

the front pew



Vol. 17 No. 56 RIVERBEND UNITED CHURCH 14907-45 Ave., Edmonton, AB November 2019

Valerie's Reveries

*We shall not cease from exploration,
and the end of all our exploring
will be to arrive where we started
and know the place for the first time.
- T. S. Eliot -*

As the days grow shorter and as some of our friends fly south, we move into the quiet days of our faith when we prepare for the Holy Night that changed the world. The last Sunday before Advent begins is the last Sunday of the Christian calendar. On that day, November 24, we will experience each season of the liturgical year through Scripture, Song, and Reflection. If you've ever wondered what all those "churchy" words mean like Advent, Epiphany, Lent, or Pentecost, or if you already know what they mean, I hope you'll join us for this special service.

Then on December 1 our Advent preparation begins. We will explore together what it means to "Come home for Christmas" —with so many different experiences of that invitation on so many different levels. What does "coming home" mean to you? Does anything of Eliot's poem above ring true for you regarding "home"? I'd love to hear your thoughts. I need sermon fodder on what it means to come home!

Join us any Sunday at 10:30 to gather as the community and seek to touch into what brings life, and let it touch into us, together.

Seeing the light in the dark,

Valerie

Upcoming Special Sundays:

- | | |
|---------|--|
| Nov. 24 | Baptism of Liam Purkess (Neil and Cindy)
Seasons of the Church special worship service |
| Dec. 1 | Advent 1: Come Home for Christmas |
| Dec. 8 | Advent 2: Come Home for Christmas |
| Dec. 15 | Advent 3: Children/Youth-Led Christmas
Worship |
| Dec. 22 | Advent 4: Come Home for Christmas
Baptism of Abigail Stoski (Heather Ainsworth
& Ian Stoski) |
| Dec. 24 | Christmas Eve services

5:00 Candlelight Service with Choir
7:00 Candlelight Service with Choir and Handbells
9:00 Candlelight Service with Communion |
| Dec. 29 | Rev Tom Sawyer, Minister Emeritus preaching |
| Jan. 12 | Baptism of Jesus
Baptism of Leora and Feya Proud (Michael
and Victoria) |
| Jan. 19 | Whole Community Worship Sunday with
Ensemble |

TOM'S TALK (Round 2) – Tom Sawyer

Sometime during the summer of 1960, while I was roughnecking on an oil rig in the Drayton Valley area, the Peace River Presbytery of the United Church was meeting. A copy of *The Fort Nelson News* had been sent to someone who was attending the meeting. This weekly paper was prepared at Ft. Nelson (mile 300 on the Alaska Highway), the material then bussed down the highway to Dawson Creek (mile zero) then over the Hart Highway to Prince George (totaling a little over 800 km one way), printed, then sent back again. The editorial in that edition was “Where the hell can I find a Protestant Minister?” This started a process that found Bev and me arriving at Ft. Nelson at the beginning of August, 1963, and moving into a 40 x 10 foot trailer parked at mile 299 of the Alaska Highway, as I was assigned to continue a ministry that began two years earlier.

Bob Angus, who was the owner and sole employee of the paper, suggested rather strongly that I, who don't have

the writing skills of my wife, should write a weekly column. Thus, “Tom's Talk” began its distribution from Dawson Creek, BC (mile zero) to Watson Lake, YT (mile 635).

It is now almost sixty years since “Tom's Talk” came into existence. I have had countless experiences and roles from local churches to the General Council (national level), meeting with individuals, Congregations, Presbyteries' and Conferences. Among those experiences I've often sat with the dying and their families. In a sort of role-reversal, Bev now finds herself involved with “The Front Pew”, Riverbend United's Newsletter. She is pulling a gentle “Bob Angus” on me after my health issues of the last few years, suggesting that I should be writing occasionally. So here goes – if it gets by Bev, who is this issue's editor!

Last year, after having a colon cancer removed very successfully three years earlier, I went on a chemo regime for a *Gastro Intestinal Stromal Tumor*. This year, when the medication was no longer shrinking the GIST, the decision was made to remove it

surgically. My 2019 medical journey began with three serious surgeries that saw my stomach replumbed, both my intestines patched, removal of my duodenum, spleen, gall bladder, and pancreas, and, with over 100 days in hospital over a five month period, a weight loss of about 20 kg. There was one occasion when my family was told by the doctor that she did not expect me to make it through to morning. The final twelve-and-a-half hour surgery was carried out by two surgeons with worldwide reputations, with my permission to do whatever they judged necessary. It was radical, but I healed sufficiently to come home in June, and have been gaining strength steadily since then.

This whole experience has given me much to reflect upon. We are so fortunate to live in Canada, with excellent care that does not leave us bankrupt! Reflecting spiritually, I wonder why God brought me successfully through this. Is there something that I am now being called to do? Perhaps it is time for me to talk about my continuing faith journey, which may be of interest to others - thus, perhaps, a 60- year- old resuscitation of “Tom's Talk”.

