

# the front pew



Vol. 16 No. 9 RIVERBEND UNITED CHURCH 14907-45 Ave., Edmonton, AB November 2018

## RUC: An Affirming Congregation

Yes! That was the vote on Sunday, November 18 after worship, an emphatic answer to the question: “Should Riverbend United Church become an Affirming Congregation?” The Affirming Committee ran out of ballots and had to print more; **97%** of those voting were in favour! This was beyond the expectations of the committee, whose members were thrilled with the result.

Our congregation’s Mission Statement, expressing our beliefs as an affirming congregation, now reads as follows: “We, the people of Riverbend United Church, recognize the dignity, value, and beauty of each and every individual as a beloved child of God. We seek to grow spiritually,

deepening our connections to God and to each other through worship, discussion, reflection, and service. We embrace the gifts brought by all people of every age, culture, economic background, ethnicity, gender, gender expression, mental and physical ability, and sexual orientation that enrich the life of this faith community. As followers of Christ, we celebrate the diversity brought by each person who joins us on our journey and shares in our congregational life and work, welcoming their full participation in church membership, leadership, and celebration of life events.”

Over the coming weeks, we will develop and present an action plan indicating commitments we have made or will make to address some of the specific needs identified as we do our best to live out our mission.



## Poppy Project Remembrance Day 2018

A big thank you to all the amazing crocheters and knitters who spent these past months making poppies or Remembrance Day and to commemorate the centenary of the end of the First World War. We are sure you would agree that they made an amazing display. Whilst we didn’t have time to count them we estimate that we received between 750 and 1,000 poppies. In particular we would like to thank Joan Serne for ensuring all the poppies had ties on them and to Jackie Hunt, Audrey Skinner and Carolyn Miller for putting the display together.

## Tres Marvelous Concert

On Friday Nov 2, the church was rocking with over 21 musicians plus the RUC choir joining together in an evening of Marvelous music. This year we had everything from big band jazz to a string quartet playing popular songs from the 30s to today. We made over \$3500 and have now paid off the sound system loan. A big thank you to all those who participated, donated or just enjoyed listening to the music.



*Marvelous Marv*

## November Health Corner

I hope this month finds you all healthy and happy. November is another busy month for the awareness of many different ailments and conditions. First up is Crohn's and Colitis Awareness Month. Named after Dr. Burrill B. Crohn, who first described the disease in 1932 along with colleagues Dr. Leon Ginzburg and Dr. Gordon D. Oppenheimer, Crohn's disease belongs to a group of conditions known as Inflammatory Bowel Diseases (IBD). Crohn's disease is a chronic inflammatory condition of the gastrointestinal tract. It is important to know that Crohn's disease is not the same thing as Ulcerative Colitis, another type of IBD. The symptoms of these two illnesses are quite similar, but the areas affected in the gastrointestinal tract (GI tract) are different. Although Crohn's most commonly affects the end of the small bowel and the beginning of the colon, it may affect any part of the GI tract. Ulcerative Colitis is limited to the colon, also called the large intestine. Crohn's disease can also affect the entire thickness of the bowel wall, while ulcerative colitis only involves the innermost lining of the colon. Finally, in Crohn's disease, the inflammation of the intestine can "skip"-- leaving normal areas in between patches of diseased intestine. In Ulcerative Colitis this does not occur. More information on these conditions can be found at [www.crohnsandcolitis.ca](http://www.crohnsandcolitis.ca).

November is also Diabetes Month. There are more than nine million Canadians living with diabetes. With more than 20 people being newly diagnosed with the disease every hour of every day, chances are that diabetes affects you or someone you know. What is diabetes? Diabetes is a chronic, often debilitating and sometimes fatal disease, in which the body either cannot produce insulin or cannot properly use the insulin it produces. Insulin is a hormone that controls the amount of glucose in the blood. Diabetes leads to high levels of glucose in the blood, which can damage organs, blood vessels and nerves. The body needs insulin to use glucose as an energy source. Type 1 diabetes occurs when the immune system mistakenly attacks and kills the beta cells of the pancreas. No, or very little, insulin is released into the body. As a result, glucose builds up in the blood instead of being used as energy. About 5-10 per cent of people with diabetes have Type 1 diabetes. Type 1 diabetes generally develops in childhood or adolescence, but can develop in adulthood. It is always treated with insulin. Meal planning also helps with keeping blood glucose at the right levels. Type 2 diabetes occurs when the body does not make enough insulin, or can't properly use it. As a result, glucose builds up in the blood instead of being used as energy. About 90 per cent of people with diabetes have Type 2 diabetes, which more often develops

in adults, though children can be affected. Depending on the severity of Type 2 diabetes, it may be managed through physical activity and meal planning, or may also require medications and/or insulin to control blood glucose more effectively. [www.diabetes.ca](http://www.diabetes.ca) can direct you to more information on this prevalent disease.

