

WE CAN CONNECT



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FEBRUARY 12, 2021

Sermon Series on Abundance



The current Sermon Series is on Abundance and this series will continue until Lent. What does abundance look like? How do we live abundantly? What is the source of abundance? Join the Community on Sunday mornings to explore



Please Pray For:

- Alix-Delburne United Church
- Perry, Debbi and Jeffrey - in Covid ICU
- Isabelle N and Julie



Save the Date: St. Andrews United Church AGM



When: **Sunday, February 14, 2021 at 9:00 a.m.**
How: **Via Zoom**

Hopefully, everyone will be able to join us for this important Community of Faith meeting.



Guidelines for "Have Your Say"

We are inviting members of the congregation to write articles/opinion pieces for our weekly newsletter under the byline "Have Your Say." The following guidelines will determine the scope of the writing. Please submit your piece to Diane at okunited@telus.net.

1. The article/piece must cover something that is currently being discussed in the local news (e.g. COVID, coal mining on the eastern slopes, indigenous affairs, current politics, random acts of kindness, vaccines, good news stories, environment).
2. The article/piece must be respectful and thoughtful, recognizing that others have differing opinions.
3. The editorial team of Diane, Carol Price and Rev. Julia have final editorial responsibilities for the piece.
4. The maximum length of the article is to be no more than 400 words.



Okotoks United Church Annual General Meeting February 21, 2021

Due to COVID-19 restrictions on public gatherings, the United Church of Canada's General Council has made the following amendments, in effect until June 30, 2021:

In short, Governing Boards may

- make urgent pastoral relations decisions,
- suspend the requirement to hold an Annual General Meeting,
- and make a decision on their annual draft budget.

Okotoks United Church, however, will be holding an Annual General Meeting on Feb. 21 at 11:15 via Zoom immediately following the morning Worship Service. There will be no in-person option to attend. We realize that this will be more difficult but we encourage you to attend by computer or by phone because we need your input and approval on a few important matters that will affect our church for the coming year. Please refer to the Annual Report for details.

Voting will be by show-of-hands or, if you are on the phone, the Chair will poll you directly. This may take a little extra time but we think it is doable. Everyone will be muted except the speaker. If you wish to speak to a motion you will be asked to raise your hand and unmute your microphone when acknowledged by the Chair.

We think that the simplest way to monitor votes will be to ask for those opposed and those who wish to abstain. All others will be assumed to be in favour.

An important item of New Business will be the proposed partnership between the Okotoks/DeWinton Pastoral Charge and the Diamond Valley Pastoral Charge. Please come prepared to vote on this issue.

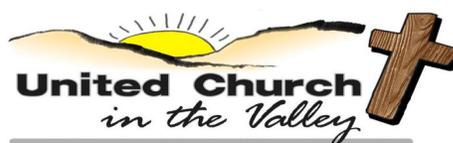
Please call Karen Pryznyk if you have any questions or concerns.

**Okotoks United Church
Annual General Meeting
Will be held on Zoom only
Feb. 21 from 11:15 to 12:15**

It will immediately follow the morning Worship Service



A Partnership Proposal between Okotoks/De Winton Pastoral Charge and the Diamond Valley Pastoral Charge (Turner Valley)



As you are aware, we have had an informal relationship with the United Church in Turner Valley for many years – supporting each other's events and bible studies and getting to know each other better because of that. It was a natural progression, then, for the Boards of the three churches to get together several times, starting in the Fall of 2019, to continue the conversation about ways we could work together for the benefit of all three churches.

Rev. Julia Kimmett has been Diamond Valley Student Minister Matthew Heesing's Educational Supervisor for two years and, in the past, has been the Pastoral Charge Supervisor for Diamond Valley. (Matthew will be ordained in 2021) They have exchanged pulpits on some Sundays and, starting in March 2020 they began to prepare and record the Daily FAITH videos, further introducing Matthew to the Okotoks and De Winton Communities of Faith.

In February 2020 the Boards of all three Communities of Faith were presented with a proposal by Rev. Julia and Matthew to formalize a more collaborative ministry and share two ministries between the three churches.

What would that look like?

