



## Back to in-person Worship

Last Sunday, a few people gathered in the Okotoks Sanctuary to worship together as others worshipped at home via Zoom. It is a blessing to be together “body and soul” however we were able to be together.

Many people expressed their gratitude for the service and those here in person said they felt good about being back in the sanctuary.

With the exception of one glitch in not hearing the organ over Zoom, entry into the building and the worship service went very smoothly and set the stage for the congregation to begin to register and attend in person going forward.

Following the service, someone who had attended in person had the following to say.

*I had not been prepared to be so emotional but from the moment I sat down I was moved. I am old fashioned and love the organ. For me, nothing welcomes me more than organ music playing while I contemplate a stained glass window. It takes me to an emotional place that I cannot describe in words and makes me feel prayerful in a way that words do not.*

We hope that over the next few weeks, those of you who wish to attend in person will call in to reserve a spot. We should be able to accommodate most people who want to come every other week so don't be afraid to call or email the office. When people hold back thinking they'll leave a space for someone else, no one will register. Please call and if we can't get you in one week, we will get you in for the next.

For those attending via Zoom, please consider having a white candle nearby during worship so you can light it when the candle is lit at that time in the service.

## Protocol for Sunday In-Person Worship

We are blessed and excited to once again be worshipping together in person. In order to ensure everyone's safety and comfort, we ask that you please adhere to the following protocol when arriving at the Okotoks United Church Building for Sunday Worship.

1. Park in the east parking lot and enter via the east foyer doors.
2. Please arrive between 10:10 and 10:25 in order to move through the entry process and be prepared for worship. (Note: arriving late makes it difficult due to protocols and seating.)
3. Wear a mask at all times in the building.
4. Maintain a 2-metre distance between yourself/household and the next person/household
5. Upon entering the east doors, greeters will be there to take attendance, help you with hand sanitizer and ask a few basic health questions. (Note: Taking attendance is necessary should there be a need for contact tracing. This is the only purpose for taking attendance and will not be used otherwise. Lists will not be kept for more than one month.)
6. After you move past the greeters please go directly to the centre sanctuary doors where you will be directed to your seat(s).
7. Remain in your seat(s) for the duration of the service.
8. There will be no congregational singing during the service at this time.
9. Offering plates will not be passed during the service. Instead there will be a basket at the back for offering should you wish to contribute that way.
10. Should you need to use a washroom during your time in the building, please use one of the two washrooms in the foyer and sanitize according to the notices posted in the washrooms.
11. At the conclusion of the service, please leave the sanctuary in an orderly fashion beginning with those closest to the doors. Again, leave a space of two metres between your party and the party in front of you.
12. Do not congregate in the foyer to visit but move outside to your car.

We know that worship will feel different during this time but our hope is that by worshipping together we will move toward being a stronger community. By following these protocols, we will be able to continue worshipping together and remain safe. We will work together to ensure that all who worship with us at Okotoks United will feel safe, welcome and cared for.

**May God bless you as you enter the sanctuary to offer praise to God.**



OCTOBER 23, 2020



### Please Pray For:

- Clive United Church
- People feeling lonely and isolated
- People feeling anxious



### ST. ANDREW'S UNITED CHURCH HAPPENINGS

*Written by P. Marie Wedderburn*

Do you remember when our community of faith met at 9 a.m. for Sunday worship? Do you miss seeing our community of faith in person?



Well, as it turns out, on the first Sunday of each month beginning on November 1<sup>st</sup>, our community of faith can meet at Okotoks United for worship beginning at 9 a.m. Of course, there will be several protocols to be adhered to when we meet such as wearing a mask and maintaining physical distance. We will be receiving a complete list of these protocols from St. Andrew's Board before that time.

If you are able to come please join us for this service. And if, for whatever reason you do not feel comfortable in coming please know that you continue to be in our thoughts and prayers during this time. For as we hold one another in prayer, we continue to be the community of faith at St. Andrew's United Church.

#### Kid's Korner:

Some more info on our re-opening plans. As you would have received your email from the church office last week, there is just a little more information I can share with you today.

We will be requiring registration to attend services weekly. For that, you will need to contact the main office either by email [okunited@telus.net](mailto:okunited@telus.net) or by phone 403-938-4357.

**When you are registering, you will need to sign kids up for Sunday School (which is running the 2nd and 4th Sundays of the month). Sunday School is running separately from worship, it will run during the same time, but at the time of arrival, kids will head straight upstairs. There is also the option for parents to drop kids off even if they themselves are not attending service that day. Kids just need to be registered with the office that week. We have a 10-child limit in Sunday School for the time being.**

On the 1st and 3rd Sundays of the month, kids are still welcome to join their parents in the service for a Kid's Time, socially distanced of course, with me up on the stage.

If you are unable to attend services on any weekend, I would strongly encourage you to join via Zoom, particularly on the days in which we have a Kid's Time.

Please remember we will be practicing social distancing and wearing masks, so please remember to bring one. Also, a reminder that the nursery is closed during this time.

Any questions, please contact Candice at [cndcsutton@gmail.com](mailto:cndcsutton@gmail.com).

#### Okotoks United Church Office - We're here for you!

The office continues to remain open at this time Monday to Friday 9:00 - 2:00. Please contact Diane at [okunited@telus.net](mailto:okunited@telus.net) or 403-938-4357 for church related news.

Please contact Julia at [okjulia@telus.net](mailto:okjulia@telus.net) or 403-702-2249 (cell) at any time.