Cookie Walk Cancelled

For those of us accustomed to baking dozens of Christmas cookies in November, in preparation for our congregation's annual Cookie Walk, this year will see a change. You will only need to bake for your own needs this year! Yes, that's right, there will no 2019 cookie walk.

Marie MacLean and Irene Meglis decided after the 2018 event that the time had come for them to step back from leading the arrangements for the cookie walk. They made announcements on Sundays to indicate their intention, and their willingness to help with the leadership transition if someone volunteered for this role. No-one did. Community members will miss this event, and the loss of revenue will be felt in our budget.

Marie and Irene want to thank all those volunteers who made this event such a success over the years: bakers, set-up volunteers, choir members who sang to the purchasers as they waited their turn to shop, and others. They have expressed their willingness to work with anyone in 2020 who might step up. Many thanks to Marie and Irene for their work in making the event such a success!

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. Crohn's most commonly affects the end of the small bowel (the ileum) and the beginning of the colon, but it may affect any part of the gastrointestinal (GI) tract, from the mouth to the anus. 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.

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. Type 1 diabetes is always treated with insulin. Meal planning also helps with keeping blood glucose at the right levels. Type 2 diabetes occurs when the body can't properly use the insulin that is released or does not make enough insulin. 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. Type 2 diabetes more often develops in adults, but 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 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 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

A few “notes” from Paula!

Music making is alive and well at Riverbend (in case you hadn't noticed!). As I type, our choir, ensemble and bell choir, as well as Emily and our youngest musicians are immersed in Christmas music rehearsals. And I do believe that even amidst the snow, ideas for spring are budding in some of our musicians' minds!

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of our dedicated musicians, some of whom participate in more than one of our music groups, for enriching Riverbend's Sunday services on a regular basis AND filling some of our Saturday nights with memorable sounds. The “blasts from the past” played by Marvellous Marv's assemblage of more than 30 Riverbend musicians and friends is still resonating in the sanctuary! (And word on the street is that possibly more Irish music MAY be emanating from another group of our own come March!)

Christmas is just around the corner, and soon it will be time for YOU to join in “letting the rafters ring” at our annual Carol Sing on Saturday, Dec. 14th at 4:00 p.m. We hope to host people from the surrounding neighbourhoods as well as your friends and family for a full hour of carols, and performances from all 3 of our music groups.

And speaking of ringing the rafters, have you considered being a part of our music activities more often? I would like to invite you to ask me about how you can participate. Singing in the choir or playing an instrument with the ensemble doesn't have to be a months long commitment. Not all of our choir members sing every week, and some instrumentalists enjoy just joining us occasionally. If your Monday evenings are free, however, a couple of spots in the bell choir have opened up! Some music reading ability is needed to be successful in this group, but no previous experience with bells is required, so please do talk to Lois or myself if you think you might like to try it out!

And finally, thank you ALL for encouraging the music endeavours here at Riverbend! Your enthusiastic support means a lot to Andrew, Lois, myself, and our many talented musicians.



***Paula Roberts,
Music Director***

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

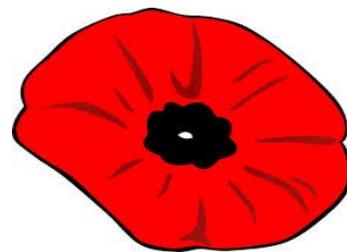
November is also home to: Lung Cancer Awareness Month; Fall Prevention Month; and National Domestic Violence Awareness Month.

Specials days being spotlighted this month are...

- World Pneumonia Day: November 12
- World Diabetes 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



***Blessings,
Dawn Power***

A Note Regarding Communication

At its October meeting, the Official Board asked Christine Ens to gather a group together to discuss the church's various communications: their intentions, effectiveness, and strategies. This came about at the request of Christine and Bev Sawyer, co-editors of *The Front Pew*, who were receiving fewer entries each month to make a substantial issue.

That group has now met, and discussed our various means of communication, to whom they were directed, and how they were working. Is our web site effective? What about our Facebook and Twitter presence? Increasingly, of course, these are becoming the prevailing means of communication in the broader society. Is that also true of our church and its local community?

Where does that leave our own, more "internal" communications, which include everything from the Friday emails Jackie sends to our entire email list; Sunday morning announcements, both spoken and projected; and *The Front Pew*? Various forms of feedback suggest that these all matter to those who receive them, with some slight modifications suggested for some of them. With regard to *The Front Pew* specifically, the group felt that four issues a year would be sufficient. Each issue should contain information from our various groups, teams or committees regarding their priorities, plans for the next few months, or a comment on recent activities – and, we hope, continued observations in "The View from The Rear Pew". Target times would be early September, late November, February and late April or May. This would fit with activities around church "seasons" such as fall start-up, Advent/Christmas, Lent/Easter, then late spring/summer. It would mean that contributors would have fewer issues to be concerned with, but perhaps would be more able to contribute an article that would keep our congregation more aware of current happenings in the church. There's so much going on, and we want everyone to have as wide a view as possible of the community, energy, caring at Riverbend United!

