

the front pew



Vol. 16 No. 8 RIVERBEND UNITED CHURCH 14907-45 Ave., Edmonton, AB October 2018

RUC General Meeting

On Sunday, November 18, Riverbend United will have a General Meeting immediately after the service, to vote on whether or not to become an Affirming Congregation. We have been engaged as a congregation in discerning this question for many years, and actively and formally engaged with Affirm United from the wider church since June 2017.

The vote will be by secret ballot, and the decision will be passed if at least 75% of votes are in favour. There are no votes “in absentia”, or proxies, accepted for this type of situation. Voting is open to all who consider themselves a part of the Riverbend United Church community and attend the meeting. (This type of vote is determined by The United Church to be like an annual budget vote, unlike one calling a new minister, which requires all voters to be registered members of Riverbend United.) Children will be allowed to vote if their parents determine that they understand the issues and the nature of the decision at hand.

If we become an Affirming Congregation, we are required to have a new Mission Statement, indicating our intention to include and affirm all people. We are also required to submit an Action Plan stating our intentions for action over the next year. Both these proposed documents will be available for discussion at a forum on Sunday, October 14 at 9:15 a.m., and informally any time after that. The purpose of the General meeting, though, it should be understood, is to vote on whether or not to become an Affirming Congregation, not to wordsmith the Mission Statement or Action Plan.

Any questions about this meeting are welcomed by the Affirming Committee. They can be addressed at the October 14 forum, with any Committee member, or directly to Jill Spaner, the committee chair (jcurd@shaw.ca). Hope to see you all at the meeting. You will hear about this again, as a general congregation meeting must be announced at least three times.

Respectfully, Jill Spaner

Cookie Walk Is Coming Soon!

This year's Cookie Walk is on **Saturday November 24th** at 10 am. Be sure to come early, as we typically sell out by 11 am.

Cookie Walk Bakers Are Needed

We rely on the generous donations from our fantastic congregation. Help us reach our goal of 1000 dozen!

Setup and Sale Day Helpers Are ALWAYS Needed

Please join us to help deliver a sweet start-off to this year's holiday season. Sign up sheets for Bakers and Helpers are in the Narthex. Need more details? Contact Irene (imeglis@shaw.ca; 780-439-7945). Thank you! -- Marie & Irene



What About PAR?

WHAT ABOUT PAR? Growing numbers of our church family are deciding to make their financial contributions to the church by use of (preauthorized remittance) PAR. When we contribute in this way it benefits the church; it is easier for our own financial management; and it stabilizes our income.

When you contribute through PAR the church receives your gift by electronic deduction from your bank account. Shortly we will be asked to make your giving plans for next year known to our church. A brochure entitled “Are You on PAR?” is placed in each of the pews. Over 60 households in our congregation have completed forms and submitted a cheque marked ‘VOID’. Each month their desired contribution is passed on from their bank to the church. These monthly gifts continue unchanged until your instructions change. You may increase or decrease your gift at any time.

Currently our Envelope Steward is Doug McEwen, assisted by Linda Schofield. Either one of them is happy to assist you in preparing and making or changing your PAR gift. Contributions are then withdrawn from your accounts, usually on the 20th of each month, and transferred to the church’s bank account

Put simply, contributing to the church by signing up for PAR is an easy and stable way to provide the church with the funds that are needed and much appreciated. It saves remembering to use a contribution envelope with either a cheque or cash and bringing it with you to church. In the same way as when you give monies through donation envelopes, after the calendar year end the church prepares and mails to you a receipt for income tax purposes.

Poppy Project



Our poppy basket in the Narthex continues to fill up which is wonderful. Thanks to all the crafters who continue to work hard at creating the beautiful red poppies. Both knitting patterns and crocheting patterns are still available for anyone who is interested in participating in this project. The plan is to use these poppies to beautify the Sanctuary on November 11th, Remembrance Day. This year marks the 100th anniversary of the end of the First World War - “the war to end all wars”; sadly, as we are all too aware, that has not been the case and there have been, and continue to be, many conflicts around the world. A small group continues to meet on Tuesday afternoons from 1:30 to 3:00 p.m. and now on Wednesday evenings from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. in the chapel, to do some “reflective crafting”. Some are making poppies and others are working on their own projects - all are welcome to come and work in fellowship. It would be appreciated if all poppies could be brought to the church and placed in the basket by **Sunday October 28th** so that we can begin putting them together. Thanks again for all your support of this project.

