

the front pew



Vol. 16 No. 2 RIVERBEND UNITED CHURCH 14907-45 Ave., Edmonton, AB February 2018



Valerie's Reveries Care Matters

Most of us have been in a situation where we don't know what to say to someone in grief. And most of us have been in a situation where we are grieving and others don't know what to say to us. In both situations, sometimes mere presence is enough,

even without words.

Being part of a community of faith means that we are cared for and caring for. It means that we are not alone. It means that sometimes we will find ourselves walking with another on their path of sorrow and at other times we will look up to find someone walking with us. All of that is built in to what we are as "church" together.

Joanne Olson and I have been exploring ways to reinvent and resurrect a vital and intentional Care Ministry here at the church. We invite you to stay tuned to updates and explore ways to join us in caring for each other. And if you would like to be part of this new ministry called The Care Team, please let us know.

*Peace,
Valerie*

RUC Youth Update for February



February is a month for us as a group of welcoming in the church. We hosted an Affirm educational movie night on Saturday Feb 3rd, and cooked for the church at the Shrove Tuesday pancake supper! (If you're reading this before

February 13th, please come down to the church at 6:00 for pancakes, and stay for an early Ash Wednesday service!).



We continue to look forward to upcoming events, including putting on a show in the spring, and continuing to gather for community and fellowship. We also are in the process of recognizing the great force that Givenson Fleck was in our group and in our church on the anniversary



of his death. The youth room will be dedicated to him with a plaque, and we will continue to remember him.

Ben Seversen

Spiritual Formation Update

Being in fellowship with other people who are living and exploring their faith is an important component of spiritual development and is great strengthening connections within our congregation. The Spiritual Formation committee oversees all aspects of worship and Christian education and is pleased to announce several initiatives that will provide an opportunity for you to nurture your own spiritual needs, whether on your own or as part of the community. Mark your calendars for the following upcoming events:

Throughout Lent

- Lenten spiritual practice – Rather than focus on ‘giving up’ something for Lent, we invite you to instead focus on taking time out to explore your own faith. Stay tuned for more details on a congregational activity that will help you to spend more time in prayer, while creating something larger with our whole congregation.
- Valerie’s sermons will focus on The Lord’s Prayer. As a lead-in, the Whole Community Worship service on February 18 will focus on the spiritual practice of prayer.
- Lenten book study – starting Feb. 21 – Join in the discussion of Marcus Borg’s book *Speaking Christian: Why Christian Words Have Lost Their Meaning and Power – And How They Can Be Restored.*

Tuesday, Feb. 13 - Shrove Tuesday/Ash Wednesday – Enjoy Pancakes, followed by a quiet service, thoughtful reflection to start off Lent.

Sunday, March 11 – Young families event after Church

Wednesday, March 28 – Seder Dinner

Saturday, April 21 – Brander Gardens Rocks Community Dinner

Sunday, April 22 – Spring Fling for Earth Day – A potluck and time for fellowship after worship, with activities related to caring for creation.

Joanne Little
Spiritual Formation Committee Chair

Lenten Practice Project

The Spiritual Formation Committee hopes many of us will become involved with a new Lenten intentional practise this year. We hope it will provide participants with a meditative activity, possibly learning a new skill, social connection if desired, and a productive use of time and talents.

The idea will be to knit or crochet squares that can be joined to create Prayer shawls or warm blankets, to be used or donated as needed. We will book some gathering times for teaching and learning the skills, and during which all knitters and crocheters can also commune in discussion and meditation. Yarn and patterns etc will be provided for those who want them.

Can you help to teach basic knitting or crocheting?

Or, do you wish to learn these arts?

Perhaps you simply want to use your skills to help with this project, in group or on your own? Your donations of finished squares are welcome. We'll also need volunteers to help join the squares together.

If you can simply help by donating supplies, we will provide receptacles for donations of worsted weight, acrylic yarn, in the church narthex. Spare knitting needles and crochet hooks are also welcome.

Yarn, instruction sheets, and even hooks, needles etc, will be made available if you need them.

