



2018 Annual Report

Riverbend United Church

March 2019

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Reflections on 2018

Rev. Valerie Oden

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As I grow to know you, I am growing to love you. Riverbend is a strong church full of faithful people, committed leaders, enormous talent, and amazing generosity of time, talent, and treasure. I am grateful to be serving among you. Here are *some* key events that I recall that were unique this past year, though there are many other events that go on year after year:

- In January we transitioned to one worship service (after a thorough survey conducted the previous Fall); our thanks to the 9:00 a.m. worshippers for their flexibility and support.
- We held numerous Affirming Congregation discernment opportunities and dialogues and then voted in November by 97% of those present to become an Affirming Ministry.
- In spring we created a new Care Team whose members are out and about visiting our members, in addition to Jo-

anne and Valerie, and they often bring meals or offer rides to those in need and take Prayer Shawls created during Lent by congregation members.

- Just before Easter we developed a team of 20 volunteers to call almost every household with a "how ya doin'?" and an invitation to Easter; these calls were well received.
- In June we said farewell to our Youth Coordinator, Ben Severson after his 4 and a half years serving us faithfully, and we welcomed two new "Youth Guys" to co-lead the program, Joel Fleck and Alex Rasmussen.
- In the fall, we installed a new T-Loop Hearing System in the sanctuary thanks to the work of Ray Hawrelak and David Galbraith, and the reports are all very positive. Some folks had never heard a sermon before, and yet they kept coming back. Hats off to Paula and our musicians for that!

- I continue to enjoy leading the Study Groups in Fall and Spring, with an extra class this year in January as a trial on Sunday mornings. Most of the groups have about 15 people attending, with each session drawing different people.
- We continue to offer worship services monthly at the Devonshire and Grandview Assisted Living Centres, and those are almost always fun and seemingly fruitful.
- The congregation continues to benefit from a committed, competent staff team of 8 paid employees who are amazing and bright. I enjoy working with all of them. At the same time, we have about a "bazillion" committed lay volunteers who keep the place going smoothly, and we are blessed by your gifts of time and talent.
- I am grateful for our Board Chairs and leaders, who tend to the work of the church responsibly and justly. Among many

Rev. Valerie Oden (continued)

who give generously of time and talent, David Galbraith goes above and beyond caring for our facility, Tom LaPointe keeps our financial records in good order, and Board Chair Matthew Schoenhardt did some heroics in late December, asking all of us to reach deep into our sense of justice and our willingness to compromise in order to keep our two schools as tenants. Thanks, Matt.

- This year saw the United Church transition to its new structure. We are now part of the Northern Spirit Region, a larger area that unites several Presbyteries.
- I continue to enjoy and rely on the wisdom and guidance of Rev. Tom Sawyer, our Minister Emeritus, whose counsel and knowledge keep us upright many days.

Thank you to our members for your ongoing support of me, the staff, and the ministries of the church, not only with your financial gifts and presence, but with your hearts and expressions of love.

~ Warmly,
Valerie Oden, Lead Minister

Chair of the Official Board

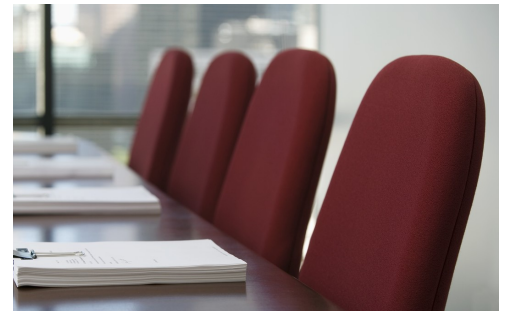
Once more into the breach! It looks like I am willing to stand for a third, and final, term as Official Board Chair. Perhaps I wear rose-coloured glasses, but it seems Riverbend continues to grow, flourish and live out God's Word in this world. Two years ago, there were plenty of possible storms on the horizon: finding a new Minister, the pending doom of a mortgage, a potentially divisive vote on inclusivity and contracting to a single worship service. Phew! Turns out the people of Riverbend United are incredible! With a fantastic new Minister (who is a delight to work with), we have passed these by and at the same time expanded our Community of Faith.

