a gift of knowledge, or kindness, or a service to others. A legacy isn't just a memory. It's an echo of our actions, beliefs, and the impact we've had on others. It's about crafting something that outlives us, something that speaks of who we were and what we stood for.

### St. Paul's legacy - past and present

Here at St. Paul's, examples of legacy abound. The community of St. Paul's formed when faithful stewards followed through on an idea, a dream, a vision. On land donated by James and Alice Mulligan in 1873, and Elmer Elias in 1958, St. Paul's was built, and then rebuilt, not once, but twice more. Over time, the community of St. Paul's, with contributions of support and service from innumerable parishioners and community volunteers since has collectively grown and enhanced that legacy providing us today with a modern facility to worship and serve our God and our community.

We have been truly blessed and have greatly benefitted from a huge variety of bequests, memorials, and many acts of sacrificial service. Some of these legacies were recounted during our 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations in February. Looking through our church will reveal a number of memorials dedicated to those who have passed on but have left their mark of service. A few examples: the cross carried by our crucifer each Sunday, the communion vessels, and the lectern. More recently, funds placed in trust years ago have now been used to repair the foundation associated with the walkway replacement over the former food cupboard.

### What will your legacy be?

***Although a legacy may be what's left after you're gone, the work of making one is done while you're still here.*** And the luckiest of us may even get to see and enjoy the fruit of our legacy as it is being built. Though your most enduring and powerful legacy might be one you never expected or intentionally cultivated, you can get started by asking yourself two simple questions:

- What do I have of value to pass on?
- Who is within my circle of influence?

### Your legacy value:

This does not have to be complicated — start small and with what you know. For example, your love of celebrating, your care for your garden, your desire to be of service to others, your easy conversation with new friends, your ability to lead a complicated conversation — all things worthy

of being passed on. For your monetary assets, you may undertake an inventory and make a plan for how you would like to see your property and money distributed when you pass.

From there, like all good things, legacies are created one step at a time – one hug, one lunch, one conversation, one email, one “are you busy,” or “do you have a minute,” at a time. Your legacy might add up to something monumental one day, but it will be built from the smallest blocks. Each choice, every day, is a brushstroke in the portrait of your legacy.

Your circle of influence:

In thinking about and creating your legacy, your circle of influence might include one or more of your spouse, children and grandchildren, siblings, neighbours, best friends, students, nieces and nephews, colleagues, a favourite charity, an art gallery or museum, and yes, your church. In fact, anyone with whom you have a relationship, and who would appreciate, benefit from, and honour your legacy gift qualifies within your circle of influence.

Your legacy's impact:

A legacy is not measured in material wealth or personal achievements. It's gauged by the depth of our impact on others. It's the stories you create, the lives you touch, the service you give, and the difference you make. Your legacy is not just for you. In the end, it's a gift to the future, a testament to the life you have lived, and the difference you have made.

Stay tuned. Next month's issue of Cornerstone will include some additional ideas on how growing your legacy at St. Paul's can be started and accomplished.

*The Stewardship Team*

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