The **2019 Photo Directory** is a much anticipated way to enhance communication within the congregation. Since photos were taken in May, Jackie and some volunteer assistants have been carefully reviewing and proofing all the material. Printed copies should arrive by the end of November. Whether or not you and your family had a photo taken, there will be a copy of the Directory available for you to pick up. They will be set up on a table in the Narthex where you can stop by for your family's copy. Thank you for your patience while we complete this important project.

Reaching Out at Christmastime

By Judi Cook

The Outreach Committee is continuing our support of the two inner city women's group homes. **Our Place** is a permanent residence, housing 10 women. **Inner Way** is a transition shelter with a maximum of 6 residents, who can stay for a maximum of 3 months. We will again provide gift bags for both groups. This year we have received a list of the women staying in Our Place (one new person this year), so now we are able to personalize their bags.

RUC individuals and groups may sign up to "build" gift bags for the very appreciative women you wish to support. Or, if you prefer, you could contribute by adding items to the playpen that will be set up in the narthex. These items will then be added to the various gift bags. Financial contributions and gift cards are also very welcome. This could support our extended gift card program at the same time (please see the article elsewhere in this newsletter)!

We will be having a Christmas Dinner and party with the ladies and staff in Mid-December in order to bring the gifts, to sing and dance and share an evening together. For further information, please contact Judi Cook, 780-435-0838 or judi@royallepage.com, or Erin James, 780-987-4702.

Safeway Cards (and others!)

Many thanks to Bob Serne, who has managed the program whereby we purchase Safeway gift cards at a discount, and then had them available for purchase at church every Sunday for many years. This program has contributed several thousand dollars to our revenues over the years. He has now retired, and we are grateful to Doug Michalko, who has assumed responsibility for this program.

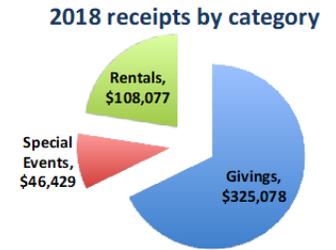
Safeway cards of various denominations will continue to be available for purchase as usual on Sunday mornings. As well, there's a new opportunity! You can pre-order other gift cards from such businesses as Home Depot, Superstore, Canadian Tire, Moxie's, Esso, Shell, PetroCanada, Amazon.ca, and others – perfect gifts, with Christmas around the corner! For more information or to place an order, please see Doug in the narthex before or after church on Sundays, or email him at ruc.giftcards@gmail.com.

Stewardship campaign 2019

Dear Members of Riverbend United:

We have just concluded three Sundays of our annual stewardship campaign where we asked you to please consider giving of your time, talents and treasure towards the ministry of our congregation. We then asked you to bring or send in your 2020 pledge card so the Finance committee can have the best estimate possible of the resources we can expect towards the support of our ministry as we develop the 2020 budget. It's still not too late to submit your pledge card, and if you haven't made your commitment for 2020 yet, please do so by mid-December. In order to explain to you our financial position, and why we need you to support our ministry as much as you can, I offer the following points.

1. Throughout 2018 and 2019, our income has been the same as our expenses. You can see by the pie chart that 2/3 of our income derives from your giving contributions and the other third from rentals and special events. Given that the income from rentals and special events is more or less fixed, the only source to meet the necessity of inflation or to deal with building maintenance needs is through your givings.
2. There are essentially no savings or rainy day fund. We have only \$25,000 in the bank to deal with the most acute emergencies or to make up expenses due to shortfalls in givings.
3. We are relying too much on 12 families to provide more than 25% of our givings income. If we lose even one of them, our expenses will be greater than our income.



Giving Level	# Families (2017)	# Families (2018)
\$10,000	5	4
\$5,000 – 10,000	7	8
Total Donors	12 5.3% of Donors	12 4.8% of Donors
Total Dollars	At least \$90,000 28.9% of total \$	\$85,184 27.3% of total \$

4. We need the vast majority of givers to do more. Far too many give less than \$100 each year. We urge everyone to step up to \$25 per week or \$1300 per year. Using PAR will guarantee your donation while you are away and assure the continuation of the work of your congregation.

Giving Level	# Families (2017)	# Families (2018)
\$500-1000	34	34
\$100-500	49	42
<\$100	53	81
Total Donors	136 60.4% of Donors	157 62.3% of Donors
Total Dollars	At most \$62,000 19.9% of total \$	At most \$60,000 19.2% of total \$

5. The budgeting process for 2020 will prove challenging. Unless we note that the pledges are increasing, we will have to consider recommending a no-increase budget to the board. In addition, there are many urgent building repair and maintenance items that do not fall into the regular budget that need attention in 2020. We will need to find the resources to pay for these repairs.