When we hired Valerie, we internally passed a motion that we would look for a second part time paid ministerial staff one year after the new Minister started. With your support, expressed at last year's congregational meeting, I embarked on a JNAC-lite discussion. The general consensus was this is not the burning issue it might have been at the time. Thanks to a very strong staff and an engaged congregation things are good. This doesn't mean we will not revisit this in the upcoming

year. I would very much like to hire a part time paid minister to augment worship, pastoral care and faith development. We will see where the finances come in, and I would like to take the leap of faith that we can afford one once we have a surplus to support half of the costs.

I am sure the Finance report will talk about this, but we are getting to be all "grown-uppy" as a Church. It is very exciting that Finance has developed the structure to accept gifts whose intention is long-term support and expansion of God's will. The Opportunity fund, or as I like to call it, the pay-it-forward fund, will accept donations that are not destined for general expenses, but earmarked for something special. What? That is where the pay it forward comes in. People can access these funds to implement ideas today, and pay it back later. The second is the Legacy Fund designed so that only its accumulated interest will be accessible. Both funds will be managed outside of our regular Treasury and Finance committees.

One event I am especially pleased to have chaired was the Affirming vote.



For those not in the know, there was considerable angst among the Board and the Affirming committee on how the vote would turn out. At one point we were on egg shells as to whether the Official Board had a consensus! 97%. Can I say that again? Ninety-seven percent! Turns out that Riverbend reached consensus over the past two years on this issue. Growing up I remember the United Church of Canada's debate on ordaining homosexuals, and being young and confused why members of my Church, whom I had known since I was knee-high, would sit in protest during hymns. It is pleasing to know that so many of us believe today that God's grace is not conditional and that we can welcome those so long persecuted by organized Christianity. I look forward to seeing the tangible actions we will take to allow God's love to embrace those and let them feel welcome.

Chair of the Official Board (continued)

On the more mundane side, there will be changes in the basement. If you want the full history, read my letter in January's Front Pew. It's online on our website! In short, we are coming to grips with the fact that about 20-25% of our revenue comes from being a landlord. Our tenants literally pay our mortgage. In an attempt to avoid the annual angst and debate we usually deal with, I have tried to develop a long-term solution. Our first tenant, River City Playschool, isn't viable long term in our location with their current business model and this year will be their last with us as they will be leaving following the 2019-20 school year.

For the fall of 2020, E2 Academy will take over the entirety of the expansion's basement with a five-year lease. To better accommodate this, E2 will be funding and building renovations this summer to create a layout that better meets their needs. Between our Welcome Team and use of the upstairs family room for parents and those with small children during wor-

ship, the Nursery had largely become storage space. With E2's renovation, the "new youth room" will be turned over to E2 and our Youth will move into the renovated nursery.

Our staff must be acknowledged for the work they do that enables this congregation to thrive! Valerie Oden, Joanne Olson, Jacqueline Hunt, Paula Roberts, Andrew Sims, Lois Samis Lund, Emily Severson and "new to the team" Joel Fleck and Alex Rasmussen continue to provide nurturing to our growing congregation.

I do not want to single any congregational member out, but a special thanks to Ray Hawrelak – a real go-getter! Ray (to my knowledge anyhow) conceived, spearheaded and worked along with David Galbraith on all the minor issues to get a hearing loop installed.

I do not think I could even start to list the members of our congregation that contribute something more valuable to

the life of our Church than money: their time and energy. To all of them, if I could speak for God I would say *"well done my good and faithful servants!"*

As I reflect on the world that the Church lives in today, I cannot help but be thankful for Riverbend United. Whereas many churches, in rural areas like both my parents and in-laws, and nationally, are struggling to stay afloat, we at Riverbend are blessed with an abundance of riches. One measure of that is that not only are our finances reliable, but growing to allow us to expand our stewardship. But this is only a by-product of a community of faith that spends its time and talents in the service of God. I would encourage you to be the light shining in the darkness and consider what time and skills you can offer up to God's service.

~ Matthew Schoenhardt
Official Board Chair

The Outreach Committee arranged the following events this year:

- ◆ Mother's Day – As usual, we delivered items for mothers and infants to the Bissell Centre.
- ◆ Father's Day Lunch at Bissell Centre – As we have done for many years, we provided fresh produce with sandwiches and desserts made by the congregation for about 200 adults who live in the inner city. About 15 volunteer adults and youth from the congregation attended the church service at the Bissell Centre and then served the lunch.