Supplies, meeting times and other details will be made available by the first Sunday in Lent: February 18. If you wish to begin before then, (Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, February 14), please speak to Joanne Little, Carolyn Miller or Audrey Skinner.

Please Note!

From now until further notice, there is just one Sunday worship service, at 10:30 am. This will be revisited via opinion survey and opened to discussion later in the year.

February Health Corner

February might be the shortest month, but it certainly is a busy one in regards to the number of health promotion occasions contained in it. Playing on the theme of Valentine's Day, February is Heart Month. The Heart Month campaign began in 1958 when the Foundation, led by Dr. Wilfred Bigelow, committed to raise \$600,000 to fund heart research. Today, heart disease and stroke take one life every 7 minutes and 90% of Canadians have at least one risk factor. Heart Month is the Heart and Stroke Foundation's key opportunity to reach millions of Canadians in February and alert them to the risks of heart disease and stroke. Volunteers are the face and the voice of the Heart and Stroke Foundation and Heart Month is a critical time when they depend on us to share their message. The Heart and Stroke Foundation is dedicated to helping all Canadians live longer, fuller, healthier lives. But, despite 60 years of progress, heart disease and stroke remains leading causes of death and hospitalization in Canada.

Here are the facts:

- More than 1.6 million Canadians are living with the effects of heart disease and stroke.
- 9 in 10 Canadians have at least one risk factor for heart disease and stroke.
- The average Canadian will spend their last 10 years in sickness due to heart disease, stroke and other chronic conditions.
- There are nearly 50,000 strokes each year, many of which are preventable with a healthy lifestyle.

Please visit www.heartandstroke.ab.ca for more information.

February is also Psychology Month in Canada. For a number of years, psychologists advocated for a month devoted to the promotion of psychology in their communities. That dream became a reality, with the launch in February 2005 of the first annual Psychology Month in Canada. The goal of Psychology Month is to generate grassroots activities that will raise Canadians' awareness of the role psychology plays in their lives and in their communities. Psychology Month encourages all members of the psychology profession to connect with their communities and show them the value and benefits of their work. During Psychology Month, all national and provincial psychological associations, private practitioners, academics, scientists, and psychologists who work in health, criminal justice, schools, business, etc. are

encouraged to organize local public education and outreach activities. More information on Psychology Month can be found at www.cpa.ca.

Eating Disorder Awareness Week runs from February 1-7. Through open, supportive dialogue, the shame, stigma and silence that affect nearly a million Canadians living with a diagnosed eating disorder and the millions of others struggling with food and weight preoccupation can be broken. This week's message is that an eating disorder is not a choice but a serious illness. This message can bring important information about these illnesses to people across the country and spread hope to those affected. More information about eating disorders can be found at www.nedic.ca.

White Cane Week is also found during the week of February 4-10. Held annually, White Cane Week is used to create awareness of issues that confront the blind and vision impaired community, but just as important, demonstrate to others as well as themselves, ability over disability. A variety of events are held at the national and local level. More information can be found at www.ccbnational.net.

This year, Sexual and Reproductive Health Awareness Week will take place from February 12-16 with this year's campaign titled, "Mind Your Business." The week will focus on the intersections between mental health and sexual health, and the complex ways in which sexual and mental wellness are connected. This connection is important because, in all aspects of our lives, we deserve to be treated as complex full individuals. This means recognizing mental and sexual/reproductive health and wellness as integral to our overall well-being. Mental health and sexual/reproductive health are both important parts of our overall health and do not exist in silos. There is a significant amount of research supporting the many links between mental and sexual/reproductive health. We are entitled to positive and affirming health care that routinely and proactively meets our mental health and sexual/reproductive health needs and all the ways in which they connect. More information can be found at www.srhweek.ca.

World Cancer Day is February 4. This is a time to raise awareness of cancer and to encourage its prevention, detection, and treatment. Cancer touches us all at some point in our lives, if not directly as a patient, then as a

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relative or a friend of someone with cancer. The impacts of this disease are multiple and far-reaching, affecting people of all ages. The rates speak for themselves: between 1 in 2 and 1 in 3 Albertans will experience some form of cancer during their lifetime, and almost half of them will die from the disease. What can you do to help halt cancer's progress?