I trust that each of you will prayerfully consider your opportunity to invest in the ministry and community work of Riverbend United Church and to respond to the best of your ability to offer your time, talents and treasures to make this work possible.

Thank you very much, David Olson, Chair of the Finance Committee

Journeying Toward Reconciliation

By Jill Spaner and Jennifer Tupper

An exciting new group for Riverbend United, sponsored by the Affirming Committee, has met twice and continues to welcome new members. The Learning Together for Reconciliation group is currently defining itself and its mandate. We seek a greater understanding of Indigenous history, politics, spirituality, and truth in order to move toward Reconciliation as a community, and individual growth in learning about the experiences of “all our relations”. Did you know that this beautiful phrase, Akwe Nia”Tetawe:neren (Mohawk), is written on our United Church crest?

We meet once a month in the chapel (next meeting, Monday, Dec. 2, 7:30), and have begun to identify where we all are on our journeys to wisdom. It is humbling to acknowledge how little we know of this part of our history, but we are supporting each other as we learn together. So far, we are watching video and reading from the many resources available. We would welcome anyone with an interest in joining us. The group will remain open; our program is not so structured that any newcomer would feel lost. We recommend watching the documentary, “Treaty Talks”, online. It has proven to be quite foundational to our conversations and understanding so far. Please consider joining us as we learn together.

Whole Community Worship

Do you enjoy worship that aims to engage and foster community? Are you interested in exploring different ways to worship? If your answer is yes then please consider being involved in the whole community worship services. The team is looking for individuals, families and/or church groups to help with the planning and implementation of these monthly worship services. There are ten services each year, with typically the month of December being led by the children and the month of May being led by the youth. This leaves eight services, and the hope is that enough people will sign up so that the commitment would be one service each year, although if you really enjoy the process, why not consider joining the core group. Resources will be available to help get you started and if enough interest is shown then a workshop can be arranged. Interested? Want to find out more? Then talk to the team of Joanne Little, Emily Severson, Randy Nelson, Rev. Valerie or Carolyn Miller.

Whole Community Worship

A Reflection - Carolyn Miller

Over the last six years it has been a privilege to have been involved in planning and participating in our Whole Community Worship Services. Chris Giffen, our previous youth and family minister, formed the Ensemble and was a great advocate for inter-generational worship and so Whole Community Worship was born. When he left RUC a group of us decided to carry on the monthly tradition. I feel that the time is right for others to step in and be involved in planning and leading (please see the article looking for volunteers), and so the November worship will be the last one that I lead (although who knows - I never say never). There have been so many wonderful services over the years that have nourished my soul. Some of the highlights for me personally have been:

- The nature walk around the Sanctuary looking at beautiful photos of creation in all its glory.
- Making of the “hand” wreath as part of our first Camping themed service. This photo was used as a Bulletin cover and seen by United churches across the country.
- The exploration of The New Creed, in particular the beautiful Anthem written by Ben; listening to the words “I am not alone, you are not alone, we are not alone” being sung touched me deeply.
- Telling of Bible stories in a Godly Play fashion, engaging both child and adult alike, in Spirit-filled silence.
- Inviting the children to think of Jesus as our lighthouse, which is the way I now think of him in my life.

Perhaps some of these spoke to you also, or maybe you have other particular favourites; that’s the great thing about worship, we all experience it differently. I want to finish by thanking the congregation for being open to try new things and for being so supportive. These past six years have truly been a blessing for me and I have received so much more than I have given. I look forward to supporting the next chapter of Whole Community Worship, seeing what new ideas people will bring to the services, all from the comfort of the pews.

A Congregation of Authors

By David M. Olson

You may not have been aware, but sitting somewhere near you in church on nearly any given Sunday is a published author. Riverbend United Church has or had many entertaining, informative and accomplished authors who have written books with youth, young adults, humor, home cooks, historians, law & politics, educators and faith leaders in mind. These books have enriched our lives, revealed how we came to be and whom we are, entertained, informed, improved, and taught us. Consistently, they reflect Canadian character, Canadian achievement and Canadian contributions to the world in which we live. All of the books described here can be found in our Riverbend United Church Library and are available for borrowing (and returning!). I encourage you and your children to read and discuss them and appreciate how members of our congregation, those who are authors and those who would like to be authors, have contributed to Canadian thought and society. These are the authors I know about. If there are others among us, please let me know.

Susan E. Merritt

A former lawyer who joined our congregation three years ago after moving from Ridgeway, Ontario, Susan wrote for youth and young adults with a special emphasis on Canadian history and strong female characters.

The *Stone Orchard* is set during the period of the Fenian Raids in Ontario in 1866. It follows Maud Fraser after her family and friends fled the invading Fenians when she is forced to care for the wounded from both armies. She and her friends struggle to keep the injured soldiers alive while Maud learns her family secret and discovers the truth about her brother's sudden death.