◆ Christmas - The congregation donated gift bags to about 20 women in Our Place (a permanent facility for women with mental health issues) and in Inner Way (a new transitional facility for women with complex issues). Members of the Outreach Committee and other interested folk from the congregation provided entertainment and dessert for some of the women when we delivered the stockings.

◆ Donations of children's toys and books and appropriate items for adults were appreciated by inner city charities.

Outreach

- ◆ We continue to collect empty egg cartons that are picked up by the Edmonton Food Bank to help with their food distribution. A donation bin is by the elevator.

The Outreach Committee continues to look for ideas for worthwhile projects that extend beyond Riverbend United Church. Please let us know if you have ideas.

~ Joan Robinson & Judi Cook,
Outreach Committee

Music Director

Music at Riverbend United was, I am happy to report, stronger and more exciting than ever in 2018. Our choir, ensemble, and bell choir were all fully engaged in bringing music to every Sunday service and beyond, and over the course of the year, seemed to become more of a musical “family” than in years past.

The highlight for the choir for 2018 was definitely the performance of our second Christmas Cantata, Joseph Martin’s “Appalachian Winter.” Rehearsals began in late October and was on our minds for 2 months prior to presenting it! We had 3 “guest singers” from the congregation as well, which added extra sound, energy and fun to the project. I have to say that our Riverbend choir members are a very dedicated group that rise to all of the challenges I place before them, and I feel that by the end of 2018, their hard work was paying off, and really beginning to show in the quality of their singing as a group.

It was only a day after the choir’s cantata that we were back to church for our candlelight Christmas Eve services. One new and exciting addition to the 5:00 p.m. service was a musical selection by some of the youth put together by Emily Severson. I am hopeful that this will continue in future years and perhaps even take the form of a collaboration between the youth and choir with perhaps a few of our instrumentalists as well. There is nothing like performing music together that helps connect people with each other regardless of age.

In December we also held our annual Christmas Carol Sing, which was well attended by both the congregation and the local community and is one of

the rare times when all of our music groups (bells, choir and ensemble) get to sing and play together.

Looking back from Christmas, the choir had a bigger part in Marv’s November “Très Marvelous” concert that included the ensemble along with Marv’s musician friends. And the big news was that, thanks to the donations of the attendees, enough monies were raised to finally pay off the sound system. Although this was secular music and not a part of our “regular” church activities, it was a chance for the ensemble, choir members, and other instrumentalists to collaborate and get to know each other better, which always plants seeds for further collaborations in the future.

The months before September 2018 were a transition time for everyone, including our musicians, as Valerie continued to bring us a new “style” of worship and of incorporating our music into each service. Her emphasis on themes has brought to light certain “holes” in the choir music library I hope to gradually fill with the coming season’s music purchases. Also, as we worked towards becoming an affirming congregation, and our awareness of what this means in all aspects of worship, it was interesting to note how some of our “old” anthem texts are not quite in step with the current practice of using more inclusive language. This will also be on our minds as we purchase new music.

To sum up the music at Riverbend United in 2018, I would say that it was a year in which our three groups grew closer together, perhaps due in large part to the fact that we needed to work together to help Valerie learn

about our talented musicians and how they could be utilized in our services. At the same time, I feel that Valerie encouraged closer communication among us all which helped us get to know each other even better, and share ideas more often as ONE group of Riverbend musicians even as we remained three distinct musical “entities”: choir, bell choir, and ensemble. My hope for 2019 is to continue to strengthen the connection among all of our talented vocalists and instrumentalists as we further develop our three musical groups.

And I need to add one last word by again saying that it remains a pleasure and privilege to work with my colleagues, Andrew Sims and Lois Samis Lund, as we go about planning and directing our music to support worship as well as church and community activities at Riverbend United.

~ Respectfully submitted,
Paula Roberts,
Music Director



Handbell Choir

The Bell Choir has had another busy and very rewarding year, our thirty-third year. During 2018 we played in church on seven Sundays. We participated in the RUC Christmas Community Carol Sing and the Christmas Eve 7:00 p.m. service. Once again we played a Christmas Concert for the patients in the Glenrose Rehabilitation Hospital.