- Minimize your own risk: Ask your doctor what screening options are available to you. Cut out smoking and drinking and exposure to the sun's harmful rays and keep fit and healthy.
- Help us determine the causes of cancer: The Tomorrow Project is signing up 50,000 Albertans aged 35 to 69, who have never had cancer. The research team will follow their health until they turn 85 and use the results to form health policy and advice. To join the Tomorrow Project please go to www.in4tomorrow.ca.

Pink Shirt Day is February 28. Bullying is a major problem in our schools, workplaces, homes, and over the Internet. On Pink Shirt Day, everyone is encouraged to wear a pink shirt to symbolize that we, as a society, will not tolerate bullying anywhere. This day helps raise awareness of bullying issues and hopes we step in when we see it happening. Please visit www.pinkshirtday.ca for more information.

Rare Disease Day takes place on the last day of February each year. The main objective of Rare Disease Day is to raise awareness amongst the general public and decision-makers about rare diseases and their impact on patients' lives. Rare Disease Day also seeks to raise awareness amongst policy makers, public authorities, industry representatives, researchers, health professionals, and anyone who has a genuine interest in rare diseases.

A disease or disorder is defined as rare in Europe when it affects less than 1 in 2000. A disease or disorder is defined as rare in the USA when it affects fewer than 200,000 Americans at any given time. One rare disease may affect only a handful of patients in the EU (European Union), and another touch as many as 245,000. In the EU, as many as 30 million people may be affected by one of over 6000 rare diseases existing.

- 80% of rare diseases have identified genetic origins whilst others are the result of infections (bacterial or viral), allergies and environmental causes, or are degenerative and proliferative.
- 50% of rare diseases touch children.

Over 6000 rare diseases are characterised by a broad diversity of disorders and symptoms that vary not only from disease to disease but also from patient to patient suffering from the same disease. Relatively common symptoms can hide underlying rare diseases leading to misdiagnosis and delaying treatment. Quintessentially disabling, the patients' quality of life is affected by the lack or loss of autonomy due to the chronic, progressive, degenerative, and frequently life-threatening aspects of the disease. The fact that there are often no existing effective cures adds to the high level of pain and suffering endured by patients and their families. On rarediseaseday.org you can find information about the thousands of events happening around the world on the last day of February to build awareness for people living with a rare disease. I hope you found at least some of this information useful. Wishing you all many blessings as we continue to journey into 2018.

Dawn Power

Gluten-Free Communion

One of the ways our church family welcomes everyone is by offering gluten free communion elements. Statistically, it is believed about one percent of the population is Celiac, and many more may be grain- or gluten-intolerant. We try to offer bread that will suit everyone, but there are also many other allergens in this world, so here is some information on what we provide.

Our glutenfree communion bread is grain free, yeast free, and peanut free. However, it does contain eggs, butter(dairy) and almond flour. The recipe is available from the newsletter editor, at akskinner050@gmail.com, if you want it, and your feedback on this issue is also welcome.

A View From the Rear Pew

by Brent Skinner

Audrey, my wife and lifelong partner, and I have been binge watching Netflix this winter. We have watched both seasons of “The Crown” and all six seasons of ‘Downton Abbey’. Both film productions are lavish, and provide a glimpse into the trials and tribulations of the very rich. A young Queen Elizabeth II struggles with issues such as televising her coronation, matching her hats and purses and dealing with Prime Ministers who don’t show up for work. Earl Grantham, the lord of Downton Abbey, has to deal with misbehaving daughters, a cranky but wise mother and death duties on his estate. All in all, it is a nerve wracking business being a member of the British aristocracy. Thankfully, both Her Majesty and Lord Grantham are supported by an army of flunkeys who simplify their lives and keep the carriage of state rolling.