Congregational Care Team invites you to reach out for confidential spiritual and compassionate care by email at: [okcongregationalcare@telus.net](mailto:okcongregationalcare@telus.net)



## Turkey on the Go!

### Okotoks United Church's first Take-Out Turkey Supper. Sunday November 15, 2020 2 to 5 p.m. \$25 per person.



Available in 2-person, 4-person and 8-person boxes. This is a gourmet Turkey Dinner from Highwood Catering which includes carved, seasoned and basted turkey, sausage stuffing, pan giblet gravy, house-made cranberry sauce, creamy whipped potatoes, peas and carrots, fresh bun and your choice of slices of homemade pie baked by Karen Jones and Pat Reader-Downey of Okotoks United Church – Blueberry, Apple, Cherry or Pumpkin.

Call Diane at the church office 403-938-4357 to place your order and pay. Drive through the East parking lot between 2 and 5 p.m. on Nov. 15 to pick up your ready-to-reheat dinner. 45 minutes in your oven and it is ready to serve! Delivery of your meals can be arranged for those who are not able to their meals pick up.

#### Volunteers needed:

We will still need a few volunteers to help the caterer package up the dinners on Saturday. Two four-hour shifts of 4 people each. On Sunday we will need about 6 people to run back and forth in the church parking lot filling orders as people drive through. (No roller skating skills required!). We also need a volunteer driver to deliver a few meals to people who have let us know that they would not be able to pick up their meals.

### What do you care about?

This past Sunday I spoke about 'acedia.' The word itself means "a lack of care." It implies a kind of listlessness or not being concerned about much or anything. Early Christian monks adopted the word to apply it to spiritual listlessness or the inability to generate interest in a spiritual life and what it entails. Acedia causes us to lose interest in life. We drag ourselves around just existing. I think that we are in an age of acedia.

Caring is hard. It takes a lot of work to care about people and to care about the world and its problems. Real caring demands our presence, our energy, our attention, our resources and our hearts.

We can't possibly care about everything. That would break us. Yet we are wired to care. Caring gives us purpose and connection. Caring engages us with life and brings out the best in us. Caring makes us human. If we stop caring we are in real danger of not living.

What do we do if we can't or don't care?

First, I would suggest sitting with God for a while to share what's going on. Pour out your heart and if necessary your tears. Sometimes we close off our hearts because it is too difficult for us to bear the pain. But stuffing it down only damages us. We have to 'unstop' our hearts and let the grief flow so we are able to feel again. If we need help with this, then we get help. We deserve to live fully, abundantly. That is God's intention for us.

Then I suggest that we search our hearts to see what truly moves us. What is going on in the world that draws our attention, really makes us sad, makes us want to weep. The temptation here is to move away from these things so we don't feel so much, to not deal with them because they make us hurt. Yet, these are the very things that we need to move toward. Doing something about what moves us is what will give us purpose and connect us with a cause that has meaning for us.

We can't care about everything, but we must care about something.

Ask yourself, "What do I really care about? What breaks my heart?" Then give yourself permission not to carry all of the burdens of the world... just this one. Then throw your support behind it, in whatever way you can. This is what gives us life.

Don't try to do everything that comes your way. Do something that means something to you and to the world.

May God bless our efforts to make a difference.

**Julia**



### **Okotoks Affordable Housing Task Force Update by Dean Salter:**

On October 13 the Affordable Housing Task Force presented a Strategic Action Plan to Town Council addressing the critical need for affordable housing in Okotoks. The extensive document has five main focuses:

#### **1. Data readiness:**

There is a need for the town to create a central data base to more fully define the extent of affordable housing problems in Okotoks.

#### **2. Resourcing the strategy:**

In order for a strategy to go anywhere it has to be resourced. The report recommends the establishment of an affordable housing fund which can be used to provide a financial incentive to affordable housing builders. It also calls for a full time town staff person or dedicated staff time focused on affordable housing. In addition, the town should establish an arms-length Housing Authority to work at developing and managing affordable housing.

#### **3. Create conditions to build affordable housing:**

To use the means the town has, such as taxation easements, grants, and by-law changes, to create incentives for building affordable housing.

#### **4. Maintain existing and establish new partnerships to get affordable housing built:**

To develop solid, long term relationships with non-profit organizations, builders and developers to encourage affordable housing builds in Okotoks.

#### **5. Monitoring and implementation:**

The Strategy is a five year plan that needs to be carefully monitored for its success over time. The report recommends the town establish an Advisory Committee on affordable housing to focus on the strategy's implementation. After five years the plan can be revised or re-written as required.

The report contains an extensive set of strategic actions to be accomplished over the next five years to bring the above five focuses to life.

At their meeting on the 13th, Town Council accepted the strategic plan, in principle, as the way forward for affordable housing in Okotoks.

Okotoks United Church can be proud of our part in this process. In 2017 we sent a letter to the town, signed by over 50 of our members, encouraging the town to find ways to more seriously address affordable housing in Okotoks. In April of 2018 the Affordable Housing Task Force was established and our town considers the development of affordable housing as a very high priority for our future.

### **On-line Worship Services**

If you would be interested in viewing live worship services, please go to this link:

<https://www.united-church.ca/community-faith/being-community/worship-online-during-covid-19>

Please refer to our website [www.okunited.ca](http://www.okunited.ca) for updated information and links to the newsletter.