All of us associated with the Bell Choir realize how fortunate we are to be part of a very supportive and loving community. As Director I am continually thankful to have the privilege of working with such a caring, (and smart!) group of people. As always, we have been challenging ourselves with some very intricate and complex music; often, after a "train-wreck," we all end up in raucous laughter.

It must be mentioned that we could not survive as a Bell Choir if we did not have a wonderful group of subs who often on very short notice come to our assistance filling the absences expertly and graciously.

~ Respectfully submitted,
Lois Samis Lund
Handbell Director



Children's Ministry



January to June 2018

Regular children's programming continued. Child involvement in services was maintained through Children's Time, where children come forward to hear a story or contribute in a small discussion that is delivered in front of the congregation. Following this and a children's hymn, children go downstairs for Sunday School which is run by Emily in a one-room school house style. Attendance varied week to week, but on average, 4-10 children could be expected. As the Sunday School teacher, Emily follows seasonal themes as well as a curriculum called "A Joyful Path" from Progressive Christianity to plan lessons.

The Family Room program for children ages 0-4 years continues to be run by

volunteers and is organized primarily by Jill Curd and Joanne Little. This room provides a space for the youngest children in our congregation to learn and play during the service.

On March 18, 2018, a Young Families Event was held. This allowed for some of our committed, young families, both new and veteran, to connect and foster relationships. They have now started to organize their own events every so often.

September 2018

A new year of Sunday School began with 'Welcome Sunday' on September 9. Numbers have been relatively high and consistent. Many of the regular children are in later elementary and are exceptionally intelligent, allowing

for wonderful discussions to take place during our circle time. Many of the children are close friends and attend school together.

December 2018

The children of RUC led a service during advent, where they did a wonderful job performing the play titled "Don't Freak Out: A Christmas Play", which was written by Katherine Willis Pershey and adapted by Emily. Numerous children demonstrated their many musical talents in the form of cello, guitar and vocals. Much positive feedback was received following the service.

~ Submitted by Emily Severson,
Children's Ministry Coordinator

Spiritual Formation

At the October Board Retreat, we were challenged to answer not 'What' we do, but 'Why' we do it. The role of the Spiritual Formation team at RUC is to provide opportunities to nurture, explore, challenge and develop their faith through all stages of life.

Worship: The primary opportunity for spiritual formation is at our Sunday morning worship. As Lead Minister, Valerie Oden has provided many thought-provoking, well-researched and inspirational sermons, filled with insight and humour. In response, numbers of people attending worship have increased. There were a number of worship services capably led by lay leadership within the congregation and our Minister Emeritus Tom Sawyer. The congregation appreciates the courage and time it takes to prepare these meaningful services.

We are grateful to the Whole Community Worship team, consisting of Carolyn Miller, Joanne Little and staff members Ben Severson, Emily Severson, Tom Sawyer and Valerie Oden for their ideas in exploring our faith and different ways of worshipping at an intergenerational contemporary service on the 3rd Sunday of the month from September to June.

Music: Many people find spiritual nourishment through music. We continue to be blessed a multitude of musical groups at the church, including the handbell choir, the choir, drummers and the Ensemble. A number of children and youth also have considerable musical talents and the congregation has enjoyed their songs and talents. The choir led a Christmas cantata this year that was much enjoyed. We again had a Community Christmas

Carol Sing to bring cheer to the community. Thanks to Paula for organizing these events.

Children's Ministry: Childhood is an important time in the spiritual development of children – and often, they provide insights that are valuable to the entire congregation. Emily Severson continues to provide leadership for the Children's Ministry. The number of children who regularly attend on Sunday mornings has increased and they enjoy their Faith Focus and time downstairs. In December, we enjoyed the children's play called 'Don't Freak Out' which featured a laid-back Joseph, some beautiful angels and God overlooking the whole drama.