A Mudcat Kids adventure, *Down in the Dumpster*, is a quick read describing the perils of Monica, who hates her new school and feels she will never be happy there, that is until she finds new friends in the dumpster!

Susan's *magnus opus*, though, is her three volume set of *Her Story, Women from Canada's Past, Her Story II and Her Story III*. These three volumes of short stories chronicle a rich array of 46 influential, strong-minded and diverse women who helped to mold the Canadian character. They cover people from Jacquelin de la Tour, born in France in 1602, a Musketeer in Petticoats, who fought and lost her life protecting her husband's property and position, to Elsie Gregory MacGill, a pioneering 20th Century aeronautical

engineer who became the first woman to design an aircraft. Representing French, English, Ukrainian, Indigenous women and women of colour who championed courage, strength and achievement, these are inspiring stories of intrepid individuals who shaped the story of Canada.

Brent Skinner

Sitting for years in the rear pew of the church, Brent Skinner not only worshiped, but from there cast his canny eye on the world and life around him. Then he reflected on what he saw, and wrote a regular column in the *Front Pew* congregational newsletter. Now 52 of his best articles are compiled in *View from the Rear Pew*. Settle back for a guffaw and a snicker or two plus a modicum of reflection about the contemporary Canadian character (written with a *double entendre* in mind). Learn why Brent wishes he was born Welsh or about his struggles with complying with the annual reporting requirements of the Canada Revenue Agency or the wisdom he has attained by being married to Audrey and having children and grandchildren.

Vernon R. Wishart

An ordained minister and a self-declared baseball addict, as well as a teacher, writer, storyteller, hockey player, and carrier of Cree blood, the late Vern Wishart's real secret life was that of a historian. He received an honorary degree from St. Stephen's College in 1972 and was the recipient of the Edmonton Historical Board's Historical Recognition Award. His labour of love was the dedicated piecing together of the life story and adventures of his triple great grandmother, an ancestral Cree woman named, *Kisiskaciman (Saskatchewan) Tracing my Grandmother's Footsteps*. This creative non-fiction story about a native woman in our neighboring province in our beautiful country, Kanata (Canada), documents the story of how much she accomplished through her traditional ways of child-rearing and parenting skills. Through her story we gain an appreciation for the contributions of the First People in forging our modern Canada. Vern's book is dedicated to the memory of the missing and murdered First Nation women torn from our midst.

Marjorie Montgomery Bowker

Graduating in 1939 from the University of Alberta with degrees in Law and Arts, Marjorie was admitted to the bar in 1940, shortly thereafter married Wilbur Bowker, and then took over his law practice while he was on active service during World War II. In the years following the war and while he served as Dean of Law at the University of Alberta for 20 years, she raised their three children, chaired

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or served on several local and national boards and committees (including the board of University Hospital as its first female member) and took on a speaking engagement at fourteen Canadian Clubs across the country and to the Canadian Forces Base in Germany on the topic, “Can the Family Survive?” In 1966 she was appointed a judge of the Family and Juvenile Courts of Alberta as the first woman Family Court Judge in Alberta, a position she held for eighteen years. In 1972, she was instrumental in establishing the Family Court of Edmonton, a court-centered marriage conciliation service and the first of its kind in Canada. It was aimed at preventing or reducing divorce and reconciling differences created by divorce. It would become a model for other courts in Canada and Australia. She retired as a judge in 1983 but continued her active service contributions to boards and volunteer activities. These public service activities drew her into becoming an author in order to comment upon issues that were contemporary at that time but are also topical today. Her book on the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement, *On Guard for Thee* (1988), was a national best seller. Her two books on the constitution, “*The Meech Lake Accord* (1990) and *Canada’s Constitutional Crisis: Making Sense of it all* (1991), were also best sellers. In 1990 she received the Order of Canada, and she passed away in 2006.

Joanne K. Olson

Along with colleague, Margaret Clark, a Teaching Chaplain, Joanne wrote *Nursing within a Faith Community*, which expands the literature in the field of Parish Nursing. She argues that the concepts of ‘parish’ and ‘parish nursing’ should be expanded to those of ‘faith community’ and ‘faith community nursing’ and include the rich diversity of faith traditions. The work addresses topics that include the theoretical foundations for faith community nursing, promoting health in times of transition, the process of nursing care within a faith community and provides examples of faith communities that are promoting images of health. Joanne has degrees from Augustana University (Sioux Falls, SD), the University of Minnesota (Minneapolis, MN) and Wayne State University (Detroit, MI). She taught in two other universities and is now a Professor of Nursing at the University of Alberta. At Western University (London, ON), she started the first Sigma Theta Tau Honor Society of Nursing chapter outside the U.S., opening the organization to chapters all over the world. Upon moving to Edmonton, she started the Canadian National Organization of Parish Nurses, became its president and traveled around the country promoting the organization and then started the first credit course in

parish nursing at the University of Alberta. She is considered the “Mother of Parish Nursing in Canada”. She is a Fellow of the American Academy of Nursing.

