

# the front pew



Vol. 17 No. 2 RIVERBEND UNITED CHURCH 14907-45 Ave., Edmonton, AB March 2019

## Valerie's Reveries

### Singing a Song of Faith: Lenten Opportunities

Lent is the 40 days of preparation for Easter. It is a time to take stock of our spiritual lives and see what "next" we are being invited into in our faith journeys. The church is offering several opportunities for this purpose and I hope something seems fitting for your calling.

We begin "clearing out our cupboards" with a Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper on March 5 at 6:00 pm, followed by a Service of Ashes at 7:00 pm. The ashes remind us of our dependence on the Source of all, for our very lives.

On Sunday, March 17 at 9:15 am, we begin a 4-week study of "A Song of Faith," the new statement of faith of the United Church of Canada, written as a poetic expression of our theology. We will reference the book *Singing a Song of Faith*, which is a daily devotional for Lent. Copies of each week's readings will be available following Sunday services or in the office.

From March 17 through to April 7, we will also focus on "A Song of Faith" in our Lenten worship services, exploring what we believe about God, Jesus, the Bible, and the church as community.

Holy Week begins with Palm Sunday on April 14 with the Whole Community Worship Team leading us. On Good Friday, April 19, at

10:30 am, we will share in honouring that dark and sacred day when Jesus was crucified.

Easter is April 21 and we will celebrate The Rising with song and worship.

In addition, if you are an adult or youth (grade 9 and up) who is interested in being Confirmed into full membership of the church, please talk to Valerie by Sunday, March 10.

May this Lenten season be fruitful and edifying for us, individually and as a congregation.

Warmly,  
Valerie



## Muffin Sunday!

*The Sunday school children with the fruits of the labour.* The children worked alongside the youth in the church kitchen to prepare muffins and cookies for February's 'Muffin Sunday'. Their baking talents were enjoyed by many!

## March Health Corner

As 2019 continues to unfold, March is shaping up to be one of the busiest months of the year. First up, March is Liver Health Month. Often what people think they know about liver disease can be as difficult to combat as what people don't know. There are a lot of preconceived notions and misconceptions about liver disease that can make it difficult for patients to talk to their families, friends, colleagues and others. Many people, for instance, believe that only those who drink or take drugs are at risk of contracting liver disease. The truth is, alcohol is only one cause of the over 100 forms of liver disease. The Canadian Liver Foundation's awareness efforts try to dispel the myths that stand in the way of the public's understanding of the risks and impact of liver disease on all Canadians. For more information please visit [www.liver.ca](http://www.liver.ca).

The month of March is Endometriosis Awareness Month. Endometriosis Awareness takes place across the globe in March with a mission to raise awareness of a disease which affects an estimated 176 million women worldwide. Endometriosis affects women worldwide regardless of their ethnic and social background. Many remain undiagnosed and are therefore not treated. The most common symptom of endometriosis is pelvic pain. The pain often correlates to the menstrual cycle, but a woman with endometriosis may also experience pain that doesn't correlate to her cycle – this is what makes this condition so unpredictable and frustrating. For many women, the pain of endometriosis is so severe and debilitating that it impacts their lives in significant ways. It is estimated that 30-40% of women with endometriosis may not be able to have children. For many women, management of this disease may be a long-term process. Therefore, it is important to educate yourself, take the time to find a good doctor, and consider joining a local support group. Please visit [www.endometriosis.org](http://www.endometriosis.org) for more information.

Colon Cancer Awareness Month is also in March. Most Canadians don't like to talk about colon cancer but the month of March is a great time to change that. It's a good time for survivors, patients, caregivers, and everyone who has been affected by this disease to tell their story and to talk about a disease that is preventable, treatable and beatable. Colon cancer is Canada's second leading cause of cancer death. However, colon cancer is one of the most preventable forms of cancer. If caught early, over 90% of these cases could and should result in a full recovery. More information on this disease can be found at

[www.coloncancercanada.ca](http://www.coloncancercanada.ca).

March is also National Nutrition Month. The 2019 Nutrition Month Campaign's slogan is: Unlock the Potential of Food. Dietitians will help Canadians realize the potential of food to fuel, discover, prevent, heal and bring Canadians together. Dietitians believe in the power of food to enhance lives and improve health. The goal of the campaign is to provide information and guidance to assist Canadians in discovering the potential of food to improve our health and wellbeing. Nutritional fact sheets, videos, along with tasty recipes can be found on the dietitians of Canada website at [www.dietitians.ca](http://www.dietitians.ca).

National Social Work Month is also found in the month of March. The theme adopted by the Canadian Association of Social Workers Board for the 2019 is: Real People. Real Impact. National Social Work Month gives all social workers in Canada an occasion to celebrate social ideals and values. Please visit [www.casw-acts.ca](http://www.casw-acts.ca) for more information.

The Canadian Pharmacists Association is celebrating Pharmacist Awareness Month for March 2019 with the theme: Rethink Pharmacists. Pharmacists across Canada have had a widely expanded scope of practice over the past decade that has them doing more for their patients than ever before. During the month, pharmacists want to celebrate the great strides the profession has made and highlight the health care services now offered at the pharmacy. Please visit [www.pharmacists.ca](http://www.pharmacists.ca).