Youth Ministry: Youth is an important time for exploring and challenging one's faith. Joel Fleck and Alex Rasmussen became joint leaders of the Youth group in September. We would like to thank Ben Severson for his many years of leadership and inspiration. Meeting every other Saturday night for events and Sunday mornings for discussion, the youth have enjoyed games nights, a hike to Elk Island, skating parties, laser tag, making movies and so much more. The numbers in youth have dropped due to the demographics of the congregation, and so several of the upcoming youth have been invited to attend these events. The youth also provided the well-attended pancake supper on Shrove Tuesday.

Adult Education: Of course, spiritual development continues throughout life. Valerie hosted two well-attended adult book studies. With the transition to one service, this has opened the door to Sunday morning discussions,

and discussions related to Affirming were held last year. Everyone who attends these events benefits from the discussions and Valerie's leadership.

Sanctuary Care: This year we wanted to especially mention Audrey Skinner, who for many years has taken care of the banners and other sanctuary tasks. Audrey has had to step back from this role and we will miss her creativity and attention to detail. Peggy Robinson, has joined the Spiritual Formation team and is now leading this. On that note, under Paula's direction we had beautiful new decor for Advent and Christmas, provided by a professional designer for the material cost only.

We would also like to acknowledge Carolyn Miller, David Galbraith, Ray Hawrelak, Sharon Hoekstra, Jesse Lim and Marv Severson for preparing the slides and running our multimedia systems during the worship service. Ray Hawrelak was also instrumental in the installation of the T-loop hearing system.

Special Activities: The Spiritual Formation committee also tried some new ideas to help explore faith in the congregation, including the initiation of 'Reflective Crafting'. This dedicated group, along with countless others at home, knitted or crocheted 'prayer squares' in Lent, which were made into beautiful blankets and then went on to knit or crochet hundreds of poppies to make a stunning display for the altar for Remembrance Day. The crafters continue to meet in the Chapel on Tuesday afternoons.

~ Respectfully Submitted,
Joanne Little

Parish Nurse

The highlight of my parish nursing ministry role this year was working with Rev. Valerie Oden on achieving the goal of establishing the Riverbend United Church (RUC) Care Team that now works closely with us and other ministry team staff in meeting care needs within our congregation.

The RUC Care Team was established in February 2018. Ten people from the congregation currently make up the Care Team: Marie MacLean, Sandy LaPointe, Marg Morley, Janet Fung, Jamie Bain, Holly Ruryk, Mary Ollie, Tom Sawyer, Valerie Oden, and myself (Joanne Olson). We meet monthly and this team is an extension of the healing/care ministry of RUC. While the ministry team staff continues to do most of the pastoral care for the more immediate situations (very ill people in the congregation, hospital visits, immediate follow-up after deaths or other losses), the Care Team often steps in to work in an ongoing way with particular people once situations have stabilized. In addition they assist the ministry team in caring for those in most immediate need – additional visits, meals as needed, transportation

etc. We communicate often by phone, email or texts, between our monthly meetings. As well, the care team is often the group who brings new needs within the congregation to the attention of the ministry staff and/or Care Team for follow-up.

The Care Team has been the group distributing the prayer shawls/blankets made by a number of talented people (Audrey Skinner, Carolyn Miller and others) within the congregation. We are now using Google Docs to quickly get volunteers to assist with distributing meals or helping with other tangible tasks for a short time when someone in the congregation is in need. This has expanded our ability as a congregation to be a responsive community; often people want to help others but don't know of the needs or don't know how to assist. The RUC Care Team can assist with making those connections. Confidentiality is stressed and kept in these care situations.

The RUC Care Team also has a "card ministry", a way of remembering those within the congregation who

have experienced losses, are ill/in hospital, and as a way to remember loss anniversaries. The RUC Care Team also participated in the Healing Service that was held in the chapel just prior to Christmas (Dec. 19, 2018). A funeral/memorial pre-planning seminar was planned in 2018 and is being held in early January 2019 in conjunction with Serenity Funeral Homes.

Plans / Goals for 2019

- 1) Refine how the RUC Care Team functions; add additional members as appropriate
- 2) Plan and carry out Healing Services at Christmas and other times of the year as appropriate
- 3) Locate a volunteer librarian from within the congregation who would take on the project of organizing the health and spirituality related and other material in the church library
- 4) Consider a fall "Loss & Healing" workshop or event with the RUC Care Team as advisors on how the event would unfold.

