

OKOTOKS UNITED CHURCH ANNUAL REPORT 2017

Okotoks United Church
43 Riverside Dr.
Okotoks, AB
T1S 1A7
Phone: (403) 938-4357
Website: www.okunited.ca





With God's help we are:

Following Jesus,

Reaching People

and

Changing Lives.



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2017 Minister's Reflections

For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. Romans 12:4-5

I keep a folder of articles from the local paper, the **Western Wheel**, that relate to Okotoks United Church. Very few weeks go by that I don't read an article or see a picture of something related to the church, whether that be an outreach project we are involved in, a concert we hosted or someone in our congregation serving the wider community. Okotoks United is definitely an active faith community, serving the needs of people in a variety of ways. I continue to be inspired by the outreach, programs and community service being done here. There are thousands of volunteer hours going into the work of the church, not to mention the heart that goes into so much work. We don't all do the same thing, nor do we always know what's going on in other areas of ministry, yet we all share in a desire to serve in whatever way we can, making up the body of Christ.

Of course, this was a particularly meaningful year as we celebrated the 100th anniversary of being the United Church in this community. From the worship services on the last weekend of June, the Centennial history book, to the enhancements to our building, it was an event to remember. This church has been a presence in Okotoks for a century and God willing it will be for the next century. The Centennial committee, under the leadership of Joanne Dzurka did a fantastic job of giving leadership to our celebrations.

This past year also saw our refugee family from Syria – Nader, Kinda and Senta – begin to acclimatize and acculturate themselves to Canada, moving to Toronto in the summer to further find their way in the country. A big thanks who all who made that possible for them. Thank God they are doing well, even thriving as they settle into life in Canada.

The launching of some new initiatives saw us providing lunches to eventually 42 children in local schools. A desire to see better housing options for people in our community created momentum for the town to create a committee to look into the relevant issues.

Of course over the year I continued my usual pastoral and community ministry of: leading worship, preaching, offering Bible study, preparing new members, conducting weddings, baptisms, funerals, services at the hospice, counselling, resourcing congregational committees, facilitating retreats, Chairing the De Winton Board and serving Presbytery as we moved through the United Church remit process as well as on the Ministry Support Division. It is such a joy to work with so many committed and passionate people. While I

cannot possibly thank all the people who faithfully serve this community, I want to thank Bev Carlson and Dean Salter for serving as our Board Chairs, Lois Irvine for her work not only as Chair of Finance but also doubling up to do book-keeping, Sally Salter as chair of M & P, Ian McNeill as Chair of Maintenance and Bill Calder as Chair of the Trustees. They have all gone above and beyond this past year to make this a thriving community.

This year also saw the Congregational Care ministry branch out to include Anne Scappaticci and Karen Pryznyk along with Julie Leggett to provide support to our congregation in so many ways. It is a privilege to work with these three talented and passionate caregivers.

We have had some staff changes over the past year with Denyse Geiger leaving the facility and office administrative position in the summer and Diane Willis coming on board in the fall. Both have enhanced the work of our congregation.

Also leaving at the end of the year were Roy and Val Peterson who did an exceptional job as custodians. We wish them all the best in their “retirement.”

This year will see me off on sabbatical and combined holiday and study leave from April 3rd to August 15th. I look forward to new adventures in that time. I have never in my over 25 years of ministry taken a sabbatical, so this will be new for me.

Thank you for the privilege of working with all of you. You are near and dear to my heart. You truly are the body of Christ, working together to make this a better world

With joy,

Julia



IN MEMORIAM

Dedicated to the memory of the members and friends of Okotoks United Church who passed away in 2017. We remember them with love and thankfulness.



Robert Dyck



Frances Agar

Frances Agar

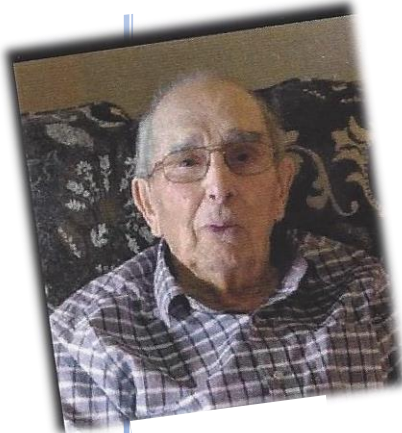
Robert Dyck

Ruby Loucks

James Minue

Pat Turner

Norm Willis



James Minue



Ruby Loucks



Pat Turner



Norm Willis

BAPTISMS

David Andrew Brown
Emily Mary Eileen Hearn



David Andrew Brown



Emily Mary Eileen Hearn

WEDDINGS

Larry Charles Bronson & Donna Bernice Smith
Christopher Simon Saltmarsh & Jamie Nicole Rush
Robert James Blanchard & Mary Grace Saluya
Kory James McGuire & Noelle Ellen Phillips



Larry Charles Bronson & Donna Bernice Smith

FUNERALS

Frances Agar
Robert William Sargeant
Robert Dedrick Dyck
Edward Ross Sloan
James Gordon Minue
Nola Margaret Middleton
Robina (Ruby) Loucks
Pat Turner
Norm Willis

CHURCH STAFF AND COMMITTEE CONTACTS

Minister	Julia Kimmet
Facility and Office Administrator	Diane Willis
Director of Music	Pat Reader-Downey
Custodian	Val and Roy Peterson
Chair of Congregation	Bev Carlson
Secretary of Congregation	Sally Salter
Governing Board Chair	Bev Carlson
Secretary of Church Board	Ellen Kneiss
Ministry Board Chair	Dean Salter
Centennial Committee Chair	Joanne Dzurka
M & P Chair	Sally Salter
Chair of Maintenance	Ian McNeill
Chair of Finance	Lois Irvine
Foothills Presbytery Representatives	Lois Irvine & Stewart Thomas
Worship Chair	Jody Connors
Chair of Trustees	Bill Calder
Centennial Celebration	Joanne Dzurka
Congregation Care Team Ministry	Anne Scappaticci, Karen Pryznyk, and Julie Leggett
Fireside Book Club	Sharon Parsons
Food for Fun	Sharon Campbell
Harmony Group	Amy Mounkes and Margaret Smith
Healing Ministry	Gisela Dyck
International Women's Day	Carol Price
Jacket Racket	Carol Price
Kids Ministry	Candice Sutton
Ladies Night Out	Pat Reader-Downey & Karen Jones
Ladies Retreat	Linda Wilson
Men's Group	Dean Salter, Bruce Wilson and Stewart Thomas
Mission Possible Dominican Republic	Gary Dzurka
Pride in the Park	Julia Kimmett
School Lunch Program	Brian & Shannon Olson

GOVERNING BOARD REPORT

It seems I usually start my annual reports with mention of how quickly the time flies by each year. 2017 is certainly no exception. We have gone through some changes, made some strides in important areas and are planning for a challenging 2018 as well!

Our Governing Board this year consisted of myself, Lois Irvine as our Treasurer, Joyce Loucks as our recording Secretary, Ian McNeil, Stewart Thomas, Ellen Kneiss, Bill Calder, Karen Jones and our course the reverent Reverend Julia Kimmet!

2017 was the Centennial of Okotoks United Church. An amazing group led by Joanne Dzurka and Dave Wedderburn went just about to the ends of the earth to compile our history. This is now in a beautiful bound book available for purchase at the church office. Many items of historical significance are also now displayed inside and outside our building, please take a look!

A group of volunteers received permission from the Town to continue with our Community Market on the lot next door this past summer. We started on June 11 with 15 vendors and a lovely day! Throughout June and July the public attendance dropped significantly along with interest from vendors and the decision was made to cancel the remaining Markets. An enormous thank you to everyone that helped out. It was a huge amount of fun and we learned a lot of things and met a whole bunch of amazing new folks along the way.

A milestone event happened in Okotoks on August 26th this past year with the first annual Pride in the Park event at Ethel Tucker Park just down the street from us. We had a committee involved in this endeavor and participated fully in the event on that day. It was amazing, beautiful and incredibly rewarding to see our town and surrounding area come together for a cause. We will continue to support the LGBTQ community and do what we can to effect inclusiveness at every level possible.

Denyse Geiger, our Office Administrator, left us in this past summer. Denyse was very instrumental in organizing many aspects of our front office, and we are very grateful to her for her tremendous amount of work and commitment to keeping us on track. We then welcomed Diane Willis to our team and she has proven herself very reliable, capable and so very pleasant to deal with. We hope to have many years to get to know Diane better!

Much work was done this year on updating our Policies and Procedures Manual with input from the board but much of the time-consuming work done by Julia, Lois and

Joyce. Thank you so much for this, you have done an amazing job. Going forward, this will play a large role in defining our goals, intentions and procedures and hopefully

make it easier for anyone to determine how to accomplish the same! We also reviewed and submitted our votes on remits put forth by the United Church of Canada's this year. Change is coming in the structure and governance of our church, and we look forward to being part of this along the way.

Lastly, and personally with mixed feeling, we will be supporting Julia on her chosen Sabbatical this year. She will be away from April 4 until August 14 and this includes Sabbatical, some vacation time as well as educational time. We have had a large, committed group of people from both of our OUC Boards, many of our Committees, the DeWinton Board as well as members at large take part in choosing the path we will take during this time. Julia is taking time to reflect, pray, meditate and otherwise replenish herself in order to come back to us refreshed and hopefully share some of what she has experienced along the way. We have chosen to hire a member of our congregation, Jody Connors, to spend a few hours each week in the office overseeing certain areas. As well she will be leading us in worship for 7 or 8 of the Sundays Julia is away and then arranging Pulpit Supply on the Sundays we will require it. This will cover both our and De Winton's congregational needs during this time. Jody is an RN, working full time, however she also has her Masters in Divinity Studies and Diploma in Christian Studies from the Vancouver School of Theology. We are so blessed to have Jody work with us to make Julia's time away not only seamless and with anticipated continuity of our version of normal, but, also to be able to support her in exploring her passions and dreams and perhaps expand our own horizons and push us a little outside the box!