March is also home to Red Cross month. Every year, the Canadian Red Cross observes Red Cross month in March and honours the efforts undertaken by the Red Cross Movement to fulfil the humanitarian mission of the organization as a whole. The Canadian Red Cross mission is to improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity in Canada and around the world. The Canadian Red Cross Society is part of the largest humanitarian network in the world, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. This network includes the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (Federation) and 189 National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies dedicated to improving the situation of the most vulnerable throughout the world. The Canadian Red Cross is the leading humanitarian organization through which people voluntarily demonstrate their caring for others in need. More information can be found at [www.redcross.ca](http://www.redcross.ca).

## Property & Maintenance March 2019

**Wanted:** Volunteers to join Property and Maintenance Committee/Facilities Committee. (I plan to step down from my position as chair for the Property and Maintenance Committee as of June 30, 2019)

We are working as a team to evaluate and complete various projects this year 2019. The team varies on the jobs to be done. Team members are David Galbraith (myself), Geoff Halferdahl, Tom LaPointe, Matthew Schoenhardt and others may join depending on their expertise or equipment needed to complete a project.

1. Sidewalk Snow Removal: Tyler a volunteer from E2 has agreed to clear the sidewalks during the week in and around the church. Eshan from Brander Gardens volunteers to shovel on the weekends.
2. Snow Shovels, Brooms and Ice Melt are located at every door. If needed, whoever is first at the church could shovel the walkways to the entrances to the doors. There is a shovel kept outside at the back door if anyone can't get in but wants to shovel.
3. Construction has begun on building storage cupboards behind the basement folding doors.

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Besides my birthday, the month of March is also home to ...

- International Women's Day: March 8
- World Glaucoma Week: March 10-16
- World Kidney Day: March 14
- Brain Awareness Week: March 11-17
- World Water Day: March 22
- World Tuberculosis Day: March 24
- Purple Day: March 26

Finally, I would be remiss if I didn't mention that Saint Patrick's Day is celebrated annually on March 17, the traditional death date of Saint Patrick (c. AD 385–461), the foremost patron saint of Ireland. Saint Patrick's Day was made an official Christian feast day in the early 17th century. The day commemorates Saint Patrick and the arrival of Christianity in Ireland, and celebrates the heritage and culture of the Irish in general. Saint Patrick's Day is a public holiday in the Republic of Ireland, Northern Ireland, Newfoundland and Labrador, and the British Overseas Territory of Montserrat. It is also widely celebrated by the Irish descendants around the world, especially in Great Britain, Canada, the United States, Argentina, Australia, and New Zealand. Fun Fact...Saint Patrick's Day is celebrated in more countries than any other national festival!

I think that about sums up all the health events and celebrations taking place this month. Wishing everyone a peaceful and blessed March.

4. Next projects are:

- Basement Kitchen counter Renovations (\$3,000.00 +)
- Front door replacement and disabled door button access (\$5,000.00 +)
- Replace the lights on the sanctuary cross with LED lights (\$1,000.00)

5. Projects under evaluation:

- Replace sky light windows in sanctuary and windows in narthex (estimates at \$52,057.11, \$70,000.00 and \$142,516.24)
- Repave a section of the parking lot closest to the church including the large pot hole (approximately \$30,000.00)
- Purchase a power sweeper to clear snow on the sidewalks and sweep up the gravel on the parking lot in the spring (\$800.00 - \$5,000.00)

***David Galbraith—(780) 717-1304***  
***Property and Maintenance/Facilities Committee***

***Dawn Power***

## Celtic Night of Music!



Come one and all to a night of Celtic music, food and fellowship on the evening of Saturday, March 16, 2019, the day before St. Patrick's Day. Many of you have probably noticed how many of our beloved hymns in Voices United and More Voices are actually based on Celtic folk tunes. The Choir, the Ensemble, and some special guests, including our own Lois Lund on her Celtic Harp, will celebrate these songs, and as well, will be performing some old standards that everyone can sing along to. And as a special Education event, Charles Hitschfeld will be giving a Seminar on "Uisce Beatha", the Water of Life (better known to us as Whiskey!) Charles will explain the difference between Irish, Scotch, Canadian and American Whiskey, and if you ask nicely, may well provide you with a sample to taste! The concert is free of charge, as is the Seminar, (donations accepted, of course). Dinner of Irish stew and Soda Bread, lovingly prepared by the Turkey Team, will be \$20.00. All are welcome, or, as the Irish say, Cead Mile Failte!



## Biblical cake making - Youth Activity



On Saturday February 23rd, the youth gathered for their annual 'biblical cake making' event. The following day slices of cake were shared with the congregation after church for a contribution. We are pleased to announce that the youth group raised \$170 that will be donated to the Stollery Children's Hospital.

