

# the front pew



Vol. 16 No. 3 RIVERBEND UNITED CHURCH 14907-45 Ave., Edmonton, AB March 2018



## Valerie's Reveries

"Where Oh death is your victory? Where Oh death is your sting?" (I Corinthians 15: 55)

We are marching toward Easter Day as sure as Spring is marching toward Edmonton. That's no coincidence. One theory asserts that the early church co-opted a pagan festival named for an Anglo Saxon goddess named Estre, the goddess of Spring. In addition, the day of Easter falls on the first Sunday following the first full moon after the spring equinox. Any way you look at it, Easter proclaims that life goes on, even after an Edmonton winter!

Jesus wasn't dead to the early church anymore than the earth is dead to us in winter. They experienced him as present with them even when they couldn't see him. Stories of people experiencing him spread and grew, and even today some people experience Jesus in what they call visions or encounters, and some as a tiny touch in their inner depths.

We may never understand what all of this means. But we also may know within that *love goes on*. We may know what it means to say that death doesn't have the last word, love does. We may know what it means to say that the presence and love of someone ripples on after they have died. We may sense that there is a perspective beyond what we can see, and that therein lies new life.

And so we proclaim on Easter morn, "Christ is risen! Christ is risen indeed!"

## New Care Team

The new Care Team for Riverbend United Church is off to a great start with several committed, diligent, caring members. We will meet once a month for a while as we develop this new ministry. If you are interested in serving in this way, please talk to our Parish Nurse Joanne Olson, or to our minister Valerie Oden. And as always, if you know of someone who needs a call please let the church office know. Thank you!

## Young Family Gathering

All are welcome to join in the next gathering of our Young Families on **Sunday, March 18 after worship**.

We'll have a simple lunch together and then the children will do Easter activities while the parents have a chance to connect with each other. Please let Valerie know if you can make it so we can get a head count for lunch.

## Congregational Phone Initiative

Lay leaders of the church will be making phone calls to our members over the next few weeks. We do not want anything from you in these calls; this is NOT a fund drive.

We will be calling simply to let you know we care and to check your contact info and check in with you and your family. If you do not want to be called, feel free to let Jackie in the office know this by phoning her at 780-430-7275.

## Prayer Shawls/Blanket Lenten Project

We are now half way through our Lenten journey and our "prayer square" project is well under way. A number of our congregation have embraced the idea and have been busy knitting and crocheting squares and putting them in our donation basket in the Narthex. As you will see from the photos some of our more experienced participants have, in addition, undertaken individual projects and created some beautiful prayer shawls and blankets. It is never too late to become involved, whether you create one square or a hundred each one is gratefully received, and will become part of a tangible gift to someone who needs our prayers.

The Chapel is available Tuesdays and Thursdays from 1.30pm to 3pm and 7pm to 8.30pm should you wish to work in fellowship with others, or experience the peace and serenity of a sacred space as you work. If you have any questions at all, you can chat with either Carolyn Miller or Audrey Skinner.



## Seder Dinner

Passover is the great Jewish feast of redemption and liberation, the memorial of the Israelites' deliverance from their bondage in Egypt. The word Passover means "deliverance," since in the story of the Exodus Yahweh "passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt" (Ex. 12:27). Passover is a festival of great rejoicing, which reveals how God "led us from captivity to freedom, from sadness to joy, from mourning to feasting, from servitude to redemption, from darkness to brilliant light." In the Christian tradition the Passover Seder is also believed to be when Jesus instituted the Eucharist. Gathered around the supper table with his disciples, Jesus told them, "I have longed to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; because, I tell you, I shall not eat it again

## Message From the Affirming Committee

We will continue through March with our Affirming Process; raising our consciousness as a congregation in learning about marginalized groups and our own attitudes towards these groups. The Youth and the Affirming Committee co-sponsored a movie night Feb.3. We watched the movie *Pride*, a 2014 film about the unexpected political alliance formed between a Gay rights activist group from London and striking Welsh miners of Margaret Thatcher's Britain in the 1980s. The film depicts the powerful truism of how people's attitudes are changed only when they really encounter the other. "I've never met a gay before...Really? I've never met a miner!" The film was followed by discussion.

The next weeks will also bring "Affirming Moments" to our gathering time on Sunday mornings. Don't be surprised when various members of the congregation will briefly share their own views/experiences with Affirming movements.

In April Reverend Valerie will lead a three session study series entitled "The Bible Through an Affirming Lens" which will culminate with the worship service April 29. We have invited Rev Catherine McLean to preach on St Paul's United's experience with becoming an Affirming Congregation.

Please continue to join us and participate with attendance, reflection and prayer as we journey in this important way.

until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God."

Join us on Wednesday March 28 at 6pm as Dr. Doug Spaner leads us through the traditional ritual of the Seder meal. This will be followed by a full meal that would be typically enjoyed in a Jewish home complete with Matzo ball soup, gefilte fish as well as beef brisket and dessert. Tickets will be available for sale after church - \$20/person, \$50/family, children 12 and under free. Please call Christine 780.435.0302 or [ens.christine@gmail.com](mailto:ens.christine@gmail.com) for questions.

## March Health Corner

As we continue into 2018, 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 during the month of 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 2018 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 2018 is: Bring Change to Life. 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 2018 with the theme: Think 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).