Jennifer Tupper

Jennifer returned to her *alma mater*, the University of Alberta in 2017 to take up the position of Dean of the Faculty of Education. She obtained both her undergraduate and Ph.D. degrees at the U of A, then served thirteen years at the University of Regina, the last three as Dean of Education. While a student at the U of A, she was invited to think more deeply about issues of injustice that continue to shape the lives of children and youth, and to engage in pedagogical practices that challenge inequity. Here her own commitment to anti-oppressive education was formed. Her research addresses treaty education, truth and reconciliation, critical citizenship, anti-oppressive teaching and learning, and teacher education. Her work has been recognized by the receipt of several awards. She has co-edited two books that are collections of essays. In *Social Theory for Teacher Education Research: Beyond the Technical Rational* (2019), Kathleen Nolan and Jennifer and their contributors make arguments for drawing on social theories to inform research in teacher education, research that moves the agenda beyond technical-rational concerns toward building a critically reflexive stance for noticing and unpacking the socio-political contexts of schooling.

Jean Paré

Who is Canada’s all-time best selling author? Is it Robert Munsch? Margaret Atwood? Nope; it’s our own Jean Paré, author of over 200 *Company’s Coming* cookbooks that have sold over 30 million copies and led to her receipt of the Order of Canada. Run to your cookbook cupboard right now and I will bet that nearly all of you have at least one of Jean’s books. Or go to any Canadian Tire, Shoppers Drug Mart, or local bookstore and you will still find her books on the shelves! What was her first best seller? *150 Delicious Squares*. It sold well over 1 million copies. You can find it in our church library. Turn to page 40 for her favorite recipe for Nanaimo bars. Jean’s first foray into cooking was when she volunteered to cater the 50th anniversary celebration of the Vermillion School of Agriculture (now Lakeland College). Working out of her home, she prepared a dinner for more than 1000 people. This event launched a flourishing catering business that continued for more than 18 years. Her customers overwhelmed her with their requests for her recipes starting with her bar cookies, which launched her cookbook business. The publication of *150 Delicious Squares* in 1981 marked the debut of the world’s most popular cookbook series.

Riverbend Facility Team Update and Appeal (Nov. 2019)

Over the past 6 months, the Facility Team has done a number of things: cleaning up a black mold problem in the basement kitchen; cleaning, painting, and outfitting a re-vitalized Youth Room, now at the bottom of the stairs on your left; some landscaping at the back of the church to further prevent springtime flooding; and significant support to E2 Academy and River City Playschool basement renovations.

Jim Schetzslle and Tom LaPointe, long-time Facility 'stalwarts' have passed on their torches, after completing long and distinguished commitments. For all the 'behind the scenes' things they have done faithfully for many years, a sincere Thank You.

So I'm asking you now to consider volunteering with the Facility Team. Did you know we have 9 furnaces, 8 air conditioning units, 6 bathrooms, 5 electrical breaker boxes (some on timers), 2 kitchens with numerous appliances, a hot water recirculation pump, and a sanitizer for dishes and cutlery needed for our Commercial Kitchen Permit? This is a big facility to keep maintained.

And it is heavily booked throughout the week and on weekends with both internal and external groups, with everyone depending on a properly maintained Facility.

I'd like to share one recent example of Facility Team work.

About 3 weeks ago, Valerie reported to me that the Chapel was cold on a Thursday morning as she prepared for the Grief Support group. She moved

the meeting to the Family Room which was warm.

After confirming there was barely any air flow from the registers in the Chapel, I called the furnace technician. He quickly confirmed my suspicion that the furnace blower motor needed to be replaced at \$1100 plus labour. (We have really fancy variable speed furnace blowers in the facility addition that actually had to be sourced from the Carrier factory in the U.S. so they are not cheap or readily available.) However, replacing the blower is not the whole picture.

How many of you have sat in the Chapel and been cold? The sign on the door to the Chapel suggests that the Chapel is generally cold; people have come to expect this. I wondered about this, especially given the great set of furnaces in the new furnace room that heat the addition. I soon realized that the heating registers in all the rooms on the Chapel heating line were wide open so that even with the furnace blower running hard, little warm air would reach the Chapel, which is at the end of the line. On-going balancing of the 'openness' of the registers on the line has improved the heat distribution in all the rooms. This is just like you do at home when one room is too hot and one room is too cold; you adjust the openness of the registers until the heat (and cooling if you have air conditioning) is to your liking!

I'm happy to report that Valerie was ecstatic with heat in the Chapel; the Grief Support members did not have to wear their jackets as they met there, nor did the Book Study Members on Wednesday nights. And hopefully all the many Users of the Chapel, the Library, the Board Room, the Meeting Room, the Choir Room, all on the same furnace, will be more

comfortable now. (The Family Room, the Gathering Area and Hallway and the Bathrooms on the main floor are all on a different furnace than the one heating the rooms on the Chapel line).