I am really looking forward to 2018, and all it will bring to our church community. I am so very blessed to be part of this amazing group of friends and family. Who are choosing to worship and take this journey together. I personally can't wait to see where the road takes us! Peace be with you all.

Bev Carlson
Governing Board Chair

Ministry Board Report 2017

As a church we've always felt that our faith calls us to be alive and active in our community.

In March of 2017 our school lunch program was started through the hard work of Brian and Shannon Olson. The number of lunches made for school children in need in Okotoks is approaching 50 for each school day. Our Board strongly supports this program as a vital outreach ministry of our church.

Also, in March our Board sponsored an "Open Church/Closed Church" event to reflect on our mission outreach. Out of that meeting a small group was formed to focus on the issue of affordable housing in Okotoks. After meeting with a variety of people knowledgeable about the issue a document was prepared. The Ministry Board passed the document that encouraged our Town Council to form a group to strategize an affordable housing future for Okotoks. In addition, this document was signed and supported by 52 members of our congregation. We feel this initiative has been helpful and are very pleased to see our town placing a renewed focus on affordable housing for 2018 and beyond.

In August our church gave our full support to the Pride in the Park event in Okotoks and had a booth at the event. Pride in the Park was a great success and we were pleased to be able to support Okotoks' LGBTQ community in this way. Following the event, a small group met to discuss other ways in which we might support the LGBTQ community as a church.

In September our Ministry Board sponsored a Mission and Ministry Fair which had wonderful support from the large number of ongoing ministries in our church. The energy level at the event was very high and very positive. People were excited to see the depth and breadth of the ministries active in our church.

In October our annual Turkey Supper was once again a huge success both financially and as a way of connecting with our community.

As 2017 came to an end we had the opportunity to renew our Third Floor Ministry by signing an agreement with Rowan House to provide our apartment as transitional housing for women and children in need. This has been a very exciting development!

In closing, I should say how proud we all are of the leadership in our church that makes it possible for over 40 ongoing ministries to help us live as the body of Christ in our world.

I also want to thank all who have served on the Ministry Board in 2017 for your time, talents and commitment. Josh Penner and Marilyn Carlson will carry forward. Jack Parsons, Candice Sutton, Pam Grinevitch, Sally Salter and Dean Salter have finished their terms on the Board and we are grateful for their service.

It has been very exciting over the years to see our church grow in numbers as well as in our mission and ministry in the world.

Dean Salter, Ministry Board Chair

Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees of Okotoks United Church hold the property of the congregation in trust for the United Church of Canada and are responsible for approving any major changes to the church structure as well as any property sales or acquisitions. The Trustees are also responsible for any major financial investments the church makes, insurance for the building and negotiating the mortgage. They take the direction of the Governing Board to do this work.

A major undertaking of the trustees this year was a restructuring of our mortgage debt. As the beginning of 2017 we reached the end of the three-year period of Interest only payments on our Congregational Development Loan from the United Church of Canada. At that time The United Church of Canada informed us that they would be decreasing the interest rate on their loan from 4.5% to 2.5% which was good news indeed! At this point it represents a decrease of \$8,000 to \$10,000 in annual interest payments.

Our loan with the Royal Bank has been on a one-year term being renewed on July 04. In June we were able to increase the amount of our loan with the United Church to the maximum of \$500,000. This provided us with an additional \$81,900 which was combined with \$6,000 from the Centennial Appeal and \$27,100 from Empowering the Promise funds to allow us to pay down the Royal Bank loan by \$115,000 at the time of it's renewal.

At the end of 2017 the status of our mortgages was as follows:

	<u>Outstanding Principle</u>	<u>Interest Rate</u>	<u>Monthly Payment</u>
Royal Bank	\$264,470.58	3.43%	\$2,942.99
United Church of Canada	\$484,084.58	2.50%	\$3,814.99

Our total outstanding balance for both loans is \$748,555.16 and total monthly payments amount to \$6,756.99

At our last Annual General Meeting Bonnie Chant-Kinsman resigned as trustee and new trustees elected were Marilyn Carlson, Gary Dzurka and Pat Reader-Downey. They joined the existing board which included me, Gerhard Dyck, Ursula Hoppenheit and David Wedderburn.

Bill Calder
Chair of Board of Trustees

Ministry and Personnel

The role of the Ministry and Personnel Committee (M&P) is to provide support and assessment for all staff and contractors of the Okotoks De Winton PC, aiming to maintain positive working conditions and relationships for the team in their various capacities within the church congregational life.

As I reflect on 2017 I am humbled and awed by the passion and dedication of our staff, contractors and volunteers. The time and caring you put into making OUC the wonderful community it is and in living out our vision is inspiring to me. You are what makes OUC a special place.

In a nutshell we had several goings and comings this year:

- Denyse Geiger resigned as our Office and Facilities Administrator (OFA) in July after 4 years of service. We so appreciate the work Denyse did in bringing organization to the office.
- Audra Brown joined us as a bookkeeping contractor in September.
- Anne Scappaticci and Karen Pryznyk joined Julie Leggett on our Congregational Care Team in September.
- Diane Willis joined us in October as our Office and Facilities Administrator.
- Val & Roy Peterson retired in December after 7 years as our Custodians.

Special thank you to:

- Karen Pryznyk and Judy Crockatt who stepped in as our Office Administration Team for August and September while we searched for a new OFA.
- Lois Irvine who took on the financial components of the OFA role until Audra joined the team.
- Heather Puttee, Amy Mounkes and Sharon Campbell who took on extra time as our Office Volunteers until Diane started in October.
- Val & Roy Peterson for their dedication and hard work over the past 7 years.

Candice Sutton continues to bring her passion and enthusiasm to the Kids & Youth Ministry Leader contract. During 2017 Candice graduated with her teaching degree and obtained a full-time teaching position in Okotoks. Way to go Candice! We are so happy that Candice has decided to continue leading our children and youth in addition to her new teaching job.

The Congregational Care Team provide caring support in many forms to the members of our OUC community – visits, food, prayers are just a few of the tools they use.

Amy, Pat, and Keith continue in their respective roles supporting and enhancing our Sunday worship services.

Julia continues to lead us with her wisdom, grace and wonderful sense of humour. 2018 will bring opportunities for Julia to rest, recharge and learn during her sabbatical.

This sabbatical time will also be an opportunity for us as a pastoral charge to challenge ourselves, explore our gifts and support each other.

As in previous years we continue to hold the dream of a second minister. While our current finances may not allow this to happen soon, it is a dream we should hold on to for the future.

In addition to handling the staffing changes noted above, the M&P Committee comprised of Sally Salter, Ken McIsaac, Melanie Toews and Mark Dutkoski (De Winton) worked on revising contract descriptions, designed a Performance Appraisal process, continued the work of creating an employee manual and supported the planning for Julia's sabbatical in 2018.

In closing, I cannot thank our staff, contractors and volunteers enough. You make this church a community, you keep it functioning, you make it a place we want to come home to and you make it a place from which we can live out our mission.

Blessings and heartfelt thanks for your generosity of time and talents.

Sally Salter, Ministry & Personnel Chair

OUC Centennial Committee Report

The year 2017 marked the 100th anniversary of Okotoks United Church. An open committee, chaired by Joanne Dzurka, began meeting in January 2016 to plan for the 100th anniversary. Members included: Norma Calder, Norma Hamilton, Ursula Hoppenheit, Amy Mounkes, Elizabeth Pitura, Dave & Maureen Wedderburn and Marie Wedderburn. The results of the work of this committee included:

1. Painting the cross on the west side of the building.
2. Installing the sign from the original church building on the west side of the building.
3. Installing sign boards from the original church building at the north and east facing entrances.
4. Installing two cabinets in the foyer to house items of historical significance.
5. Installing the two stained glass windows from the original church building on either side of the west foyer entrance.
6. Delivering historical moments in church leading up to the anniversary.
7. Producing the OUC 100th Anniversary History Book (please note that a page of the Methodist chapter in the history book was missed during printing. If you did not receive a copy of this page please contact Diane Willis, Office Facilities Administrator).
8. Commissioning Treena Primmer of Twist Designs Ltd. to design and install 6 new stained-glass windows at the front of the sanctuary.
9. Organizing the evening of Music & Memories held on Saturday June 24, 2017 in the original church building (now the Rotary Performing Arts Centre). A big thanks to Rev. Julia Kimmett for emceeing, our Choir Director, Pat Reader Downey, and Accompanist, Amy Gatus, the OUC choir and guest choir members who led us in song that evening.
10. Assisting with the planning of the 100th Anniversary church service on Sunday June 25, 2017 where we welcomed over 200 congregants and special guests including: former ministers Rev. Marilyn Evans and Rev. Doug Powell and President of the Alberta Northwest Conference, Kathy Yamashita. We were also delighted to receive greetings from Moderator, The Right Reverend Jordan Cantwell and, Rev. Bert Loree (minister at OUC 1953-59), Ray Goodship, Chair of



Foothills Presbytery, Okotoks Alliance Church, Okotoks Food Bank, Soto Christian Church in the Dominican Republic and Rev. Dr. Randy Naylor and Rev. Marie Wedderburn.

11. Bringing the Provincial Archives up-to-date on OUC annual reports and other documents of historical significance and
12. Creating an onsite, OUC Archive housed in the church office

Thanks to Dean Salter for lending his literary talents to a write-up on the anniversary events that is pending publication in the inCONTACT section of the Observer.

It was a joy to reconnect with our past through stories, pictures, music and shared memories. Please continue to pray for the future of our church. May we be led by the Spirit, always loving one another as Jesus taught us to do.

Joanne Dzurka, Centennial Committee Chair



Congregational Care Team Ministry

Greetings to our Church family,

Your Congregational Care Ministry Team began 2017 with the goal to build up not just the numbers of those able to provide support and care to members of our congregation but also to increase the capacity of each compassionate care visitor's skills and knowledge. We did this first by having planning meetings and reviewing materials with Rev. Julia, then taking this plan to our whole congregation in leading a Sunday service and finally by providing five initial orientation and training sessions in March led by Julie Leggett and Anne Scappaticci which were very well attended.