- Julia and Matthew would each work a .8 position giving them the work-life balance they desire.
- Each pastoral charge would call their current minister and each church's budget would remain independent.
- Julia and Matthew would equally share the preaching and congregational care between all congregations. Okotoks would take on a .9 FTE position share, De Winton, .2 FTE and Turner Valley .5 FTE for a total of 1.6 FTE positions shared between the three churches. Currently Okotoks and De Winton share a 1.0 FTE with approximately .2 being supported by the De Winton contribution. Under the new arrangement the two churches in our charge will therefore share a 1.1 FTE (.2 + .9) giving us a slight increase in services and a resulting slight increase in our budget – approximately \$3000 per year. The exact amount will be determined after the calls are negotiated by the two ministers and their respective Pastoral Charge.
- Every church would have a Sunday Service just as they do now and the offices would be staffed as they are now with some days covered by Julia and some by Matthew. (Julia and Matthew would split their worship leadership equally between Okotoks/De Winton and Turner Valley)
- The partnership would begin in August 2021 if approved by the respective Communities of Faith.

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A Partnership Proposal between Okotoks/De Winton Pastoral Charge and the Diamond Valley Pastoral Charge (Turner Valley) continued

What are the benefits?

- Both ministers can remain in the communities they love and wish to serve in. Both pastoral charges continue ministry with a faith leader they are familiar with and trust.
- Because each minister would have to prepare only two sermons a month, Julia and Matthew expect this would improve the quality of their preaching.
- Less time on sermon preparation leaves more time for other ministries such as teaching, congregational care and other programs.
- The churches would benefit from the varied gifts of two ministers.
- A natural collaboration would develop between the three churches leading to a larger impact in our area.
- We would be an example to other churches as an innovative way to combine strengths and talents and efficiently share resources and coordinate efforts.
- Julia and Matthew will benefit from having a colleague in a team-ministry with all the support, collaboration and creativity that such collegiality brings.

What is next?

- All three Boards have approved this arrangement in principle.
- A Memorandum of Understanding is being prepared by the Boards to formalize the agreement.
- The 2021 budgets of each church being presented at their respective AGMs will reflect the financial impact of this arrangement.
- A motion to approve the collaborative ministry will be presented at the AGM.
- Formal Approval of the Memorandum of Understanding by Chinook Winds Region.
- Terms of the call for each minister to be finalized.

Your part: Please...

- Contact either Rev. Julia or Karen Pryznyk if you have any questions or comments.
- Take the time to review the Budget for 2021 when it is released.
- **Be prepared to attend the 2021 AGM planned for February 21 at 11:15 on Zoom and vote on this matter.**



Nominees for the position of Trustee

The following people have allowed their names to stand for the position of Trustee for Okotoks United Church: **Michael Scappaticci and Desiree Hart**

Their nominations will be brought to a vote at the Annual General Meeting to be held Feb 21 at 11:15 a.m. Nominations for these and other positions may also be accepted from the floor at the meeting.

Lent 2021

Lent, in most Christian denominations, is the forty-day liturgical season of fasting and prayer before Easter. The forty days represent the time Jesus spent in the desert, where, according to the Bible, he endured temptation and deprivation.

The purpose of Lent is the preparation of the Christian, through spiritual practices for the annual commemoration of the death and resurrection of Jesus, as celebrated during Holy Week. This week following the 40 days of Lent recall the events linked to the Passion of Jesus culminating in Easter, which this year spans from March 28th to April 4th.

In Western Christianity, Lent lasts from Ash Wednesday until Holy Saturday. The six Sundays in Lent are not counted among the forty days because each Sunday represents a "mini-Easter", a celebration of Jesus' victory over sin and death.

In the English language, Lent was formerly referred to by the Latin term *quadragesima* (translation of the original Greek *tessarakoste*, the "fortieth day" before Easter).

In the late Middle Ages, as sermons began to be given in common language instead of Latin, the English word *lent* was adopted. The word initially simply meant *spring* and derives from the Germanic root for *spring* (specifically Old English *lencten*; also the Anglo-Saxon name for March-*Lenct*-as the main part of Lent, before Easter, usually occurred in March).

The traditional forty days of Lent, excluding Sundays, were marked by fasting, from food and festivities, and by other acts of abstinence or penance. The three traditional practices to be taken up with dedication during Lent were prayer (connection with God), fasting (discipline of self) and almsgiving (caring for neighbour).

The spiritual practices of Lent are meant to make us more present to God and God's activity in our lives. Imposing self-discipline in some area of our lives is intended to bring our attention back to the things that matter, making time for our relationship with God.