This is just one example of the kinds of things the Facility Team gets involved with. There are lots of other things that require some investigation and often simple things can be done to solve problems easily, although we do call in expert technicians when we are convinced they are needed. We are working towards a more planned (reliable) Maintenance Program, with more inspections and a more pro-active strategy; however, this takes volunteer hours.

So, if you have some time, or experience, either 'thinking about' or 'doing' maintenance type things, or if you would like to learn about a very wide range of maintenance issues, many that you can apply elsewhere, please come and talk to me or David Galbraith. I'm sure we can use your time, knowledge and energy.

Oh, and if you are not warm in the Chapel, or something does not seem to operate quite right around here (lights, doors, water, fans, etc.), please contact me, Geoff Halferdahl, Facility Team Leader, at 587-989-7945.



WECAN Food Basket Society



It was almost one year ago that I met the Rev. Dan Wold in our church basement late on a Friday; I was baby-sitting the goodies on Cookie Walk Eve, and he was clearing up after the November WECAN 'Pickup Day'. He explained what WECAN was about, that he was stepping down after 5 years as the Depot Coordinator, and that he had been unable to find a successor. I, like many in our congregation, wasn't often in the building on Fridays-- although I had heard about WECAN once before, it only barely registered as one of the many things that happen in our church. And all evidence of WECAN was gone by Sundays!

Dan explained how this not-for-profit program offers much-needed access to affordable, fresh, healthy food. There was real worry about how food security in this area would be impacted without our Depot. With Cookie Walk looming the next day, I was not inclined to volunteer to run something else! But I promised Dan I would bring this to our congregation. At service two days later, I offered to co-organize the Riverbend/Terwillegar Depot for a year—*if* three other people would step up with me! After the service, seven of you volunteered. We now have a team of more than a dozen people—from our congregation and the community—who keep things running each month.

Let me tell you a bit about WECAN. It is modeled after a 'food co-op', in which members from any of the 29 Edmonton-area depots pay for their food baskets each month—produce or meat or both, and as many as they like. WECAN negotiates with our long-time partner wholesaler to supply 3 types of fruit & 3 vegetables for \$10 or 3 fresh-frozen meats for \$15. Every month our newsletter shows the cost comparison of this same basket of food from local stores. The savings are substantial, and the quality is sometimes higher than the equivalent store-bought, because the food is literally off the truck, to our depots, and into your hands within a day. The only downside: you don't know exactly what you're getting until it arrives!

Technically, WECAN is not a true co-op, because the annual memberships fees are supplemented by grants and donations from Edmonton-area partners to cover administrative costs. But because members are paying the full cost

of the food in their baskets, the program is open to all, with no restrictions or financial eligibility requirements. It is by harnessing the power of bulk-buying—and the generous labour donated by hundreds of volunteers around Edmonton—that this food is made affordable and accessible. As soon as we saw that our Depot would survive into the new year, congregation members were encouraged to give it a try. We expanded 'Order Day' and 'Pickup Day' to include Sundays after service, and many in the congregation (and the Bell Choir, of course!) have joined. A well-used depot is a healthy depot, and a diverse membership (of all financial abilities) ensures we are here for those who may have fewer food options.

Our congregation's generosity did not end with the depot volunteers. Over the past year, you have filled the 'WECAN Can' with \$569.70. This was used to pay the annual fees for 12 new members from the community; to provide 22 produce baskets to our guests from Brander Gardens at this year's Community Dinner; and to buy 14 produce and 8 meat baskets for neighbours experiencing hunger in our own community. There is almost enough left in the Can to cover the cost of three more meat orders to donate in December; we will be bringing out the WECAN Can for a refill in January!

In less than a year, we now have the largest depot in the City. From students to seniors, from those experiencing need to those who routinely buy an extra basket to donate when they purchase their own, we are truly a cross-section of our community. Some members are parents buying for their grown children; some are grown children buying for *their* parents! Some are retired, some fully employed, others under-employed or unemployed. Some are dealing with short-term or permanent physical challenges. Some are new to Canada. Some are generous and dedicated community volunteers and social workers who have direct connections with people experiencing need in our area; these folks have been our conduit for most of the donated baskets.

Continued on page 12

I am so grateful to the people of Riverbend United Church for taking this program into your hearts, for the use of the kitchen and other facilities, for your generous basket donations, for participating as members, and especially for the hours of volunteering which keep our Depot running so smoothly each month. With your loving support, we can look forward to another successful year.

Anyone interested in giving WECAN a try, joining our volunteer team, donating baskets, or just wanting more information, please send me an email, call or text and I'll fill in the details! Irene Meglis: imeglis@shaw.ca 780.289.8894



Please join us for a variety of special Christmas services and events occurring this holiday season at Riverbend United Church.