Julie's social work background and Anne's background as a Registered Nurse, specializing in mental health and skill building with crisis teams, enabled us to provide some up-dated learning materials to our caring visitors.

Our training sessions with our compassionate care visitors included:

- The qualities of a caregiver within a church congregation;
- Bringing prayer to each person in need either in person or via our e-mail linked prayer group;
- Empathy vs sympathy;
- Immense value of time sitting "being present" with another;
- 'What to do' and 'what to say when visiting';
- Grief, loss and experience with trauma – all of which are complex, highly personal, multi-layered and have no specific time line nor expectations;
- Brain, body and emotion connection;
- Importance of self-care and safe boundaries while supporting others.

This past year our pool of compassionate care visitors grew from 3 or 4 to 12 members of our church family who visited with others in our church who were isolated, not able or had not been to church in a while, lonely, discouraged or those who simply enjoyed a friendly visitor. We also established an "as needed" core group of visitors who provided compassionate and caring visits, on behalf of Rev. Julia, with those in hospital, those who were experiencing recent grief and/or loss or those recently home from hospital after an acute illness or trauma from injury or surgery etc.

We are sincerely grateful to our talented cooks who provided many thoughtful meals as well as some of the best comfort food in form of muffins and cookies. Further gratitude is extended to the caring hands who crocheted the many prayer shawls that were delivered by our visitors this past year. Each prayer shawl was blessed by our Rev. Julia making them very special gifts which were well received. Also, very well received were the many cards sent by our small but highly attentive Card Ministry Team. Eighty six members of our congregation received caring as well as appropriately humorous cards which truly lifted spirits when needed.

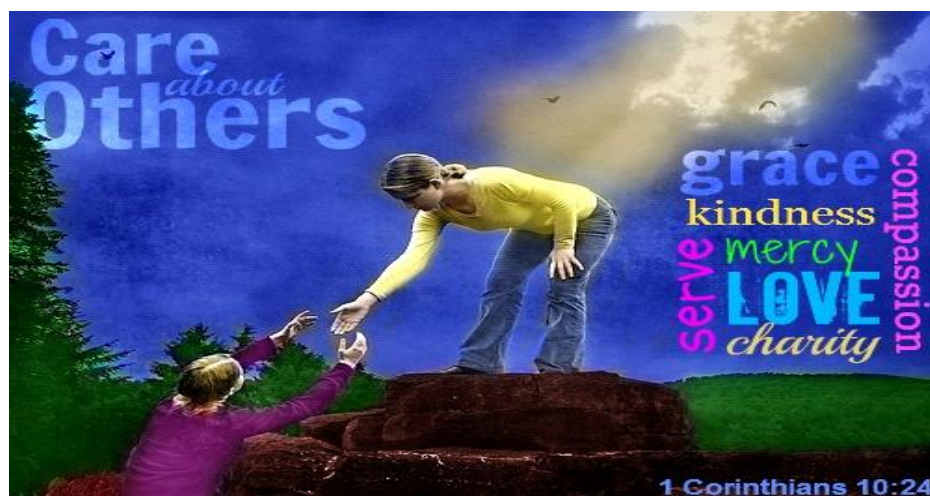
Our steadfast prayer group has also grown in strength and numbers. The requests received are sent out via e-mail almost immediately with many ready to focus on another in need. In 2018 we will be arranging more ways for you to be able to let us know of those who need prayers. In the meantime, please continue to let us know our prayer needs via a phone call to the Church office, email at okcongregationalcare@telus.net or by talking with individuals wearing the caring blue hands symbol on their name tag.

Throughout 2017, and within the existing budget, the Congregational Care Coordinator position evolved into a Congregational Care Leadership Team. This leadership team included Anne and Julie coordinating the compassionate care visitors group and Karen Pryznyk working closely with Rev. Julia to manage the day to day and administrative aspects of the Congregational Care Ministry. Julie and Anne along with Rev. Julia truly celebrated Karen's decision to join the Leadership Team as she brought her excellent administrative and organizational skills from her knowledge as a previous hospital administrative support and a Unit Clerk. We believe these changes have made our Congregational Care Ministry stronger and more responsive for you, our Okotoks United Church family.

The end of 2017, therefore, brings us all a wonderful state of sincere gratitude for all people involved in the Okotoks United Church Congregational Care Ministry; in particular for all their willingness to give the gift of time, the gift of being present with another, for sharing many generous handmade goods and crafts along with compassionate Prayer. Each of you truly is the light for many in our Church family.

Thank-you from our hearts to yours.

Julie, Anne and Karen



Presbytery Report

The Pastoral Charge of Okotoks-De Winton is part of the Foothills Presbytery, Alberta and NW Conference of the United Church of Canada. As of January 1, 2019, that will change. We have decided that instead of FOUR COURTS (Pastoral Charges, Presbyteries, Conferences and the National Church) we will become a THREE COURT church. Since the United Church of Canada has a **member dominated structure** these changes could not happen without consulting the membership. This consulting is done through “REMITTS”. Foothills Presbytery and our Pastoral Charge has worked through these remits during the last year and we have approved all of the suggestions except one remit (One order of ministry). These new courts will be called “COMMUNITIES OF FAITH”, “REGIONAL COUNCILS” and “DENOMINATIONAL COUNCIL”.

The committee working on the boundaries for the new Regional Councils has suggested 17 regions and we will be in region #4. Our region will include all of Alberta south of highway #13 which includes the presbyteries of Coronation, Red Deer, Calgary, South Alberta, and Foothills. I think we are pleased to know that we will be working with many people we already know. Much of our time in Presbytery and some at the Pastoral Charge has been used to work through the remits. We all need to say thank you to our commissioners (Rev. Julia and others) who have worked long and hard to make these changes.

While much of the work of the Foothills Presbytery this past year was taken up with the remit process, we continued with the work of Pastoral Charge Oversight, Pastoral Relations, Stewardship and the Financial work of the Presbytery, Strong Public Witness, and Congregation and Mission Development.

At all levels of our church, we seek to find ways to serve each other and the broader church and world. While many of you may not know much about the other courts of the church, know that people are working to make the church not only viable but effective in its mission and ministry.

Stewart Thomas.

Annual Report 2017 - Worship Committee

1 Corinthians 14:15 - "I will pray with the spirit, but I will pray with the mind also; I will **sing** praise with the spirit, but I will **sing** praise with the mind also".

Okotoks United Church Worship Committee continues to learn and evolve. 2017 has taken us further along the path of helping Rev. Julia and the congregation grow in opportunities to enjoy inspiring and insightful worship experiences.

In 2017 representatives from the Ushers, Greeters, and Hospitality Groups began attending our Worship Committee meetings and operating as committee members. This has helped us to better integrate these aspects of worship services into the worship experience as a whole. We have worked on providing a more comprehensive welcome to newcomers and visitors to the church, and to coordinate the flow of services and liturgy more fully.

The Worship Committee began to offer more team-led worship services this year. This has been a unique learning opportunity for many of us, giving us the chance to expand our public speaking, worship planning, leadership, and teamwork skills.

The Worship Planning Group members while not part of the official Worship Committee, meet frequently to plan worship liturgy and choose music with Rev. Julia for Sunday Services. Their input and assistance are invaluable to service planning.

Members of the Worship Committee and Worship Team, along with artistic contributions from the children of the congregation, also created an Advent devotional booklet for the Okotoks and De Winton congregations this year that was gratefully received.

Many special services and events were planned this year with the input and assistance of members of the Worship Committee including Holy Week, Easter, Advent, Christmas, Blessing of the Animals, baptisms, confirmations, transfers of membership, the OUC 100th Anniversary service, sermon series, and various intergenerational services.

We look with optimism and excitement to the coming year and all of the opportunities it provides, with God's guidance, for vibrant and meaningful worship experiences.

Jody Connors
OUC/De Winton Worship Committee Chairperson

Maintenance Committee Report 2017

The maintenance committee is responsible for the day to day operations regarding the Okotoks United Church building and grounds to meet the needs of the congregation and various groups utilizing the facilities throughout the year.

We did not have any major issues in 2017. As our church gets older there is more maintenance especially with the plumbing. We continue to upgrade our lighting to the more energy efficient LED bulbs when replacing bulbs. This allows us to reduce electrical expenses and reduce our costs over the long term. This year we replaced all of the east parking lot lights to LED as three of the lights had burnt out and needed replacing. Since a bucket truck must be rented we did all five. We will replace the west parking lot lights when at least three need to be replaced. We also completed the replacement of the quartz halogen lights on the exterior walls with new LED fixtures. Thanks to Larry Logan for completing the wall lighting installation. We obtained a partial rebate from the Energy Efficiency Alberta program to reduce our costs. Our grounds maintenance was made much easier when Don Gilbert donated a self-propelled John Deere lawn mower this spring.

The Okotoks Fire department asked us to replace the basement stair door after their inspection last year as it did not have a fire rating tag on the door. This was completed last spring. Thanks to Larry Logan for his help. They also asked us to fill in all basement ceiling openings in drywall to meet codes for fire suppression. It took Dave Wedderburn a number of days to complete this task and we are grateful for the effort that was spent to do this time consuming work.

Snow removal continues to take a lot of time periodically. December was a bad month for snow fall. Abe Enns continues to provide time and equipment to clean our parking lot and walks around the church every time we have a snowfall. A great deal of thanks goes to Abe for removing all the snow so quickly and helping us to keep our costs down.

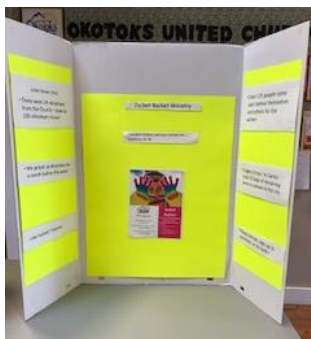
We continue to make use of a part time gardener in the spring and summer. Her work was especially important this year on our 100th anniversary. We will continue to maintain the grounds while being mindful of costs. Thanks to all who assist in grounds maintenance from time to time throughout the year from trimming shrubs and bushes, clean- up, and snow removal.