Osteoporosis Month is also celebrated in November. Osteoporosis is a disease characterized by low bone mass and deterioration of bone tissue. This leads to increased bone fragility and risk of fracture (broken bones), particularly of the hip, spine, wrist and shoulder. Osteoporosis is often known as "the silent thief" because bone loss occurs without symptoms. Fractures from osteoporosis are more common than heart attack, stroke, and breast cancer combined. At least one in three women and one in five men will suffer from an osteoporotic fracture during their lifetime. Bone is a living tissue that is constantly renewed through a process in which old bone is removed and replaced by new bone. Cells called osteoclasts erode the bone, creating small cavities; bone-forming cells called osteoblasts then fill in the cavities with new bone. This is nature's way of restoring bones and keeping them healthy. In younger people with healthy bones, the osteoclasts and osteoblasts work together, maintaining healthy bones. However, after our mid-30s the process is not as efficient, and we begin to gradually lose bone. In someone with osteoporosis, bone loss occurs more rapidly, causing the bones to become thinner and weaker over time. For individuals with osteoporosis, there is now a variety of drug treatments available. The primary aim of drug treatments is to reduce fractures. Visit [www.osteoporosis.ca](http://www.osteoporosis.ca) for more information.

The Movember Foundation is the leading global organization committed to changing the face of men's health. The Movember community has raised \$574 million to date and funded over 800 programs in 21 countries. This work is saving and improving the lives of men affected by prostate cancer, testicular cancer, and mental health issues. The Movember Foundation challenges men to grow moustaches during Movember (formerly known as November), to spark conversation and raise vital funds for its men's health programs. At the start of Movember, guys take action by signing up with a clean-shaven face and for the 30 days of November commit to growing a moustache. With the sprouting of a new moustache, men effectively become walking, talking billboards for the month, and like a run or walk for charity they use their hairy ribbon to spark conversations around the often ignored issue of men's health. More information can be found by visiting

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<https://ca.movember.com/>

November is also home to Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) Month, Lung Cancer Awareness Month, National Eczema Awareness Month, World Pancreatic Cancer Awareness Month, Stomach Cancer Month, Fall Prevention Month, and National Pulmonary Hypertension Month.

Specials days being spotlighted this month are...

- World Pneumonia Day: November 12
- World Diabetes Day: November 14
- World COPD (Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease) Day: November 14
- National Child Day: November 20
- International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women: November 25
- Stomach Cancer Awareness Day: November 30

I would be remiss if I did not mention Remembrance Day on November 11. Every year on November 11, Canadians pause in a silent moment of remembrance for the men and women who have served, and continue to serve our country during times of war, conflict, and peace. We honour those who fought for Canada in the First World War (1914-1918), the Second World War (1939-1945), and the Korean War (1950-1953), as well as those who have served since then. More than 2.3 million Canadians have served our country in this way, and more than 118,000 have died. They gave their lives and their futures so that we may live in peace. Each year during a special Remembrance Day service, our church family remember those who lost their lives in service to our country and those lucky individuals who came home. Some of those who returned sit in the pews next to us on Sunday. To those men and women, we say "Thank you."



**Lest We Forget**

*Dawn Power*

## Spiritual Formation – Advent Unwrapped

Advent is upon us. Are you ready? Is the baking done? House decorated? Presents wrapped? No doubt about it, it is a busy time of year and sometimes, we lose sight of what is really important in all of our busy-ness. So, this year, the Spiritual Formation committee is encouraging you to prepare a gift for yourself and your family, for when you really need it, by creating a **Joy Jar**.