Blessings for 2019!

~ Sincerely,
Joanne Olson, PhD, RN, FAAN
Parish Nurse

Trustees

The 2018 Board of Trustees of Riverbend United Church was comprised of:

- David Hitesman (since 2012);
- Terry Hunt (since 2012);
- Tom LaPointe (since 2000);
- Marg Morley (since 2013);
- Joan Robinson (since 2006); and
- David Turner (since 2012).

Lynne Wolford had been a Trustee since 2013 and submitted her resignation in 2018. We thank her for her many years of service to Riverbend United Church. The role of the Trustees is primarily to hold title to the real and tangible property of the congregation and ensure its proper use and protection. The Trustees act in conjunction with, or as directed by, the (managing) Board of Riverbend United Church acting on behalf of the congregation.



Youth Ministry



While the year has had its ups and downs and our attendance numbers have been less than ideal, we remain hopeful for the future of the RUC Youth Group. This year has given us the opportunity to settle into the position in a low stress environment and helped us understand how we can improve it in future years. Upcoming years see many new youth moving up from Sunday School which should improve our numbers significantly. Once more youth start to attend, we would like to redevelop the youth group's role within the congregation. In the future we would also like to bring back the spring cantata and the youth retreat. We also look forward to moving into a new space that we can call our own. We have not taken any money out of the youth budget since Ben stepped down. If possible we are wondering if we could allocate some of our unspent budget to the renovation of the new youth room.

This year's highlights:

- January 13th was our "Just Dance and Games night", ten people attended (6 leaders and 4 youth) and played Just Dance and sang Karaoke.
- February 3rd we held an Affirm movie night with twelve people attending (4 leaders, 1 youth, 7 con-

gregation members). We watched the movie "Pride" and had a discussion after.

- February 10th was intended to be our "Make a Movie Night" but due to low numbers was changed to a Monopoly night and six people attended. (4 leaders, 2 youth) We played monopoly while watching the Olympics.
- February 13th, Shrove Tuesday, sixty people plus ten youth & leaders attended the pancake dinner. This was a huge success with a great turnout.
- Due to low numbers there was no Cantata or Youth Retreat this year. However, in place of the Cantata RUC Youth led a Mother's Day service.
- In June, Ben Severson stepped down as Youth Ministry Coordinator and the role was taken over by Joel Fleck and Alex Rasmussen
- On September 15th we had our first event. Seven people (5 leaders, 2 youth) played games and ate ice cream.
- September 29th was our Make-a-Movie night. Seven people attended (3 leaders, 4 youth). Numbers were suboptimal, however we still had fun!
- On October 13th, we visited the Corn Maze. Three people attended (2 leaders, 1 youth). Note for next year: Thanksgiving weekend is not a good

time to plan events!

- On October 27th we hosted our Halloween dance, sixteen people attended. (4 children, 5 leaders, 3 congregation members, 4 youth). This event will need to be revised for the future.
- November 24th had been planned to be the Youth retreat weekend, however due to low interest we played laser tag at Laser City instead. Six people attended (4 leaders, 2 youth)
- On December 15th, we held our Christmas sleepover. Seven people attended. (5 leaders, 2 youth)

For Sunday morning youth discussion, we typically have had two to three youth attend. We start off with a check-in question. We will usually have a discussion accompanied by watching a TED talk (or another informative video. Sometimes we will play bible themed games (Bible Apples to Apples, or Bible Trivia...)

We are looking forward to this next year!

~ Submitted by Joel Fleck &
Alex Rasmussen,
RUC Youth Co-Coordinators

Property & Maintenance



Purpose:

To ensure the buildings and property of Riverbend United Church are maintained and secure. Present Committee members include David Galbraith, Geoff Halferdahl and Tom LaPointe. Jim Schetzle contributed many hours in 2018 to P&M and his efforts are greatly appreciated.