Ian McNeill

On behalf of Maintenance Committee



The Work of the Church



Benevolent Fund - Helping those in need!

How does God's love abide in anyone who has the world's goods and sees a brother or sister in need and yet refuses help? 1 John 3:17 (NRSV)

Choices. We all have choices to make in life. Sometimes they seem overwhelming. Yet, I am deeply grateful that I do not have to choose between whether I can buy groceries or whether I can pay for accommodation this month, not to mention other necessities. This is often the case when people looking for assistance come through our doors. Some are referred by agencies and schools and some come to the church on their own. They have heard that we might help and come seeking, often ashamed or embarrassed to be in the situation they're in. The first thing I try to do is to reassure them that we all need help at times and that we're happy to help. We can offer assistance in the moment. Often, the problems are bigger than we can handle. However, thanks to you, we have some resources through the Benevolent Fund that can alleviate some stress and anxiety in the moment to help people move on to healthier places. And people are grateful, as you can see.

Dear Okotoks United Church Congregation,

Thank you so much for your help this fall from the Benevolent Fund, during a time when things were very lean and stressful in my household. Your kindness is tremendously appreciated.

Dear United Church,

Thank you for helping out my family this Christmas Season. Your thoughtfulness and generosity are greatly appreciated. Blessings.

This year, our **income** for the Benevolent Fund was **\$17,910.00** thanks to a generous gift of \$5000.00 from a benefactor. We also received several hundred dollars worth of gift cards during White Gift Sunday. These are distributed through the year.

Throughout 2017 we **dispersed \$18,544.95** in Benevolent gifts, which consisted of both money and gift cards. By far the greatest amount given goes to housing needs which totalled \$10,914.14 this past year. Groceries and utilities take another portion (\$1,387.91) while the rest comes under "other" (\$5,827.90). This amount included medications for a child, counselling services, a washer-dryer to serve the upstairs apartment and people coming in to do laundry, sending a child to camp, eye glasses,

To those who are recipients of your generosity it is nothing short of a miracle that the church would be willing to help them and many express profound gratitude at the gift that just might get them through to better circumstances. Most are one-time gifts that bridge the gap in tight financial times. This year, we are including the Benevolent Policy for you to see how funds are managed and distributed.

Thank you for your faithfulness.

[illegible]

BENEVOLENT FUND

Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary. So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of faith. (Galatians 6:9-10)

Purpose: The congregation of Okotoks United Church has a Benevolent Fund to enable the church to assist members of the congregation and those in the community who are in dire financial or material need on an urgent basis.

Policy

- The Benevolent Fund is administered directly by and at the discretion of the paid accountable minister(s) on behalf of Okotoks/De Winton Pastoral Charge.
- The Benevolent Fund is offered as a one-time, temporary gift during a financial crisis, to be used when the family or individual requesting assistance has explored all other possible sources of support from family, friends, social assistance, savings or investments. In unusual circumstances, the minister may decide to help more than one time if the recipients have shown urgent need and evidence that they are taking steps to address their concerns.
- A gift from the Benevolent Fund is not considered a loan. No gift is required to be repaid, either in part or in full, in money or in labour. If the recipient desires to give to the church at a later time, the recipient should be encouraged to give directly to the general fund of the church.
- In all but extraordinary circumstances, no cash or cheque will be given to or made directly to the individual/family requesting assistance. Money will be directly designated to the party requiring the payment (i.e. landlord, utility company, etc.) In all but extraordinary circumstances all monies issued will be in the form of a cheque or credit card (for tracking purposes). In the case of food or clothing, gift cards may be given.
- Generally, the maximum that any one recipient or family may receive cumulatively from the church shall be no more than \$2000.00 in total. If a family or individual finds themselves in dire need due to a catastrophic event (flood, fire, etc.) there is the potential to be assisted above the stated cumulative cap. Such cases must be reviewed carefully by the minister and the additional accountability of appropriate leadership.
- The recipient must be willing to sign a form acknowledging that they have received assistance from the church.
- Those requesting assistance must be willing to give the minister personal information that will assist in determining need and allow the minister to follow-up on any information provided. The minister will be sensitive to confidential issues.
- No assistance will be offered if the minister determines, in their estimation, that negative or irresponsible behaviour will be reinforced by financial help.
- The stated purpose of the Benevolent Fund is to meet people's basic needs. Normally these needs are defined as: Lodging (including utilities), Food, Clothing, Medical treatment (including necessary medications and transportation to appointments)
- Recipients of funds disbursed from the Benevolent fund may be: Church members;

Members of the community; Ministries and Christian agencies that serve people with the same needs as those who fit the criteria for assistance from the benevolent fund and who provide the services that the church can or does not.

- Needs that may *not* be met by the Benevolent Fund could include: Business loans or expenses; Paying off credit cards (unless the card must be used in a crisis or emergency, e.g. hospitalization or death in family); Needs of an individual who is wanted by the law or must pay legal fees or fines as a result of breaking the law; Penalties relating to late payments or irresponsible actions: School tuition.
- This assistance is provided with the understanding that Okotoks United Church is not rendering legal, accounting or other professional advice or service. Professional advice on specific issues should be sought from an accountant, lawyer or other professional.
- In extraordinary circumstances, the minister, in consultation with any member of the executive, may make exceptions to the guidelines for the disbursement of Benevolent Funds.

Procedure for Disbursement

- A Benevolent request form must be filled out and presented to the minister. This form will be kept on file by the minister with personal details kept strictly confidential.
- At the minister's discretion, and after checking references or circumstances, the minister may appropriately administer the fund. The minister also reserves the right to check with other churches as to whether they have received any requests related to this application. This process may take several days.
- The minister will prepare a detailed report of Benevolent Fund disbursements including back-up documentation, that will be reviewed annually by the Treasurer.

Sources of the Benevolent Fund

The Benevolent Fund is a permanent fund of the congregation consisting entirely of monies received from individuals, specified fund-raisers or a benevolent offering. There is no budget for the Benevolent fund for either income or expense. Once it has been disbursed, no other monies from the regular budget will be diverted to cover the Benevolent Fund. Charitable receipts will be issued for monies received for the Benevolent Fund. However, individuals wishing to extend assistance directly to someone in need will not receive charitable receipts.

Established October 26, 2017- - by the Governing Board of Okotoks United Church

Bible Study Report

Studying and learning in community, appreciating new perspectives, learning about our faith and history, rich discussion. These are some of the reasons participants gave for why they come to bible study. Most Thursdays from September – May find us meeting in the chapel from 10:00 – 11:30 to share our lives and our thoughts, laugh and cry together and dig deeply into the bible...and it is the bible we study, not books about the bible. Last Winter and Spring we studied the letters of Paul. During the Fall, we engaged scripture to learn more about Jewish Festivals as well as getting a brief overview of the biblical context. It was engaging and enlightening as we gained a deeper understanding of the Jewish faith and traditions. Sometimes we were enlightened and inspired by scripture, and at other times we would leave with more questions than answers. Regardless, we learned and grew together. Studying scripture makes our faith more tangible. Often, we experience our faith and what it might mean to us in a more practical way. Many in the group affirm that studying together is far richer than studying scripture alone, as the following comment from one of the group states:

“my comment is that each time we have Bible study, I learn something from our collective study of the scriptures and I also really enjoy being with the group of people who come regularly to the study.”

Consider joining us on Thursday mornings. All are welcome. No knowledge required, just an open mind and curious spirit.

Submitted by Julia Kimmett on behalf of the Bible Study Group



Animate Courses

Last Spring, during the 2017 Lent season, a group of about two dozen people gathered to explore their faith through the **Animate Faith** video series. Each week we journeyed through basic Christian subjects like God, Religion, Jesus, Salvation, Cross, Bible and Church, listening to some of today's best contemporary Christian speakers. Through small group discussions and wider group debriefings, we pondered what these subjects mean for us today. It was a challenging and enlightening time as many people encountered some of the ideas presented for the first time. This is what faith is about, we learned – a journey of exploration and not a destination. Growing deeper means curiosity and reflection. This we did in abundance.

Julia Kimmett

Last Fall we ran a course called **Animate Bible** on Wednesday evenings. 12 people registered and between 6 and 10 people attended each week. Animate Bible is a seven-session video exploration of the Bible for small groups. In each Animate Bible session, the group watched a video featuring a leading voice from the Christian faith, spent time on personal reflection and journaling, and shared ideas. We learned how we got the bible we have, how the bible has been made available over the centuries - going from parchment scrolls to smart phones. We looked at the two parts of the bible - the old and new testaments especially the part called the gospels. We learned how to read the different types of literature that makes up the bible - poetry, history, wisdom, prophecy, and letters. Then we dove into interpreting this challenging collection of books and learned that love and grace are the foundation of the whole story. It was an exciting series of sessions - the video speakers were engaging, and the supporting journal and discussion made us think and grow.

Karen Pryznyk

Charles Foreman

On Sunday, March 26th, 2017 classical pianist Charles Foreman performed a solo concert entitled



The Romantic Character Piece: a Snapshot. Our own pianist, Amy Gatus, played a beautiful piece by Poulenc. The concert was well received by those who attended and generated \$900.00 for the general fund.



OUC Fireside Book Club

The Book Club is a Fellowship Ministry, that meets on the first Monday of the month at 7:00 p.m., unless a statutory holiday, then automatically moves to the following Monday. Books are obtained from the library and distributed a month ahead for reading. Our attendance ranges from 8 to 10; everyone is welcome.

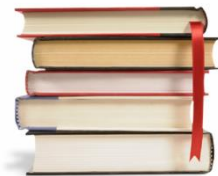


During the past year the Book Club has met 10 times to discuss a selected book. In March we joined forces with Healing Pathways to host Food for Fun. In September we participated in the Ministry Fair and gave away books. At the Christmas Market in November we re-sold books generously donated by the congregation.

In January 2018 we will begin the process of selecting books for the following year. Please check the bulletin board or website for monthly book selections.