There are door flunkeys who open doors; meal flunkeys who serve portions of food onto gold-trimmed Wedgwood plates; flower and gardening flunkeys; and even dressing flunkeys who help with putting on and taking off of a variety of clothes, ranging from tuxedo dinner suits to silk pyjamas. There are even whispering flunkeys who whisper the latest news into the royal ear, probably on a variety of topics such as ‘a corgi is missing’, ‘your panty hose has a run’ or ‘we are now at war with Germany’. There are limousine driving flunkeys, farm management flunkeys, and my personal favourite, bed making and cleaning flunkeys - one of whom presumably spends his whole day following the royal corgis around Buckingham Palace to clean up after them.

I suggested to Audrey that we should give serious thought to hiring our own flunkey. This servant would add an element of class to our humble home, by wearing a velvet uniform, a powdered wig, brass buttons and breeches with clocked hose. More importantly, of course, the flunkey could be of enormous help, by taking over many household chores, leaving me free to focus more of my attention on reading mystery novels and watching Netflix and Amazon Prime. Audrey sought clarification on said household chores, upon which I listed: cooking, table setting and meal serving, shoe and silverware polishing, laundry and bed making, car driving and car washing, garbage disposal, cleaning up after our occasionally incontinent grand-dogs, and, most importantly, dressing and jammy donning for yours truly. Audrey then pointed out that, except for the dressing function, she is already responsible for all of these

duties, and that if I wanted her to add the dressing function, then I should plan on spending the rest of my life in sweat pants and plaid flannel shirts, with socks, underwear and neckties being reserved for special occasions such as birthdays and Christmas. This was all kind of a revelation to me, and I blurted out ‘Hooray, I already have a flunkey!’ noting that all she really lacked was a powdered wig!

I am now sleeping on the family room couch, and meal and laundry services are becoming sporadic. I think that I should not have suggested that Audrey was a flunkey - maybe the term ‘lackey’ would have been more diplomatic?

Lent

Lent is the 40 days of preparation before Easter. How will you prepare this year? Here are some opportunities.

- Tuesday, February 13: Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper followed by a Service of Ashes
- Sundays in Lent: Join us for worship as we explore The Lord’s Prayer and seek ancient meanings in it.
- Wednesday, March 28: Seder Meal— come learn about the Jewish Passover tradition
- Friday, March 30, 10:30 am: Good Friday Worship with the Choir Sunday, April 1: 10:30 am: Easter Day worship

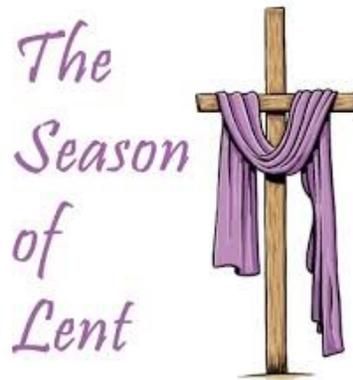


Calendar of Events:

Tuesday, February 13th	1:00 pm 7:00 pm	Shrove Tuesday Pancake Dinner WUC Board Meeting
Wednesday, February 14th		Ash Wednesday
Sunday, February 18th	2:00 pm	Grandview Service
Wednesday, February 21st		Lenten Book Study—Speaking Christian: Why Christian Words Have Lost Their Meaning and Power—And How They Can be Restored by Marcus Borg
Thursday, February 22nd	10:30 am	Devonshire Worship
Friday, March 2nd		FRONT PEW DEADLINE
Sunday, March 11th		Young Families Event—after service
Wednesday, March 28th		Seder Dinner
Friday, March 30th	10:30 am	Good Friday Service
Saturday, April 21st		Brander Gardens Rocks Community Dinner
Sunday, April 22nd		Spring Fling for Earth Day

Weekly Events

- Mondays 7:00 pm—Handbell Rehearsal
- Wednesdays 9:00 am—Walking Group
- Thursdays 7:30 pm—Choir Rehearsal; new singers welcome!
- Weekly Sunday Worship-10:30 am (Sunday School and Youth Discussion Group)



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March deadline: Friday, March 2, 2018