2018 Activities:

January

- ◆ Turned off outside Christmas lights (electrical panel lever in electrical room)
- ◆ Annual elevator inspection
- ◆ Sealed inside lower windows

February

- ◆ Completed inspections included backflow meter & fire extinguishers
- ◆ Obtained paving quotes for pot hole (\$30,000)

March

- ◆ Got quotes for new front doors and wheel chair access button
- ◆ Received kitchen renovation quotes and temporarily repaired kitchen counter top

April

- ◆ Tractor tune up completed
- ◆ Reset alarm system

May

- ◆ Swept parking lot, sand stored in bags by disabled parking
- ◆ Storage pod ordered for early garage sale item donations
- ◆ Furnace & AC inspection completed. Turned on 6 air conditioners (outside panel boxes)

June

- ◆ Installed bathroom shut off valves

July

- ◆ Griffin Powers started as a landscaping assistant with the Canada Summer Jobs program

August

- ◆ Aidan Leicht started as Canada Summer Jobs student landscaping assistant (lawn cutting, weeding, watering flower and shrub beds)
- ◆ Other completed work included drainage diversion around the electrical transformer that had flooded the basement
- ◆ Electrical room cleaned out
- ◆ Indoor window washing completed, shelves constructed in both furnace rooms, and other repairs and painting completed

September

- ◆ Office security breach (computer taken) resulted in change to locks on office and photocopy room
- ◆ Changed janitorial service following trial of a few companies. Decision to proceed with On the Spot Janitorial Service.

October

- ◆ On the Spot Janitorial Service steam cleaned carpets. Tyler (student with E2 Academy) volunteered to shovel snow on school days
- ◆ Shut off valves installed for outside tap (south) and basement bathrooms
- ◆ Men's urinal installed, water fountain repaired
- ◆ Outside extension cords arranged for Christmas lights
- ◆ Reset alarm system due to time change
- ◆ Furnace room sink and overhead light installed

November

- ◆ Hearing loop installed
- ◆ Outside windows in main Sanctuary area were sealed
- ◆ Basement floor was stripped and re-waxed
- ◆ Light bulbs in outside sign replaced. Other bulbs replaced as needed

December

- ◆ Two new windows installed by ramp (one had cracked during resealing).
- ◆ Security breach in office (iPhone taken) door codes changed for office, photocopy room and side outside door
- ◆ Eshan from Brander Gardens volunteered to shovel on weekends
- ◆ Basement microphone damaged and replaced
- ◆ Basement furnace room door key was replaced

Monthly responsibilities include:

- ◆ Change furnace filters (5), vacuum furnace filters (4) and check AC screens(6)
- ◆ Change light bulbs inside and outside as required
- ◆ Refill soap and rinse for sanitizer in basement kitchen

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Property & Maintenance (continued)

- ◆ Refill hand soap and hand sanitizer in bathrooms, kitchens, halls
- ◆ Restock toilet paper, paper towels in bathrooms and kitchens
- ◆ Check urinal odorizers and sanitary napkin bags
- ◆ Check all garbage cans and recycling inside and outside (Thursday collection) and put in correct bins
- ◆ Check all thermostats and make up furnace (in new furnace room)

Looking Forward

Changes to some basement rooms are planned. We will be building storage cupboards behind the folding doors.

This cupboard will house the new Christmas decorations as well as some nursery items.

Over the summer the nursery will be transformed into a new youth room and nursery items will be sorted and organized. Anyone who would like to help move and sort through nursery items can contact any Property Maintenance volunteer or the office.

The area behind the folding doors will now be designated for Sunday school and the Sunday school will continue to use the small room with craft supplies and costumes.

If your group stores any items in the cupboards behind the folding doors please ensure your items are labeled so that they are not thrown out.

A storage cupboard will also be built by the choir room door in the upper hallway for instrument storage.

Planned large long-term projects include resealing the sanctuary skylight windows (\$?), replacing all windows in the main church area (\$70,000 to \$142,500), and the purchase of a power sweeper to clear snow on sidewalks and sweep up gravel in the parking lot in spring (\$800 to \$5,000).

The Janitorial Service comes twice a week (Wednesday & Saturday evenings). Their responsibilities include: vacuuming; mopping floors; cleaning bathrooms; emptying garbage and recycling containers; checking soap, paper towels, and toilet paper supplies in bathrooms and kitchens; wiping counter tops, inside microwaves and garage can lids.