O.U.C. Fireside

BOOK CLUB



The Foyer



Our foyer is an import part of our church. Last summer it was enhanced by having beautiful stained-glass doors added to the west entrance to celebrate our 100th anniversary. We are proud of the space and work hard to keep it welcoming. We have numerous events taking place all year long and our congregation is blessed as we use it for church gatherings. We have three bulletin boards that keep folk in the know regarding activities at the church and in the community. We endeavour to keep everyone informed regarding activities and special events which are central to our faith journey. Thank you to everyone who helps make the space warm and welcoming.



Gayle MacPherson and Sharon Campbell

Food For Fun

This past year participation has been bountiful as we continued to enjoy our **Food for Fun** ministry, providing a fellowship lunch following the worship service about once a month. It has been great for promoting relationships, getting to know new people and being an opportunity to include everyone. This past year we wanted to simplify things by moving to soup and buns, focusing instead on being together in community. The response has been great. We have asked people to sign up to bring soup once for the year and help serve and clean up on that day. As has been said, many hands make light work! Thanks to everyone who participated and helped make it a fun experience for everyone. This ministry helps to make us a stronger faith community.



Sharon Campbell



The Harmony Group

The Harmony Group has been a very busy group of young minded ladies this past year meeting in fellowship and helping as needed for church activities.

We started off the year with the pleasure of serving refreshments at the wedding of Donna (Smith) & Larry Branson. The gift to the couple from the group, a horse decorated cake made by Judy which was done as a surprise.



The Harmony Group seems to spend a great part of our time in the kitchen. In 2017 we made and sold 585 Turkey Pot Pies and 141 Shepherd's Pies. We made 153 jars of antipasto, some for pre-sales and some for the Christmas Bazaar.

In January we served Presbytery lunch for 41 people. We supplied Food For Fun in February for 125 with a meal of pulled pork and coleslaw. We catered lunch for 5 funeral/memorial services this past year.

Our Christmas Bazaar took on a new look this year and tables were rented to vendors – we did have a waiting list. As well, we had our usual bake table with donations from members of the group and members of the congregation. We also included a table of gently used Christmas gifts and a table of craft items.



Within Okotoks United, a donation of \$5,000.00 was made to the General Fund, a donation was made towards the installation of the windows from the old building, the convection in the small oven was serviced and paid for and soup spoons were purchased for the kitchen.

Prayer shawls have been made by members and donated to Pastoral Care.

We are sorry to have lost two long time members this past year. Our remembrances go out to Ruby Loucks and Pat Turner.

We have moved our meetings to the 3rd Tuesday of the month and would like to invite interested ladies to join us. We have ladies of the congregation that join us for some of our endeavours and we would like to extend our thank you to them.

Judy Niven, Secretary

Healing Pathways Ministry

Over the year the healing ministry team provided 28 healing sessions.

Christ centred healing is a process guided by God to restore balance and wholeness of body, mind and spirit, not only for the individual but also within relationships, community and creation.

Our ministry is used in a wide variety of settings. These include: hospitals, hospices, care facilities and private homes. The healing ministry involves a gentle touch that assists in balancing physical, mental, emotional and spiritual well being. The goal is to restore harmony and balance to support the body's natural healing ability. It is safe for all ages.

This year Healing Pathways Phase 2 "Where two or more gather" was offered at the Church from April 28-30.

Offering this ministry from a Christ centred, compassionate heart is following Jesus, reaching people & changing lives.

The following testimonial describes the experience of a session:

"I arrived at my very first healing ministry session with trepidation... what would it be like, what would they do, would I be comfortable, how would I feel at the end? The experience was unlike anything else I have ever done or felt. I Immediately felt comfortable with my practitioners, I felt cared for and safe. We prayed and then with the careful ministrations of my team I was able to let go of the things that were weighing me down. At the end of the session I did not want to leave the comfort and safety of that space...I was at peace and completely relaxed in a way I have never been before. There was a complete feeling of joy and peace."

Gisela Dyck



International Women's Day, March 8, 2017

EMPOWERING WOMEN THROUGH HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

We celebrated International Women's Day with a plethora of wonderful food, happy fellowship and informative inspirational speakers. This year we were able to partner with the Rowen House Emergency Shelter from High River, and with Dan Carruthers, an author from Turner Valley.



There were approximately 35 people in attendance for our event. At 5:00 we were meeting and greeting each other, then we were welcomed with a toast. We toasted the special day which is celebrated all around the globe in over 60 countries. Julia provided us with a grateful and thoughtful grace which was followed by an amazing pot luck dinner.

Dan Carruthers, our local author from Turner Valley, spoke of his background, his experiences involving young girls in the sex trade, and his novel **Anya Unbound** which was inspired by his knowledge of what some young girls experience. He spoke of the attempted abduction of the 3 girls in High River, bringing the issue close to home for all of us.

Next, Carol identified the need for us in Canada to be aware of the statistics of violence against women both in the community and in the home.

Sherrie and Carmen from the Rowen House Emergency Shelter then explained their services and programs for people of all ages in High River, Okotoks and area. Carmen spoke on the statistics involved in their daily work and the need that is present here. She further explained how Rowen House works with everyone, women, men, and children to help develop healthy relationships and healthy people.

Lastly, we viewed a Ted Talks video on gratitude, reminding us of the beauty around us, the happiness around us, and how blessed we all are.

Just as we closed we all realized that no one took pictures – next time for sure!

Respectfully Submitted,

Sharon Campbell and Carol Price



Jacket Racket Report – 2017

Mission statement: With God's help we are, Following Jesus, Reaching People, and Changing Lives.

There was a plan for 2 coordinators which not work out. Since I had worked on the coordinating committee for several years, I felt that with the current volunteers, I could do the job this one year without another coordinator.

As of September 10th, the planning for Jacket Racket 2017 was in place. It was decided that we not include the Crescent Field house as a collection spot as very few items were gathered there last year. In addition, we continued to use the Rubber Maid tubs for collection. They are sturdier and easier to handle than cardboard boxes.

Volunteers began signing up to help with the events and the donation tubs were put into place Friday, September 22. The collection volunteers picked up items every few days and took the items to the Church. Sobeys, the Church, and the Rec Centre are the most popular collection spots while both cleaners had a few items to be collected.

On Saturday, Oct. 21 we set up the event and held our first exchange from 1:30-3:30. Each of the 7 events was staffed with happy and helpful volunteers. There were a minimum of 4 volunteers at each event. At the end of the last event, we collected a few items that might be needed to keep in the Church for over the winter and bagged the rest of the items. The Calgary Drop-In Centre came on Wednesday, November 16th and took the 21 bags of donated items to be distributed around Calgary.

Summary:

- We had over 20 volunteers:
 1. 3 groups of people did the donation pick up from the drop off points 2- 3 times per week from Sept. 22 to Nov. 15.
 2. There were 7 events, 1 set up and 1 take down and each of these was about 2.5 hours = 22.5 hours and each event had at least 4 volunteers = 22.5 x 4 = 90 volunteer hours plus the time involved in the pick-ups from donation sites.
 3. 3 volunteers helped load up the 21 large bags into the Calgary Drop-In Centre truck.
- Over 220 people came and took what they needed.
- The Calgary Drop-In Centre came with their truck and took all 21 bags of items remaining.
- 4 families were given donated gift cards to Walmart in order to purchase items as there were no donated items that fit their needs. I believe that there are 3 remaining gift cards to be used as needed.

Jacket Racket Report continued:

- A thank – you to all who participated in Jacket Racket 2017 was placed in the November 26th Church Bulletin.

What we noticed:

- It seemed there was an even distribution of people in the afternoons and in the evening events which was not the case last year – where there were more people in the evenings last year
- It seemed there were more men's items donated this year – especially larger men's items which was very helpful
- We also received a number of beautiful hand knitted items – in fact, one family brought in 3 boxes of knitting by a 91-year-old mother and grandmother. We did send her a thank you card
- Overall, the quality of the donated items was very stylish which does not always happen
- The Church Guidelines for Jacket Racket states to count the number of jackets each person receives, we find it a challenge to count those - especially when it is busy. Perhaps keeping track of the number of items could be removed from the guidelines
- The Church Guidelines also state to put a community Thank You in the Western Wheel following the last day of Jacket Racket. Perhaps when the initial ad goes into the Western Wheel we could put a statement of gratitude into that ad. That way, only 1 ad needs to be placed.

In relating back to our Mission Statement: With God's help, this Ministry is definitely reaching people; by providing warm clothing for a cold winter, helping ease some financial pressures, offering appealing and attractive items to choose from which does make a difference, especially for the teens who came. Lastly, the Church is a very joyful place when people are matched up with items that they like, the items fit them, and they look good in them!

It seems to me those who attend, both volunteers and those looking for items, are very happy, and grateful to be there – a very valuable Ministry in many ways!

If you have any questions or need additional information just email carol.a.price@shaw.ca

Respectfully Submitted,

Carol Price



Kid's Ministry Annual Report

This year we continued to see general attendance grow in our Sunday School. In general, we have more regular participants as well as higher numbers for holidays. However, we are still having the problem of a small volunteer pool. We continue to have the support of Arlene Heron and Quinton which makes a difference on Sundays. I would however, like to see for the upcoming year, more congregants willing to give the occasional Sunday and spend some time with our awesome kids!



This year we also launched a craft supply drive which was very successful. Based on the feedback from parents and children, the most effective approach to Sunday School is through a makerspace. This is an approach that promotes creating projects of their faith through crafting, drawing and creating communal art. This approach promotes memory retention and encourages active participation by all as well as a creative outlet. Through this approach, we can also welcome adults to craft and develop their faith through creation. Therefore, we will probably be



asking for craft items regularly as well as purchasing items we need.

We also expanded our costume collection for future pageants this year. This was an update that was badly needed as many of the existing costumes are over 5 years old. With the help of the Loucks sisters we were able to update the costume closet with minimal cost to the ministry.





Youth Ministry

Youth Ministry Annual Report

We continue to see growth in this ministry as well as we are seeing some of our members age out in the coming years. I want to continue to reach out to our younger members and have them join to see Youth Group evolve. We have added several new young members to this group who attend regularly. We also continue to see the existing members attend regularly as well as bring friends to join our Friday nights. This year I would like to create a balance of experiences in the church as well as throughout the town of Okotoks. We are also looking for more volunteers to support me in supervising Youth Group that will be able to support at the church as well as our other activities.