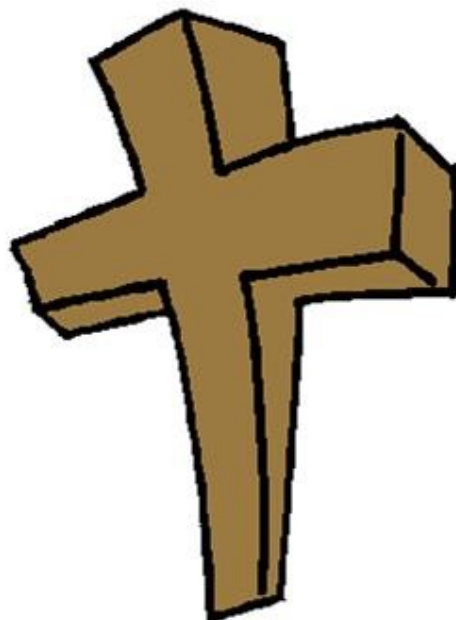
Besides my birthday, the month of March is also home to ...



# Easter Word Search

B M A L M H B B K I N G R N R  
 N O I T C E R R U S E R E O O  
 A P O S T L E S E Y S C D I O  
 S E C I F I R C A S H J E T S  
 N S N A M O R O O R R E M A T  
 R C D S G T T R I I K S P V E  
 O Y R A M B C S S V Z U T L R  
 H L O V E L T E M M A S I A Y  
 T C R O W N N Y L O H S O S Z  
 X C R U C I F I X I O N N K Q

APOSTLES  
 CHRIST  
 CROSS  
 CROWN  
 CRUCIFIXION  
 HOLY  
 JESUS  
 KING  
 LAMB  
 LOVE



MARY  
 REDEMPTION  
 RESURRECTION  
 RISEN  
 ROMANS  
 ROOSTER  
 SACRIFICE  
 SALVATION  
 SAVIOR  
 THORNS

## A View From the Rear Pew

by Brent Skinner

Old duffer. That is what I used to label older men, without suspecting how soon I would turn into one myself. This morning, I found myself putting on sweatpants and a T-shirt, along with my matching pizza print socks. I am now exhibiting one of the early symptoms of dufferdom - choosing comfort over style. Pretty soon I will begin to display other signs such as Sam Snead hats, smelly cigar smoking and braces holding up my sweatpants.

The thing is, us old duffers don't really care what kind of impression we make on people, because nobody is going to hire us, or even ask for advice( e.g. how do you get to the Southgate Shopping Centre from here?).

This, of course, doesn't stop us duffers from providing advice and sharing our wisdom, whether welcome or not.

A favourite target is my seven year old grandson, Henry. The rare moments when the boy is not wearing his earphones and playing on his iPad, I like to tell him about my childhood in Yorkton, and playing bicycle polo with croquet mallets, bouncing an Indian rubber ball over our neighbour's shed and playing endless games of 'guns' with my trusty leather holster and cap gun. Mine was a fascinating childhood full of hula hoops, fizzies, Red Cross swimming lessons at Collert Dam and comic book trading. The boy is plenty bored by my stories. By the time I get to single channel black and white television and the annual trip to the Carman Fair, the boy's eyes are glazed over, and he is looking for a way to escape his boring old grandfather. You see, as far as Henry is concerned, I might as well be talking about cave bears and pterodactyls.

Yet the older I get, the more I dwell on my childhood and the many lessons that I learned about life - mostly by way of mistakes.

Audrey's book club just read and reviewed a book by Plum Johnson titled *They Left Us Everything*. It tells the true story of an adult daughter who cleans out her parents' house after they die, and thereby relives her childhood and comes to better understand her parents in the process. It is a good read. It made me reflect on my own childhood and the debt of love and happiness that I owe to my own parents and grandparents.

I remember my old grandfather sitting on the end of my

bed and wanting to talk about his childhood and life lessons learned. I was not interested and just wanted to get back to my comic book. One more regret to add to a growing pile of 'what ifs'.

So how does an old duffer communicate with his grandson? I don't have a boat, so I can't trap him on an extended fishing excursion. He is too young and I am too old for mountain hikes. Maybe I should make a video with a mysterious label saying, "Don't view until May 11, 2049,"...which would happen to be my 100th birthday, in the unlikely event that I should be spared. Henry will be 38 years old and, I am certain, dying to learn about hula hoops and fizzies. I wonder if he'll be able to locate the outdated technology to view the video?

*Continued from page 4*

- International Women's Day: March 8
- World Glaucoma Week: March 11-17
- World Kidney Day: March 8
- Brain Awareness Week: March 12-18
- World Water Day: March 22
- Poison Prevention Week: March 18-24
- World Tuberculosis Day: March 24
- Epilepsy Awareness 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.

*Dawn Power*

Calendar of Events:

Tuesday, March 14th	1:00 pm 7:00 pm	WUC Board Meeting
Sunday, March 18th	Noonish 2:00 pm	Young Families Event—after service Grandview Service
Thursday, March 22nd	10:30 am	Devonshire Worship
Wednesday, March 28th	6:00 pm	Seder Dinner
Thursday, March 29th		FRONT PEW DEADLINE
Friday, March 30th	10:30 am	Good Friday Service
Sunday, April 1, 2018	10:30 am	Easter Sunday Worship
Saturday, April 21st		Brander Gardens Rocks Community Dinner
Sunday, April 22nd		Spring Fling for Earth Day

Weekly Events

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



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**April deadline: Thursday, March 29, 2018**