It is simple. Simply take time each day to write down 5 things (or however many you can think of) that bring you Hope, Peace, Joy or Love. Write each day on separate sheets of paper and add it to your Joy Jar. Alternatively, you could share your ideas with your family at mealtime. Keep your Joy Jars somewhere prominent (like on your kitchen table or under your Christmas tree) and make sure to give thanks for all of the little things that bring you and your loved ones joy each day. On days when you are having a hard time giving thanks, dip into your Joy Jar. Look for ideas on how you can decorate your Joy Jar in the Narthex.

For more ideas on how to observe Advent at home, check out the United Church of Canada website at [adventunwrapped.ca](http://adventunwrapped.ca)

## Fall Feast

Thanks to all who came out to enjoy our delicious fall feast on October 28. Sandwiched between Canadian and American Thanksgivings, it was a great opportunity to enjoy turkey and all the trimmings, and last but not least, our amazing pie buffet! Ten turkeys were cooked in the ovens of ten different homes while volunteers peeled and chopped 50 pounds of potatoes after church. Carvers arrived while the gravy was prepared and at 6pm we served a fall feast to 120 people. Thanks to the Turkey Team and other super volunteers who peeled, roasted, baked, set, decorated, stirred, sterilized, stacked...and then put their collective feet up.

Stay tuned for the next Turkey Team event – our community dinner with our Brander Gardens ROCKS friends in the new year, date yet to be set.



## 2018 Christmas Outreach

Once again this year, the Outreach Committee will be taking gift bags to ladies living in permanent inner city housing, specifically to Our Place and Inner City Way. These are nicely renovated homes for 10 residents, with single rooms and a communal space. Both in the inner city, they are about a block and a half apart. Our Place has been running for 10 years; Inner City Way opened a year and a half ago. Each has a vibrant and helpful staff. The dinners are delicious (we provide dessert)!

Would you or your group like to fill one or more of the bags? The following lists are provided as a guide.

Must have items:

- mitts, gloves, hat or scarf
- Socks
- Christmas chocolate or candy
- \$20 gift card to Tim Horton's, Superstore, Walmart or Dollarama

Other ideas for filler:

- writing paper, pens
- Christmas decoration, ornament, angel, etc.; Christmas cards to give
- home-made cookies, brownies, fudge, etc.
- healthy treats (nuts, trail mix, etc.)
- playing cards, games, puzzles, etc.
- pretty cosmetic bag
- hot chocolate package, special tea or coffee

- Calendar
- hair/bath/body products (full-size will fit in the bags)

If you or your group are able to “build” one or more gift bags, please contact Judi Cook (780-435-0838; [judi@royalpage.ca](mailto:judi@royalpage.ca)). Please have the bags at the church by Sunday, December 16. We will deliver them on Friday, December 21, and share a meal with the women. There is space for two more people to join us. Contact Judi Cook, Erin James, or Joan Robinson if you would like to come.

In addition, we are working on a second project, for delivery to the Bissell Centre and the Inner City Pastoral Ministry. In addition to any of the above items, please consider dropping off any of the following **new** items in the designated area (probably a playpen) in the narthex by Sunday, December 16th.

- Towels
- children's toys, book, or clothing
- single bedding
- travel mug
- bus tickets
- hand warmers
- underwear for women
- underwear, socks etc. for men

Financial donations are also much appreciated and very helpful. Thank you very much.

## 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 4<sup>th</sup> 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.

*In gratitude,  
Valerie*

## A View From the Rear Pew

by Brent Skinner

Driving, or, to be more precise, not driving, has been much on my mind. This past August, I was discharged from hospital. The bottom right hand box of the written discharge summary said “no driving”. I politely inquired if this prohibition was for six weeks, or six months? The reply was, “no driving ever!”

I am fortunate to have a patient spouse, Audrey, who is also an excellent driver. I am now totally dependent on Audrey to take me to medical appointments and other places outside of our home.

As a result, we have worked out a protocol which we closely follow when traveling by car.

**Rule One** - do not criticize the driver’s driving. Comments such as “you’re following too close”, “you’re wandering into the wrong lane” or “WE’RE ALL GOING TO DIE !” are not appreciated.

**Rule two** - learn how to use the iPhone. As the designated passenger, my most important job is to read incoming messages and to type out responses. Comments like “I think that I lost the call”, “what is this red button for?” Or “I can’t read the screen” are also seldom appreciated.