Candice Sutton



Ladies Night Out 2017

Ladies night out had a smaller attendance this year with about 100 ladies enjoying a silent auction, fashion show, dinner and entertainment held at the De Winton Hall. The support from businesses and individuals was amazing and the offering at the silent auction exceeded expectations. We thank everyone for their generous contributions and those who partook in buying items of art to massage, golf gift certificates and everything in between. We had a fabulous group of United Church women working together to make this event a wonderful evening.

Okotoks United Church Ladies Retreat 2017

The retreat took place on June 16th - 18th at the Kings Fold Retreat Centre. There were 24 ladies in attendance from Okotoks, De Winton and Calgary. The goal of the Retreat was to give the ladies a time away from their busy lives to relax, reflect, share and spend time with God. This year's retreat was focused on personal growth and thought-provoking programming. Julia did a fantastic job to keep us thinking with time to just be. Our ladies had time to walk the labyrinth, hike, and play games. We made new friends and I believe our ladies left feeling rested and renewed in their faith. Comments were received on how the weekend has changed some of their lives. I would like to thank Julia for her hard work with facilitating the retreat for us.

Blessings,

Respectfully submitted

Linda Wilson





MEN'S GROUP

The men's group met 5 times during the year for breakfast. For the first time ever, the men's group had breakfast ready for everyone that attended the sunrise service at the Big Rock. We also had the following quest speakers; Dave Wedderburn talked about the history of our church, the community and Bill Calder talked on his experience as a veterinary. The men's group also participated in the Ministry and Mission Sunday by having a table set up in September.

Bruce Wilson



MISSION POSSIBLE



Since 2012, Okotoks United Church has sent five teams to the Dominican Republic including 55 different travelers from our congregation and extended community. What began as a one-time mission trip has turned into a long-term partnership with T.E.A.R.S. (www.tears.org). T.E.A.R.S. is a Christian based, locally led charity that serves in the Maria Auxiliadora and Soto barrios near La Vega, Dominican Republic.

The key values that guide our participation are:

- Building relationships based on long-term commitment.
- Connecting and caring for others through deeper relationships.
- Caring for communities and people in a holistic manner.
- Honoring the autonomy and dignity of local communities.
- Building mutual trust and respect through partnerships.

Below you can read about some of the programs Okotoks United Church has supported through our mission teams and fundraising efforts.

Children's Education

The El Camino and Soto schools work beyond their walls by nurturing relationships with the families of their students. This includes: family counselling, and regular home visits for each student. Additionally, students are provided with instruction in art, physical education, social skills and personal hygiene. Each child is provided with school supplies, vitamins, periodic medical and dental care, uniforms, and a daily nutritional meal. All of this is offered in a loving environment.



The El Camino school was founded in 2000 for 60 impoverished primary-school children who had no birth certificates and could not access the public education system. The school, staffed and led by the local people, now provides quality education and meals for 456 children from Kindergarten through grade 12. This has resulted in students having a sense of optimism and hope for the future. Stories of changed lives speak of success within this community.



Meet Ydekel Capellán: A remarkable young man who flourished against all odds. Ydekel is a role model for many youth in his community. Ydekel was born in the barrio that houses people with very low income, where poverty is so marked it forces many to get involved in illicit activities just to survive. Two of Ydekel's brothers were killed before he turned 5 years old. Ydekel was also starting down a similar path but at the age of 9 he realized the need for change in his life. He joined the T.E.A.R.S youth center where he thrived mentally and intellectually. Today, Ydekel is a University graduate with a degree in marketing. He works with T.E.A.R.S. as part of the church youth leadership and manages the community soccer program.

In 2015, T.E.A.R.S. completed the construction of a primary school and in 2017 completed phases 1 and 2 of a new high school using used cargo containers built by a Canadian company, a first for the Dominican Republic. Students now have the opportunity to complete their high school education rather than leave school early due to the lack of family resources, the need to provide for their families and the general entropy that accompanies poverty.

The impact of this investment is that students, who do not otherwise have a chance to go to school, receive an excellent core education and are able to excel in future learning pursuits upon graduation. Our partnership has also enabled the teachers to receive their accreditation. As a result, the school is now accredited by the state as a private school totally run by local people.

El Camino Church

El Camino Church is located in the Maria Auxiliadora barrio. Although the church is small, the people attending El Camino have big hearts for their community. The church and T.E.A.R.S. school occupy the same building and together provide a caring community for children and adults. El Camino ('The Way') is composed of individuals and families who have experienced the hardship of poverty, crime and domestic violence, but their lives are being changed by their faith.



El Camino Church nurtures individuals through worship services, care groups, children and youth programs, Bible studies and community outreach activities. Many members from El Camino are also involved with the TEARS School, as teachers or support staff. The church is active in the community and has been a great supporter of youth activities, providing leadership for the sports programs at the nearby baseball field, soccer pitch, and basketball court. Social programs such as the provision of purified

water, food baskets, medical clinics and hospital care packages are important aspects of El Camino's ministry.

Water Purification Project

The water purification plant project began over 10 years ago offering pure drinking water more affordably than that offered by nearby stores. It has been a source of incalculable benefits for the community and surrounding area, providing a central necessity and a healthy future.



Both the Maria Auxiliadora and Soto barrios face a high risk of disease due to unsanitary conditions and many also suffer from malnutrition and thirst, drinking far less water than their bodies need to function well. For this reason, the El Camino Water Centre has been an invaluable source of aid to those living in the Maria Auxiliadora, Soto, and numerous surrounding barrios, and the water is making a radical difference in the health of the community members.

Currently, the system is selling about 5,000 5-gallon jugs monthly at half the retail price of local retail outlets, thus benefiting less advantaged people who could not afford to pay full retail. The water purification distribution also creates a connection with the local church, which provides holistic care for the needs of these communities.

Community Development

Many programs are offered to those living in the Maria Auxiliadora and Soto barrios and nearby communities. These include soccer and other sports programs for teens, youth mentorship programs, post-secondary education grants, in school medical clinic, food bank and the Soto Tutoring Program. Each of these programs contribute to the development of children and adolescents by promoting their wellbeing, through a participatory learning process and guiding families in social restoration.



We are blessed to witness the difference of these programs in a few short years. We thank you for your prayers, participation in our fundraising efforts and your donations. None of what the Mission Possible Team does can be accomplished without your support.

Gary Dzurka

Pride in the Park

On Saturday, August 26th, 2017 the **Foothills Rainbow Connection** hosted its first ever Pride event in Okotoks. “Pride in the Park” was a festival like event at Ethel Tucker Park just down the street from the church and Okotoks United was there in full force, sponsoring a booth, handing out cupcakes and applying “tattoos” to delighted festival goers. Our booth was a great hit with attendees. Who doesn’t smile when given a rainbow cupcake? Fun, engaging entertainment and booths highlighting some of the businesses and services in town surrounded the park. The energy was positive and exuberant as a good crowd of locals gathered to support the LGBTQQ+ community in Okotoks. The response by many people to the church being at an event for this community was at times delightful and at other times heart-breaking as people expressed their stories of being hurt and rejected by the church. This was a chance for us to show that we support the community and that God truly does love all people, as do we.



Refugee Sponsorship 2017

In 2016 our congregation embarked on the beginning of an significant journey. We, along with Diamond Valley Pastoral Charge and Red Deer Lake United Church, agreed to sponsor a refugee family. We fundraised the required amount to support them for one year, completed the application process, and at the end of that year we welcomed from Syria our new Canadian family of married couple Nader Kazaal, Kinda Dawood, and their daughter Senta.



2017 was the year of the Kazaal-Dawood family's acclimatization to Canada. Both Nader and Kinda enrolled in English classes and Kinda engaged in extra tutoring to learn the language. Senta was enrolled in a local preschool and all thrived in these new environments.

The family enjoyed exploring Okotoks, Turner Valley, and Calgary especially after they received the generous donation of a vehicle to use. The family made friends with both long-time Canadians and other relative newcomers to this country. They took advantage of many community and cultural activities offered in Okotoks and Calgary including Christmas and Canada Day celebrations.

After 7 months in Canada, our sponsored family made the big decision to move to Oakville, Ontario for Nader to have more opportunities to pursue his dream of being ordained as a priest in the Syrian Orthodox Church. They packed up their belongings into a trailer and drove across Canada to start another new chapter in their lives. Here follows an update from them from July 2017, shortly after they arrived in Ontario:

*Dear my family in united church in (Okotoks, Red deer lake, turner valley)
I need to thank you very much for everything you do it for us to make the
sponsorship for my family.*

*We had a great time with you when we are in calgary and we spend lots of nice
and amazing day together.*

*Now we thank God first that's we arrived safe to Oakville in Ontario
the moving take four days driving we saw lots of places in canada
and amazing roads*

Everything here is nice and good

*I start working in a big company of snack , senta and kinda will start
school in the end of next month*

We have a new home and we bought a furniture for it and



*everything until now is good
We miss you all you will stay our family in Canada where we are
When someone her asking me you are from any church an answering I am from
united church of calgary
We love you and we promise you that we will visit you someday.
With all our love for you
Kinda,Senta,Nader*

Our sponsorship obligation to this family continued for the agreed upon one year set out by the Canadian Government, until early December 2017. Since settling in Ontario, Nader has found further work at Amazon Canada, as well as working as a delivery driver. Kinda volunteers at Senta's preschool and helps to care for elderly friends of the family. They are happy and healthy, and building a life of safety in their new country, Canada. This was made possible, with God's help and guidance, in part through the care and generosity of the congregation of Okotoks United Church.

- submitted by Jody Connors, OUC Sponsorship Group Representative



School Lunch Program

Letters to editor

Dear Editor,

On behalf of the Okotoks United Church school lunch program, we wish to thank the talented youth from the Okotoks and surrounding area for being part of the Kids Helping Kids variety show. It was a huge success, not only in the performances but also in the donations contributed to this valuable program. As a community, we always seem to find the volunteers and resources to help make our community a better place.