It is still a common practice for Christians to fast or give something up for Lent as a spiritual practice. In a year when we have given up so much, perhaps we might consider another spiritual practice that draws us to God and prepares us for Holy Week: daily bible reading; prayer; devotions (see article on **What Are You Doing for Lent?**); journaling; a daily picture log of what your life is like this year during Lent; blessing one person a day or something that makes sense for you.

Lent begins next Wednesday on February 17th. Whatever you choose to do this year, be intentional about opening your heart for the possibility that God will prepare you in a new way to receive the gift of grace that meets us in Jesus' death and resurrection.

Julia



NEWS FROM ST. ANDREW'S UNITED CHURCH

Written by *P. Marie Wedderburn*



At one point on Sunday there were 21 people on the Zoom gathering for St. Andrew's. I believe that It remains beneficial for us to see one another during these times.

Unfortunately due to the cold weather (especially with wind chills in the -30's) the birthday drive-by that was originally scheduled for the week was cancelled. Those who were to be honoured by this event still have a birthday in February and so the Community of Faith brings birthday greetings to you on your special day.

As we can see in other parts of this newsletter, please have a copy of our annual report handy and plan to join us for our Annual General Meeting via Zoom **this Sunday, February 14th beginning at 9 a.m.** Hope to see you then and in the meantime, stay warm and safe.

What Are You Doing for Lent?

Have you ever wanted to get a tattoo but didn't know what it would look like? Well, here's your chance. We have tattoos. Ash Wednesday Tattoos to be exact. Here's what they look like.



Ash Wednesday is on Wednesday, February 17th and marks the beginning of Lent.

You are invited to come in on Ash Wednesday from 9 a.m. – 8 p.m. to “get” a tattoo (on your forehead or hand) and to sit quietly in the chapel for a time of reflection.

On weekdays throughout Lent (February 17th – April 3rd), you are invited to come and sit in the chapel for a time of devotion, prayer and reflection.* There will be some Lenten devotionals and a public journal there for you to write in if you wish (remember, it's public so anyone can read it).

The office is open from 9:00 – 2:00 on weekdays so feel free to drop in anytime for some quiet time. By the way, just in case you're worried, the tattoos are temporary. They'll eventually wear off. The spiritual benefits won't. *Please follow proper health protocols.

Pancake Day by *Ellen Castelow*

Pancake Day, or Shrove Tuesday, is the traditional feast day before the start of Lent on Ash Wednesday. Lent – the 40 days leading up to Easter – was traditionally a time of fasting and on Shrove Tuesday, Anglo-Saxon Christians went to confession and were “shriven” (absolved from their sins). A bell would be rung to call people to confession. This came to be called the “Pancake Bell” and is still rung today. Shrove Tuesday always falls 47 days before Easter Sunday, so the date varies from year to year and falls between February 3 and March 9. In 2021 Shrove Tuesday will fall on February 16th. Please click below for article on Shrove Tuesday:

<https://www.historic-uk.com/CultureUK/Pancake-Day/>



Coldest Night of the Year Walk!



One of our Church's Ministries is the Okotoks Food Bank and the Food Bank is again joining with the Coldest Night of the Year group here in Okotoks to raise funds to help support our community's needs. This year, because of COVID 19 the walk will take place for the whole month of February. If you follow this link: <https://cnoy.org/location/okotoks> you will find out more information about the month long event or you can call Carol Price 403 982 4442 or email me at carol.a.price@shaw.ca. The idea is to register yourself or your team, thinking up a great name, find people who are interested in sponsoring you on your walk, to participate, raising money for the community, and having fun!

Just a friendly reminder of COVID 19 rules – up to 10 people in outside settings while keeping social distancing, and a face mask – which you might want anyway to help keep you warm! Thanks, Carol Price, Okotoks United Church's Food Bank Ministry's Representative



KID'S KORNER:

KID'S MINISTRY MEETS FOR A ZOOM SUNDAY SCHOOL FOLLOWING OUR MORNING WORSHIP SERVICE. WE START AT 11:30.

YOUTH GROUP WILL MEET EVERY SECOND FRIDAY BY ZOOM. WE START AT 6:30.

FOR LINKS TO THE MEETINGS AND DETAILED HAPPENINGS ON SPECIFIC DATES, PLEASE CONTACT CANDICE



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 or 403-938-4357 for church related news.

To contact Julia email her at okjulia@telus.net or phone her at 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

Please refer to our website www.okunited.ca for updated information and links to the newsletter.