Valerie’s Reveries

Stewardship is such a beautiful word. It harnesses our gratitude, invites our care, summons our generosity. We are all stewards of so much through our lives—our family, our relationships, our home, our work, our gardens, our words, our neighbours, our earth, our church.

We will be hearing invitations to respond as stewards of the church as we move through our annual pledge drive. We will be asked to identify the ways we give to the church through our time, our talent, our treasure. We will be invited to consider how this church is loving our neighbours. And we will be asked to support the church financially, because it is only by the donations of its members that the church operates.

November 4th is Response Sunday. We are asked to bring our response cards that day or before. That day, we also get to enjoy a Fall-Back Pancake Breakfast—a great way to spend the extra hour of the time change and celebrate together.

*With Gratitude,
Reverend Valerie Oden, Lead Minister*

October Health Corner

The first month of autumn gives us a full month of health celebrations and observances. First off, October is Autism Awareness month. What is autism? Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is a lifelong developmental disability that impacts a person's

- communication (both verbal and non-verbal);
- social interaction (ability to form or understand relationships);
- imagination (restricted interests, repetitive or unusual behaviours, lack of creative play).

Autism is called a "spectrum" disorder because of the varying degree of severity and impact on a person's ability to function, and wide range of symptoms that may be present. The person might have cognitive impairment or an intellectual disability; however, it is important to note that nearly half of all children identified with ASD are of average or above-average intelligence. Sensory issues are common. People with ASD may be hyper- or hypo-sensitive to sights, sounds, smells, touch and/or taste. For example, loud noises, bright lights, scratchy clothes or certain textures can be excruciatingly uncomfortable. On the other hand, some people with autism might have an unusually high tolerance for pain (which can be extremely dangerous). Because of all these things, someone who is "autistic" is sometimes described as being "detached from the social world". 1 in 68 children has been identified with ASD, according to estimates released in 2013 by CDC's Autism and Developmental Disabilities Monitoring Network. This information is the result of the largest ongoing investigation of ASD prevalence in the United States, beginning in 2000. ASD occurs in all racial, ethnic and socioeconomic groups. Notably, ASD is almost five times more common among boys (1 in 42) than among girls (1 in 189). This ratio has remained approximately the same over the decades, even as overall rates have been rising. While experts still disagree on the causes, improved monitoring and reporting has uncovered a steady increase in rates over the past few decades. Back in 1992, autism was identified in only one out of every 150 children. More information regarding Autism can be found at www.autismedmonton.org.

October is also Lupus Awareness month. Lupus is a chronic autoimmune disease characterized by inflammation in one or more parts of the body. A complex disease, it can target any tissue or organ of the body including skin, muscles, joints, blood, lungs, heart, kidneys and the brain. Men, women and children can be diagnosed with lupus but

between the ages of 15 and 45, nine times more women than men are diagnosed. While lupus is a serious condition, in most cases it can be treated and controlled. Diagnosis and treatment are improving, allowing people to live increasingly active and productive lives. Look for more information at www.lupuscanada.org.

One of the most publicised health observances this month is Breast Cancer Awareness month which falls in October. What is breast cancer? Breast cancer is a malignant tumour that starts in the cells of the breast. Malignant means that it can spread, or metastasize, to other parts of the body. Cells in the breast sometimes change and no longer grow or behave normally. These changes may lead to benign breast conditions such as atypical hyperplasia and cysts. They can also lead to benign tumours such as intraductal papillomas. Benign conditions and tumours are not cancerous. But in some cases, changes to breast cells can cause breast cancer. Currently in Canada, screening for breast cancer is recommended for women of average risk between the ages of 50 and 69. Regular screening for breast cancer is recommended for this age group because about half of all new cases of breast cancer occur in women between 50 and 69 years of age. The most reliable way to find breast cancer early is screening mammography, a low-dose x-ray of the breast. Research has shown that regular mammography can significantly lower the risk of women in this age group dying from breast cancer. Provincial and territorial screening programs use screening mammography, which is used to look for breast cancer in women who don't have any symptoms of the disease. It may be done in a clinic, screening centre or mobile screening mammography unit.