Talented young Okotokians showed off their music, dance and theatre skills in a variety show to help fill the bellies of their peers.

The Okotoks United Church hosted the Kids Helping Kids Variety Show Nov. 4 featuring an array of young talent in an effort to raise awareness and support around the Lunch for Kids Program. The initiative sees volunteers making lunches on school days for 41 students.

Program co-founder Shannon Olson said it has been an eye-opening experience for volunteers to see the level of need in town.

“There were a lot of shocked comments when we brought the idea out,” she said. “People just can’t believe it in a community with the affluence that Okotoks has, but you don’t see behind closed doors and we don’t see the social situations and we know the struggles since the economy shifted have been pretty great for a lot of people and they’re barely hanging on.”

The idea of the Lunch for Kids program came from Olson and her husband Brian, who learned about a similar program in Calgary and High River. The couple contacted the Foothills School Division to see if there was also a need in Okotoks.

“There is so much need right now and sometimes for these families it’s such a struggle to get healthy food that sometimes you have to choose between medication and feeding kids,” she said. “We understand there are social situations, but kids should not suffer because of those situations. My husband and I feel that for successful children to grow up and get a good education you’ve got to feed their brains and nurture their bodies.”

Volunteers prepare the lunches in the Okotoks United Church’s commercially-certified kitchen two to three times a week. Olson said the food is supplied from donations by more than 10 local organizations, businesses and individuals in the community.

“This isn’t a church-driven thing, this is a community-driven thing,” she said. “We wanted to make this a community commitment so the whole community recognizes the need here in Okotoks.”

Lunch for Kids began as a pilot project in March, providing a sandwich, fruit, vegetables and add-ons like Gold Fish crackers or an unsweetened fruit cup each for 23 students in two schools. In September, it expanded to 41 students in four schools.

Ryley Hatchard, counsellor co-ordinator with the Foothills School Division, said she contacted schools to identify students who could benefit from the program.

"I sent it out to schools to see if there was a need for lunches," she said. "We identified 20 students that could benefit from the lunch program."

Hatchard said she contacted schools again in September and doubled that number.

"There certainly is a need," she said. "It really depends on what's going on in that individual family's life. Sometimes it might be for a short period of time or it might be longer for others. It varies from situation to situation."

Most of the families contacted were receptive to the Lunch for Kids program and appreciate the support, said Hatchard.

"Brian and Shannon were so kind in approaching us with this and providing this opportunity to families in Okotoks because there wasn't any sort of program like this prior to their stepping up," she said. "The biggest thing is how appreciative we are for Brian and Shannon for taking the initiative and ensuring that the children have the nutrition they need to be successful in the classroom. Fed kids are able to learn."

Variety show organizer Shelley van den Bos said about 20 performers were lined up for the weekend's event.

"I think it's going to be amazing," she said. "They're all excited about the premise of what it's for."

Through the variety show, Shannon hoped to not only get more sponsors for Lunch for Kids, but also volunteers like service groups to expand the program to include other schools.

Admission to attend the Kids Helping Kids Variety Show was by donation. Attendees could also purchase a brown bag lunch similar to what the children receive for \$5. Door prizes were available, and a pie auction was held.



A.G.M.

Agenda
AGM minutes – February 26, 2017
Financials
Budget
Harmony Group Financials

**Agenda
Okotoks United Church
2018 Annual General Meeting (AGM)**

Opening Prayer
Opening Remarks

1. Election of Secretary
2. Election of Chairperson
3. Motion by Members for Adherents to vote on temporal matters
Motion: That adherents be permitted to vote on all financial or administrative matters relating to the work of St. Andrew's United Church.*
4. Approval of Agenda
5. Approval of Minutes from February 26, 2017
6. Approval of 2017 Annual Report
7. Financials
8. Motion to Approve Financials
9. Presentation of the 2018 Budget
10. Motion to approve the 2018 Budget
11. Governing Board Report
12. Ministry Board Report
13. Proposal for 2018-2019 Consolidated/Unified Board
14. Election of Board members
15. Election of Trustees
16. Election of Presbytery Representatives
17. Election of Committee Members:
 - a. M & P
 - b. Nominating Committee
18. New Business
 - a. Sabbatical Plans
19. Benediction
20. Motion to Adjourn

*It is the policy of the United Church of Canada that adherents are able to vote on temporal matters of the church if members indicate their desire for this to be so. Only members, however, can vote on anything involving the pastoral relationship (including searches, calls, and appointments); in elections or appointments of the governing body, committees, trustees, and presbytery representatives, and of other bodies and officers; on anything involving the order of worship; on amalgamating, disbanding, or realigning the congregation or pastoral charge; and on property matters needing presbytery consent.



Okotoks United Church Annual General Meeting Minutes

Date: February 26, 2017

Location: OUC Sanctuary

Present: Attendance list on file. There were 59 persons in attendance consisting of 48 members, 10 adherents and 1 staff.

Opening: Rev. Julia Kimmett opened the meeting at 12:05 pm with a prayer.

Rev. Julia Kimmett spoke briefly about how Okotoks United Church is a growing community. We are striving to make our presence known both locally and afar. People's lives are being changed and blessed. She expressed gratitude to the whole congregation.

1. Election of a Secretary
It was moved by Pam Grinevitch and seconded by Dave Wedderburn that Sally Salter be elected as Secretary. Carried.
2. Election of a Chairperson
It was moved by Julie Leggett and seconded by Carol Powley that Bev Carlson be elected as Chairperson. Carried.
3. Motion by Members for Adherents to vote on temporal matters
It was moved by Susan Baker and seconded by Donna Smith-Bronson that adherents be permitted to vote on all financial or administrative matters relating to the work of Okotoks United Church. Carried.
4. Approval of the Agenda
It was moved by Ursula Hoppenheit and seconded by Joe Muhle that the agenda be approved as presented. Carried.
5. Approval of Minutes of January 31, 2016 AGM
It was moved by Betty-Lou Bayley and seconded by Sharon Campbell that the Minutes of the January 31, 2016 AGM be approved as presented. Carried.
6. Approval of 2016 Annual Report
Bev thanked Joanne Dzurka for the all of the time and effort (and photos) she put into creating the 2016 Annual Report. A thank you also to Gerhard Dyck for his editing and proof reading assistance.
It was moved by Donna Smith-Bronson and seconded by Ellie Shaver that the reports contained in the Annual Report be approved as presented. Carried
7. Report from the Ministry Board Chair
Dean Salter, Ministry Board Chair, shared three things with the congregation:
 - a. The Spirit of Yes was our 2016 theme – yes to new visions and dreams of new ministries. The Spirit of Yes will carry forward.
 - b. The Spirit of Inclusiveness will be our 2017 theme – who is welcome in God's church? This will include the Spirit of Social Justice.
 - c. Thank you to the board members and Rev. Julia for their dedication and hard work.
8. Report from the Governing Board Chair
Bev Carlson, Governing Board Chair, thanked the current board members for their dedication and hard work. She thanked Lois Irvine for taking on the role of Treasurer and she thanked Udo Adam for all of the work he did as Treasurer to make our finances understandable. Bev also thanked the congregation for their love and support.



Lois
Treasurer, provided an overview
for their contributions to the
and the Finance Committee for

Okotoks United Church Annual General Meeting Minutes

Date: February 26, 2017

Location: OUC Sanctuary

10. Motion to approve Financials
It was moved by Gerhard Dyck and seconded by Stewart Thomas that the 2016 Financial Statements be approved as presented. Carried.

11. Presentation of the 2017 Budget

Lois Irvine, Treasurer, provided an overview of the 2017 Budget. Lois thanked the Finance Committee members for all of their hard work. This year's budget presentation has been changed to include all funds, both general and restricted, in one document.

12. Motion to approve the 2017 Budget

It was moved by Jack Parsons and seconded by Joe Muhle that the 2017 Budget be approved as presented. Carried.

13. Outgoing Governing Board members

No members of this board are leaving at this time.

14. Outgoing Ministry Board members

No members of this board are leaving at this time.

15. Election of Governing Board members

The following candidates were presented to the assembly for election to the Governing Board for a two year term:

Karen Jones

Ian McNeill

Lois Irvine

They join Bev Carlson, Stewart Thomas, Ellen Kneiss, Joyce Loucks and Bill Calder.

It was moved by Pat Reader-Downey and seconded by Joe Muhle that these candidates be accepted. Carried.

16. Election of Ministry Board members

The following candidates were presented to the assembly for election to the Ministry Board for a two year term:

Candice Sutton

Marilyn Carlson

Josh Penner

Daniel Lafond

They join Dean Salter, Sally Salter, Jack Parsons and Pam Grinevitch.

It was moved by Anne Scappaticci and seconded by Betty-Lou Bayley that these candidates be accepted. Carried

17. Election of Presbytery Representatives

No change, Lois Irvine and Stewart Thomas.

It was moved by Joe Muhle and seconded by Dave Wedderburn that these candidates be accepted. Carried.

18. Election of Trustees

The following candidates were presented to the assembly for election to the Trustees:

Reader-Downey

yn Carlson

Dzurka

Bill Calder, Dave Wedderburn, G

It was moved by Lois Irvine and seconded by Donna Smith-Bronson that these candidates be accepted. Carried.

19. Election of Committee Members



Okotoks United Church Annual General Meeting Minutes

Date: February 26, 2017

Location: OUC Sanctuary

a. Ministry & Personnel Committee

The following candidates were presented to the assembly for election to the Ministry & Personnel Committee for a two year term:

Ken McIsaac

Melanie Toews

They join Sally Salter and Mark Dutkoski (De Winton). Susan Baker is leaving the Committee.

It was moved by Dean Salter and seconded by Donna Smith-Bronson that these candidates be accepted. Carried.

b. Nominating Committee

The following candidates were presented to the assembly for election to the Nominating Committee for a one year term:

Sharon Campbell

Gayle MacPherson

Amy Mounkes

It was moved by Donna Smith-Bronson and seconded by Marge Bell that these candidates be accepted. Carried.