## A View From the Rear Pew

by Brent Skinner

Border walls. This is a big topic these days. U.S. President Donald Trump is insisting that his government build a 3142 km long boundary fence stretching from the Gulf of Mexico to the Pacific Ocean. This wall is promised to be “big, beautiful and nine metres tall.” Trump is probably a fan of poet Robert Frost who has written, “Good walls make good neighbours”. The purpose of the wall is to prevent hordes of refugees, murderers, drug dealers and “velvet Elvis” artists from swarming into the United States. He claims that “walls work”, and will help keep America safe.

As an amateur historian, I have briefly reviewed the relative success of great walls of the past.

- **Hadrian’s Wall**— This masonry wall was built by the Romans around 122 a.d. and stretched 117.5 kilometres across Britannia from the North Sea to the Irish Sea. It was studded with watch towers (called mile castles), fronted by a deep ditch and backed up by several large military camps. Designed to stop Scots and Picts from crossing into the empire and stealing cattle, molesting women and playing bagpipes, it was mostly successful, and also facilitated an organized trade between the two countries whereby the Romans got double malt scotch whisky and haggis in return for olive oil, red wine and gold coins. The biggest problem was the low morale of Roman soldiers, many of whom originated from warm climates and were stuck on the cold, windy and boring northern border of the empire.
- **Great Wall of China**—This masonry and packed earth wall was a staggering 21,156 kilometres long. Constructed in the 14th century under the Ming dynasty, this wall is probably humankind’s largest single building project and is said to be visible from outer space. Intended to keep the Huns and other raiders on the desert side of the wall, it was topped by watch towers and backed by large military camps. It usually slowed rather than stopped barbarian hordes, who were focused on conquering rather than merely raiding the “Middle Kingdom”.
- **Offas’ Dyke**—This earthwork was constructed by the Anglo Saxons in the 8th century and stretches 240 kilometres along the English/Welsh border. This massive dyke is mysterious, and nobody really knows

the “why” except that the Welsh people can get irritating, since they sing all the time and shoot arrows at anyone who dares to complain. Welsh football fans still blast out “Guide me O Thou Great Jehovah” at the beginning of each match, so Offas’ Dyke was not that successful.

- **Maginot Line**—This massive line of underground forts, barracks and railways was studded with artillery caissons and stretched 1509 kilometres from the Swiss to Belgian border. Built in the 1920’s for a huge amount of money, it anticipated that the tactics of The Great War (WWI) would be repeated in the next war with Germany. The Maginot Line was a total failure, as the Wehrmacht bypassed the Maginot line by attacking through Holland and Belgium.
- **The Berlin Wall**—This 155 km wall was built in 1961 to keep East Germans under communist rule and to stop a growing flood of people from fleeing to the west. While there were some daring escapes (such as hot air ballooning over the wall), the fact that East German guards shot to kill escapees kept most East Germans trapped in East Germany.
- **The Skinner’s back yard fence**—This 2 meter high wooden fence stretched for 60 meters around our rear yard and was designed to provide privacy (e.g. naked barbecuing) and to keep the livestock from wandering down the street. It was only modestly successful, as our corner lot yard was overlooked by two and three storey homes across the street and our microdog, Fergus, discovered that he could squeeze under the fence while our guest dog, Gooby, would leap over the yard gate in feats of amazing athleticism.

So there you have it. Through our world’s long history, walls don’t always work the way wall builders intend.

Also, there is the matter of wall maintenance. My backyard fence needed painting every 4 or 5 years, along with periodic replacement of rotting posts or boards. Imagine the ongoing maintenance of a 3142 km wall along the U.S./ Mexico border. If it is a metal wall, as currently proposed, the painting of the wall will be a never ending task. Also, all the signs facing Mexico will need to be changed from “Welcome to the United States” to “Not Welcome to the United States”, “Please Go Away” and “No Trespassing – Private Country”. To keep border patrol members from being totally bored when stationed out in the desert or high

**Calendar:**

Friday, March 8th	10:00 am & 4:00 pm	WECAN Food Basket order placement
Tuesday, March 12th	1:00 pm	Women of Riverbend United Church gathering
	7:00 pm	Official Board Meeting
Saturday, March 16th	5:00 pm 6:00 pm 7:00 pm	Celtic Night of Music • Whisky tasting • Dinner • Concert
Sunday, March 17th	9:15 am	“A Song of Faith” Book Study in Chapel (4 consecutive Sundays)
Friday, March 22nd	10:00 am & 4:00 pm	WECAN Food Basket order pickup
Friday, March 22nd & Saturday 23rd		Make Tax Time Pay
Sunday, March 24th		Worship Service & RUC Annual General Meeting—2018 Annual Report & Financial Statements will be presented along with 2019 budget
Thursday, March 28th	10:00 am 11:00 am	Grandview Service Devonshire Service
Friday, April 5th		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)

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up the mesas, the project will need to include air conditioned barracks, swimming pools and satellite television.

To end with another quote by Robert Frost – “Before I built a wall, I’d ask to know what I was walling in or walling out and to whom I was like to give offence. Something there is that doesn’t love a wall”.

**the front pew**



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**Next submission deadline: Friday, April 19th, 2019**