~ Submitted by
David Galbraith,
Property & Maintenance

Official Board 2018 — 2019

Chair	Matthew Schoenhardt
Past Chair	Christine Ens
Chair Elect	VACANT
Secretary	Jon Spaner
Treasurer	Tom LaPointe
Finance Chair	David Olson
Member-at-Large	Phil Sevigny
Ministry and Personnel	Heather Dettman
Outreach	Judi Cook
Presbytery Representative	Jill Spaner
Property & Maintenance	David Galbraith
Spiritual Formation	Joanne Little

The mission of Riverbend United Church is to **celebrate** the Good News of Jesus Christ, to **embody** the Good News for the world, and to **welcome** one another in the name of Christ.



We will remember 2018 as the exciting year RUC became an affirming congregation. The Affirming Committee led the congregation through a time of discernment, begun in June 2018 and culminating in a vote and powerful Statement of our intention to be so, held on November 18th. The Committee invited guest preachers, members of the congregation and the wider church to speak to the issue. There were films, bible study, educational workshop and "Affirming Moments" during worship, all well attended and welcomed as the congregation sought to articulate our individual and collective thoughts and beliefs about diversity.

A new Mission Statement for RUC was crafted and approved by the Board

and congregation in September. It reads as follows:

We, the people of Riverbend United Church recognize the dignity, value and the beauty of each and every individual as a beloved child of God. We seek to grow spiritually, deepening our connections to God and 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

Affirm Committee

membership, leadership, and celebration of life events.

A Marriage policy was also formalized as well as an Action Plan for the Committee to undertake in 2019. These are both available on the RUC website. The vote passed by a significant majority and drew many members of our community ... both past and present. Clearly, we felt strongly about the need for this direction to be taken at RUC.

A Celebration will be held in March 2019 where the congregation will be presented with a Certificate from Affirm United with the larger United Church.

The Affirming Committee now becomes a Standing Committee of the Official Board and will identify and seek to implement new ways that we may welcome diversity in the future.

~ Submitted by Jill Spaner,
Affirm Committee

Presbytery Report

Presbytery Meetings were attended monthly by Reverend Valerie Oden and Presbytery Representative, Jill Spaner.

The highlights of the year's business were the final dispensation of the monies garnered from the sale of Knox Metropolitan Church the year before. The major proportion of this money will be held in a trust administered by the congregation of United on Whyte, the congregation formed by the amalgamation of the Avonmore, Knox Met, Ritchie and

Pleasantview congregations. This congregation meets in the former Avonmore building and previous tenants of this building, the Korean United Church have taken over the former Ritchie building. The Trust fund is designated to fund Community Ministry.

Edmonton Presbytery and Alberta Conference were dissolved in September, 2018 and folded into a new court of the church, The Northern Spirit Region. The first meeting of this Court, which will represent a much greater geographic area, including the area

north of Highway 13 in Alberta, south of the Arctic Circle, west of Nunavut and Saskatchewan, east of the Yukon border and the Northern Rockies in BC! It includes 135 Preaching Points, 95 Communities of Faith, 6 United Church Camps, 1 United Church Affiliated Hospital and 85 Ministry Personnel. The first meeting of the Region will be in May, 2019 in Valleyview AB.

~ Respectfully submitted
by Jill Spaner,
Presbytery Representative

Ministry Team

Rev. Valerie Oden	Lead Minister
Rev. Tom Sawyer	Minister Emeritus
Joanne Olson	Health Ministry & Care Team
Paula Roberts	Music Director
Andrew Sims	Music Ministry & Accompanist
Lois Samis Lund	Music Ministry, Handbells
Emily Severson	Children's Ministry
Joel Fleck	Youth Ministry Co-Coordinator
Alex Rasmussen	Youth Ministry Co-Coordinator
Jacqueline Hunt	Office Manager

2018 Statistics

Baptisms	4
Marriages	4
Deaths	10
Members (residents & non-residents)	409
Households (members & adherents)	326
New members in 2016	10
New members in 2017	14
New members in 2018	18



Clifford Downey
William "Bill" Hellings
Millie Horn
Evelyn Johnson
Anneliese Laue

Katherine "Gene" Manyluk
Brent Nordstrom
Engelina "Elly" Pletcher
Barry Robinson
Eira Spaner