**Rule three** - Don’t offer to navigate unless you know what you are doing. For most of my career, I have navigated the city of Edmonton and the surrounding region by way of hospital or nursing home landmarks (e.g. the office is one block south of the Grey Nuns Hospital or two intersections past the Allen Gray Auxiliary Hospital). This tried and proven navigational method is no longer relevant, since those centres are not on our destination list now, so I must pursue new approaches, such as use of the stars, road maps, or GPS. I tend to prefer old fashioned maps, because I find GPS too complicated and I own lots of city maps, dating back to 1990. However, maps can be tricky, because you need to know where you are now, where you want to end up, and which side of the map is the top and which side is the bottom. Then, to add to the difficulties, you must be able to see well enough to read the map, as well as the street signs.

**Rule four** - don’t be a prude. My wife is normally a polite and soft spoken partner, until you put her behind the

wheel. She then magically transforms into a Viking princess warrior who aggressively elbows her way down the road while spouting profanities that would make a longshoreman blush. She sometimes makes rude hand gestures at horn blowers behind us. I wonder if road rage protocols would give me time to get my walker out of the back seat before engaging in fisticuffs?

**Rule five** - show gratitude. Always say “thank you”. On arrival at our destination, Audrey needs to find a handicapped parking spot (no easy job at University Hospital), park the car, lift out and unfold my 150 pound walker, and offer suitable encouragement as I get out of the car (her 2005 Toyota Echo has the ideal passenger seat height for someone in my condition) and begin to shuffle toward my destination. At this point I almost always say, “thanks”, sometimes followed by “I love you” if she is still grinding her teeth.

Having to depend on your spouse to take you places is a big adjustment in one’s lifestyle. It is very much a symbol of my decline in both manliness and societal usefulness. I remember how sad my Grandpa Goldsmith was when he surrendered his driver’s license at the age of 85 years.

For more than 50 years, I was the main driver in our family, as I piloted our giant Buick station wagon down the highway, or delivered our children to band practice, Junior Achievement meetings, Cadets or other of their numerous after-school activities. While I would rate myself as only “average” in driving skills and abilities, my half century of motoring was accomplished with only a minimum of mishaps: one speeding ticket, three fender benders, two highway flat tires, and a few minor incidents of backing up through the garage door. However, I was a cranky road trainer when my children were learning how to drive and an even crankier driver when going grocery shopping early in our marriage before Audrey got her driving license.

I don’t think that I ever really enjoyed driving a car, even on the open highway with the tape deck player blasting out music from ABBA or John Denver, and a giant bag of barbecue potato chips. I do recall being scared silly when driving through night time blizzards, Calgary’s Deerfoot Trail at rush hour, or the automatic car wash at the 23rd Avenue Petro Canada gas station (I don’t know why but I am intimidated by car washes).

Now I am a mere passenger on the road of life, so I try, as Audrey always reminds me, to “Just look out the window and enjoy the ride.”

Calendar:

Sunday, December 9th	11:30ish	Newcomers Luncheon
Saturday, December 15th	4:00 pm	Community Christmas Carol Sing
Sunday, December 16th	10:30 am	Children's Christmas Pageant
Wednesday, December 19th	7:00 pm	Christmas Healing Service
Sunday, December 23rd	10:30 am	Christmas Choir Cantata
Monday, December 24th	5:00 pm 7:00 pm 9:00 pm	Candlelight Service with Choir Candlelight Service with Choir & Handbells Candlelight Service & Communion
Sunday, December 30th	10:30 am	Worship Service
Friday, January 11th		FRONT PEW DEADLINE

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
- Thursdays 7:30 pm— Choir Rehearsal; new singers welcome!
- Weekly Sunday Worship-10:30 am (Sunday School and Youth Discussion)

**Christmas Worship Services & Events**

- **Community Christmas Carol Sing:** Saturday, Dec. 15th at 4:00 p.m.
- **Children's Christmas Pageant:** Sunday, Dec. 16th at 10:30 a.m.
- **Christmas Healing Service:** Wednesday, Dec. 19th at 7:00 p.m.
- **Christmas Choir Cantata:** Sunday, Dec. 23rd at 10:30 a.m.
- **Christmas Eve Services:** Monday, Dec. 24th
  - > 5:00 p.m. Candlelight Service with Choir
  - > 7:00 p.m. Candlelight Service with Choir & Handbells
  - > 9:00 p.m. Candlelight Service & Communion
- **Sunday, December 30th** 10:30 a.m. Worship Service



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