Riverbend United Church
December 2019 Services & Events

Thursday, December 12th

7:00 p.m. Healing Service

Saturday, December 14th

4:00 p.m. Community Christmas Carol Sing

Sunday, December 15th

10:30 a.m. Service & Children's Pageant

Sunday, December 22nd

10:30 a.m. Service

Tuesday, December 24th

5:00 p.m. Candlelight Service with Choir

7:00 p.m. Candlelight Service with Choir
& Handbells

9:00 p.m. Candlelight Communion Service

Sunday, December 29th

10:30 a.m. Service

A View From the Rear Pew “By Brent Skinner”

Elections! Canada has just completed a federal election. As a senior citizen, I had no burning issues to guide my vote and so I determined my eventual choice by considering the following key factors:

- which party had the least irritating robocall;
- which party had the most yard signs in my neighbourhood;
- which candidate would I be most likely to invite to my backyard barbecue (assuming I had a backyard);
- which party promised the biggest expansion of government-funded services;
- which party promised the biggest tax cuts (all the while ignoring the obvious contradiction between service expansion and tax cutting);
- which candidate wears the most unfashionable and wrinkled clothes (on the grounds that they are the most genuine candidates and can endure criticism – especially by their spouses);
- which candidate your spouse is voting for, so you can consider a difference candidate out of pure orneriness; and (most important of all),
- which candidate had the nicest teeth (my mother always said nothing is more important than nice teeth).

Having determined my candidate and party of choice by way of the above exacting scientific process, unaffected by sneaky foreign blogs or bots (whatever they are), the next step is to actually cast my vote. I voted at an advance poll for convenient car parking and to avoid the crowds. Here’s how the actual voting process works:

- park your car at the polling station and follow the seventeen or so Elections Canada directional signs to the voting poll entrance;
- follow the nice clerk to the handicapped entrance;
- blink in the bright fluorescent grandeur of the voting station;

- walk up to a long receiving table, smile at the nice clerk, and triumphantly wave your written polling notice;
- pull out your driver’s license to prove that you are indeed the person named in your polling notice (all the while trying to avoid frowning or highlighting your facial wrinkles, to look 4 years younger to match the picture on your license;
- receive a little paper ballot which has already been folded about 5 times, and shuffle in the direction of a little cardboard voting booth;
- unfold the paper ballot, notice that there are about 10 candidates (most of whom I have never heard of), and make the big decision (do I put an X or a check mark to mark my preferred candidate, using the Elections Canada provided HB pencil?);
- return to the Elections Canada table where the nice person rips a numbered strip off my ballot, then hands it back to me so I can stuff it into a cardboard ballot box

That’s it. It’s over. I am suffused with a warm patriotic glow, and leave the polling station whistling *The Maple Leaf Forever*.

Later that evening, I tune in to CBC News to learn that the network has already declared a winner.

In 4 more years we get to repeat the process. Democracy: gotta love it!

After Elections Canada volunteers unfold and count millions and millions of scrunched up paper ballots, pound away on their calculators and decide which party got the most votes by riding, and then submit their calculations to the Elections Canada counter-in-chief, tada! Canada has a new federal government!

Canadians are very proud of our elections system, which is almost impossible to be tampered with by hostile foreign powers, as said foreign powers would have to duplicate millions of scrunched up ballots. I wonder if all the thousands of suffragettes and other patriots who worked so hard to achieve universal suffrage would approve. I am mindful of Winston Churchill’s admonition that democracy is the worst form of government, except for all the others. See you at the polling station in 2023!

Calendar:

Thursday, November 21 st	11:00 am	Lifestyle Options Service
Thursday, November 28 th	10:00 am 11:00 am	Grandview Service Devonshire Service
Sunday, December 1 st	10:30 am	1st Sunday of Advent
Monday, December 2 nd	7:00 pm	Ministry & Personnel Meeting
Friday, December 6 th	10:00 am & 4:00 pm	WeCan Food Basket order placement
Sunday, December 8 th	9:00 am 11:30 am	Care Team Meeting Young families luncheon
Tuesday, December 10 th	1:00 pm 7:00 pm	Women of Riverbend United Official Board Meeting
Wednesday, December 11 th	7:00 pm	Trustee Meeting
Thursday, December 12 th	7:00 pm	Healing Service
Saturday, December 14 th	4:00 pm	Community Christmas Carol Sing
Sunday, December 15 th	10:30 am	Children's Christmas Pageant
Friday, December 20 th	10:00 am & 4:00 pm	WeCan Food Basket order pick-up
Tuesday, December 24 th	5:00 pm 7:00 pm 9:00 pm	Candlelight Service with Choir Candlelight Service with Choir & Handbells Candlelight Communion Service
Sunday, December 29 th	10:30 am	Worship Service

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

**NOTE: Office closed from
Monday, December 23rd, 2019
to Friday, January 3rd, 2020**

the front pew



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