- If you are 40 to 49: Talk to your doctor about your risk of breast cancer, along with the benefits and potential risks of mammography. The benefits of regular mammography to screen for breast cancer in women under 50 are still unclear.
- If you are 50 to 69: Have a screening mammography every 2 years.
- If you are 70 or older: Talk to your doctor about how often you should have a mammography.

Breast cancer is the most common cancer among Canadian women (excluding non-melanoma skin cancers). It is the 2nd leading cause of death from cancer in Canadian women. Breast cancer can also occur in men, but it is not common.

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It is estimated that in 2018:

- 26,300 women will be diagnosed with breast cancer. This represents 25% of all new cancer cases in women in 2018.
- 5,000 women will die from breast cancer. This represents 13% of all cancer deaths in women in 2018.
- On average, 72 Canadian women will be diagnosed with breast cancer every day.
- On average, 14 Canadian women will die from breast cancer every day.
- 230 men will be diagnosed with breast cancer and 60 will die from it.

More information on this sinister disease can be found at www.cancer.ca.

Most of you have probably seen or heard about the “Flu Shot” or perhaps some of you get the vaccine annually. October is home to Influenza Immunization Awareness month. Influenza - commonly called the flu - is a viral infection of the nose, throat and lungs. It spreads easily from person to person.

Every year millions of Canadians catch the flu, usually in late fall to early spring. Some people are only mildly affected, while others get very sick. Flu symptoms usually start suddenly with some or all of the following:

- fever or feeling feverish;
- cough;
- a sore throat;

- muscle aches and fatigue;
- loss of appetite;
- runny or stuffy nose.

Some people, especially children, may also have stomach upset and pain, vomiting and diarrhea. Not everyone with the flu will have a fever. Most people recover from the flu in a week or 10 days. But others may develop serious complications, such as pneumonia, that can send them to hospital. The best way to protect yourself is by getting a flu shot every year. Alberta's influenza immunization program begins in mid October, offering influenza vaccine to all Albertans (six months of age and older), free of charge. Influenza immunization clinic schedules and more will be live on the AHS website in early fall. More information regarding the Influenza Vaccine can be found at www.healthycanadians.gc.ca.

Other health highlights during the month of October include...

- Learning Disabilities Awareness month
- Rett Syndrome Awareness month
- National Occupational Therapy month
- Healthy Workplace month
- Psoriasis Awareness month
- International Walk to School month
- Sudden Infant Death Syndrome Awareness month

Dawn Power

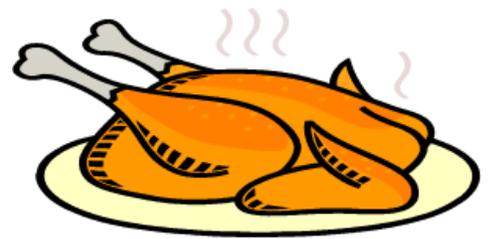
Riverbend United Church Fall Feast

Turkey, all the trimmings and a pie buffet!

Sunday October 28, 2018

Arrive at 5:30pm, Dinner at 6pm

\$20/person; \$60/family; 12 and under free

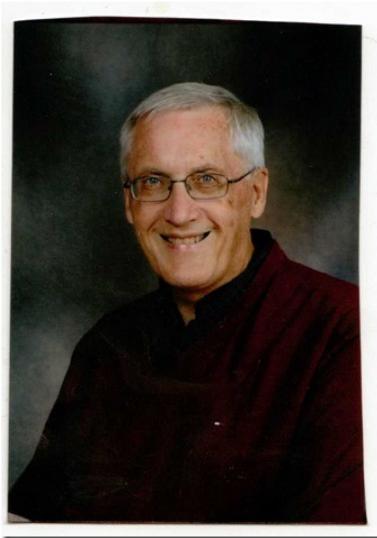


The turkey team is back at it, this time organizing our namesake event, the turkey supper! There are many ways for you to join in the fun: invite family and friends, buy tickets for the delicious meal, volunteer to peel some potatoes, set the table or bake a pie. Sign-up forms will be in the narthex.

Tickets are limited so please buy early, either on Sundays before and after the service, or from Jacqueline in the office during the week.

Questions? Please call Christine at 780.435.0302; ens.christine@gmail.com

A View From the Rear Pew by Brent Skinner



Have you tried lately to telephone your bank, utility company or other institution? It is difficult to talk to a real person. Your phone conversation starts with a recorded voice giving you an endless series of choices which need numeric responses from your digital phone.

One company started the interview by asking me if I had a rotary telephone. Now I haven't even seen a rotary telephone since about 1972, but was tempted to stay on the line to see what would happen next. My guess is that a Telus, Shaw or Rogers truck would immediately appear on my driveway, break down my front door, smash my rotary telephone to pieces, and give me a replacement touch tone telephone.

Being an honest person, I confessed to having a digital telephone, and then had to answer an endless series of questions by hitting digits 1,2,3 or 4 and occasionally the pound key (it is the funny little button that looks like an X's and O's board that has had too much to drink).

The voice you hear is female, confident, unflappable, and persistent - kind of like my grade 3 teacher. She seems to have an upper class, downtown Toronto accent, and I imagine her as a glamorous blond sophisticate, wearing an expensive mink coat, slinky black dress, diamond bracelet and Gucci high heeled shoes.

The questions asked become increasingly complicated and you are expected to make intelligent choices about service

opportunities that you didn't know even existed (e.g. if you want to request Wi-Fi press one, if your thingamajig won't interface with your XM rotary router, press two, or if you want to discuss the meaning of life with our staff astrophysicist, press three, or if none of the above, press four).

This grilling is more challenging than my grade XII departmental exams and mercifully ends with "If you want to speak to a customer service representative, please stay on the line". Just as a wave of self congratulation surges through your body, the lady in the mink coat says "Due to a higher than average number of calls, you are customer number 185 in the customer queue, and the wait time to talk to the first available customer service agent is estimated at 2 hours and 56 minutes." The really annoying thing is that all these companies always seem to have a "higher than average" number of customer calls - so what is the official forecast of average?---- five calls a day? Does the number of client representatives consist of only 3 people in the sub-basement of the branch office in Mumbai? Does the delay in talking to customers reduce the number of customer complaints (they can't get through to make them) and so reduce negative scores in the company performance index, and thereby please senior executives and shareholders? What gives?

Anyhow, if you have the patience and time to hang in there, you will eventually get to a real live person. These agents are invariably pleasant and helpful and will give you the name of the department that can help you (e.g. nuclear physics) and refer you back to the main telephone line and the lady in the mink coat.

These experiences are like something out of 'Alice in Wonderland', but present wonderful opportunities to exercise your patience. Whoops! I am now customer number 5 in the queue and has only been 1 hour and 57 minutes!

Calendar:

Sunday, October 14th	11:30 am	Gratitude Luncheon
Sunday, October 21st	10:30 am	Whole Community Worship Service
Thursday, October 25th	10:00 am 11:00 am	Grandview Service Devonshire Worship
Sunday, October 28th	10:30 am 5:30 pm	Mission & Service Sunday; Handbell Choir Congregational Turkey Dinner
Friday, November 2nd	7:30 pm	Tres Marvelous Concert
Sunday, November 4th	9:00 am 10:30 am	"Fall Back" Pancake Breakfast Stewardship Dedication; Communion
Sunday, November 11th	10:30 am	Remembrance Sunday
Friday, November 16th		FRONT PEW DEADLINE
Sunday, November 18th	10:30 am	Affirming Sunday

Weekly Events

- Mondays 7:00 pm—Handbell Rehearsal
- Tuesdays 12:30 pm Restorative Yoga and 1:30 pm Reflective Crafting
- Wednesdays 9:00 am—Walking Group, Reflective Crafting 6:30 pm, and Book Study 7:00 pm (October 10th -November 14th except Halloween).
- Thursdays 7:30 pm—Choir Rehearsal; new singers welcome!

Tres Marvelous!

If you enjoy free concerts, or if you enjoy making donations to good causes, please join us at 7:30 on Friday November 2 for the "Tres Marvelous" fundraising concert at the church. This year will be bigger and better than ever with a "big band" performing some of Glenn Miller's jazz classics plus a number of songs featuring a string section! The concert will include well-known songs from your favorite bands such as The Beatles, Stevie Wonder, The Carpenters, Queen, The Eagles, Boston, Glenn Miller and more! As always, admission is free, but tax-deductible donations to pay off the sound and projection system are greatly appreciated.



*Hope to see you there,
Marvelous Marv*



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