19. New Business

a. Centennial Fundraising

- i. Bev Carlson asked attendees to brainstorm on ways for Okotoks United Church to participate in the Canada's Sesquicentennial Celebration in July. We met in small groups, then shared our ideas with the assembly. The ideas were collected and forwarded to the Governing Board.
- ii. Bev Carlson announced some of the initiatives that the Centennial Committee is undertaking as part of our 100th anniversary. These include installation of the stain glass windows from the old church, a centennial book, display cases for the foyer and adding some of the historic signage from the old church.
- iii. Bev Carlson introduced the creation of a Centennial Fund. The purpose of this fund is three-fold:
 1. Pay for the Centennial projects
 2. Funds to hire a second minister for Okotoks De Winton Pastoral Charge
 3. Funds to go towards our mortgage

The goal is \$100,000 to celebrate our Centennial year. The funds would first go towards the Centennial projects and then be split between the other two purposes

20. Rev. Julia Kimmett offered the Benediction.

21. Motion to Adjourn

It was moved by Carol Powley that the meeting be adjourned at 1:25 pm.

Adjournment Time: 1:25 pm

Recorded by: Sally Salter

Chair: Bev Carlson

Notes to the Financial Statements

At Okotoks United Church we have three "Funds" that function to highlight various financial areas and responsibilities of the church.

- Fund 1 Operating Fund** - general funds for the operation of the church: staff, programs, building and grounds maintenance, etc. In 2017 we transferred \$36,000 from the Operating Fund (Fund 1) to the Mortgage Fund (Fund 3) to cover our mortgage payments.
- Fund 2 Restricted Fund** - monies designated to specific ministries that are carried over from year to year: Mission Team, Healing Ministry, Mission & Service, Bequests and Memorials, Benevolent Fund, and as of 2018 the School Lunch program, etc.
- Fund 3 Mortgage Fund** - Income and Expenses related only to paying mortgages held on the building by the Royal Bank and the United Church of Canada.

Operating: In 2017, for operating purposes, we had a total income of \$338,120.00. Total expenses were \$318,810.00 (including \$36,000.00 transferred to Fund 3) which left us with a surplus of \$19,310.00 thanks to the responsible management of Boards, Committees and staff of the church.

Mortgages: In 2017 we were able to make a \$115,00.00 one-time payment to RBC due to renegotiating and increasing our mortgage with the United Church of Canada, thus reducing interest and risk (the United Church is a little more forgiving than the bank), reserve funds and specified monies from our Centennial appeal. The total owing on our mortgages as of January 1st was \$748,555.16 (RBC \$264,470.58 and UCC \$484,084.58)

Budget: In 2018 we are projecting a deficit of \$20,648 in the Operating Fund (1) and \$31,356 in the Mortgage Fund (3) mainly due to rising expenses, some decline in fundraising and rental income as well as Julia's sabbatical. We have added \$10,000.00 in fundraising income on faith, hoping that people will step up with creative ideas for increasing our income. While we do have some reserves that will cover our expenses for 2018, this is not sustainable long term and our desire is to work toward being in a better position to carry forward our Mission to make a difference by "*following Jesus, reaching people and changing lives.*"

Thank you for your faithful and generous support of this faith community. Your hard work and many hours spent volunteering make this a caring, vibrant community. Let's work together to continue to be Christ's presence in the world for the next century.

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Okotoks United Church
Income and Expense Statement
 GENERAL FUND 01, January 2017 - December 2017

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	Current Period	Year to Date	Year to Date Budget	YTD Budget Difference	YTD Budget Percentage
INCOME					
GENERAL FUND INCOME	\$230,694.34	\$230,694.34	\$253,812.00	(\$23,117.66)	90.89 %
INVESTMENT INCOME	1,210.98	1,210.98	380.00	830.98	318.68 %
PROGRAM INCOME	8,170.65	8,170.65	5,550.00	2,620.65	147.22 %
PROJECT INCOME	8,180.00	8,180.00	7,750.00	430.00	105.55 %
RENTAL INCOME	37,085.25	37,085.25	32,694.00	4,391.25	113.43 %
OTHER INCOME	14,572.45	14,572.45	27,000.00	(12,427.55)	53.97 %
FUNDRAISING INCOME	38,206.78	38,206.78	16,600.00	21,606.78	230.16 %
TOTAL INCOME	338,120.45	338,120.45	343,786.00	(5,665.55)	98.35 %
<i>Budgeted</i>	<i>317,848.76</i>	<i>317,848.76</i>	<i>343,786.00</i>	<i>(25,937.24)</i>	<i>92.46 %</i>
<i>Non-Budgeted</i>	<i>20,271.69</i>	<i>20,271.69</i>			
EXPENSES					
OPERATING EXPENSES					
SALARIED	\$117,946.04	\$117,946.04	\$127,815.63	(\$9,869.59)	92.28 %
SUPPORT STAFF	49,330.75	49,330.75	49,286.00	44.75	100.09 %
BENEFITS	261.75	261.75	382.74	(120.99)	68.39 %
ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSE	25,463.99	25,463.99	31,682.00	(6,218.01)	80.37 %
BUILDING & GROUNDS	39,311.92	39,311.92	48,743.00	(9,431.08)	80.65 %
AUDIO VISUAL EXPENSES	2,898.39	2,898.39	10,500.00	(7,601.61)	27.60 %
Subtotal Operating Expenses	235,212.84	235,212.84	268,409.37	(33,196.53)	87.63 %
<i>Budgeted</i>	<i>235,212.84</i>	<i>235,212.84</i>	<i>268,409.37</i>	<i>(33,196.53)</i>	<i>87.63 %</i>
<i>Non-Budgeted</i>	<i>0.00</i>	<i>0.00</i>			
DEPARTMENTS/COMMITTEES					
CHRISTIAN EDUCATION	9,104.20	9,104.20	13,134.00	(4,029.80)	69.32 %
OUTREACH	7,102.75	7,102.75	0.00	7,102.75	0.00 %
FELLOWSHIP	72.23	72.23	1,974.00	(1,901.77)	3.66 %
MINISTRY EXPENSE	6,153.25	6,153.25	8,950.00	(2,796.75)	68.75 %
Subtotal Departments/committees	22,432.43	22,432.43	24,058.00	(1,625.57)	93.24 %
<i>Budgeted</i>	<i>15,835.16</i>	<i>15,835.16</i>	<i>24,058.00</i>	<i>(8,222.84)</i>	<i>65.82 %</i>
<i>Non-Budgeted</i>	<i>6,597.27</i>	<i>6,597.27</i>			
OTHER EXPENSES					
FUNDRAISING EXPENSES	8,770.91	8,770.91	11,500.00	(2,729.09)	76.27 %
WEDDINGS AND FUNERALS EXP	5,019.00	5,019.00	5,435.00	(416.00)	92.35 %
Subtotal Other Expenses	13,789.91	13,789.91	16,935.00	(3,145.09)	81.43 %
<i>Budgeted</i>	<i>13,789.91</i>	<i>13,789.91</i>	<i>16,935.00</i>	<i>(3,145.09)</i>	<i>81.43 %</i>
<i>Non-Budgeted</i>	<i>0.00</i>	<i>0.00</i>			
Subtotal Expenses	271,435.18	271,435.18	309,402.37	(37,967.19)	87.73 %
<i>Budgeted</i>	<i>264,837.91</i>	<i>264,837.91</i>	<i>309,402.37</i>	<i>(44,564.46)</i>	<i>85.60 %</i>
<i>Non-Budgeted</i>	<i>6,597.27</i>	<i>6,597.27</i>			
PROJECT EXPENSE	11,374.84	11,374.84	17,300.00	(5,925.16)	65.75 %
TOTAL EXPENSES	282,810.02	282,810.02	326,702.37	(43,892.35)	86.57 %
<i>Budgeted</i>	<i>276,212.75</i>	<i>276,212.75</i>	<i>326,702.37</i>	<i>(50,489.62)</i>	<i>84.55 %</i>
<i>Non-Budgeted</i>	<i>6,597.27</i>	<i>6,597.27</i>			
TRANSFERS	(\$36,000.00)	(\$36,000.00)	(\$36,000.00)	\$0.00	100.00 %
TOTAL TRANSFERS	(36,000.00)	(36,000.00)	(36,000.00)	0.00	100.00 %

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Okotoks United Church
Income and Expense Statement
 GENERAL FUND 01, January 2017 - December 2017

Page: 2

	Current Period	Year to Date	Year to Date Budget	YTD Budget Difference	YTD Budget Percentage
<i>Budgeted</i>	(36,000.00)	(36,000.00)	(36,000.00)	0.00	100.00 %
<i>Non-Budgeted</i>	0.00				
EXCESS INCOME\EXPENSES	<u>\$19,310.43</u>	<u>\$19,310.43</u>	<u>(\$18,916.37)</u>	<u>\$38,226.80</u>	<u>(102.08)%</u>
<i>Budgeted</i>	5,636.01	5,636.01	(18,916.37)	24,552.38	(29.79)%
<i>Non-Budgeted</i>	13,674.42	13,674.42			

Okotoks United Church
Income and Expense Statement
 TEMP. RESTRICTED 02, January 2017 - December 2017

	Current Period	Year to Date	Year to Date Budget	YTD Budget Difference	YTD Budget Percentage
INCOME					
Banking Interest	\$0.24	\$0.24	\$0.24	\$0.00	100.00 %
TEMP. RESTRICTED INCOME					
Mission Possible	7,842.57	7,842.57	27,420.00	(19,577.43)	28.60 %
Mission trip expense	13,540.00	13,540.00	0.00	13,540.00	0.00 %
Benevolence (Min)	21,563.00	21,563.00	18,064.80	3,498.20	119.36 %
Outreach Fund	2,799.37	2,799.37	2,000.00	799.37	139.97 %
Second Minister Fund	4,470.00	4,470.00	0.00	4,470.00	0.00 %
Healing Touch	5,015.00	5,015.00	2,625.00	2,390.00	191.05 %
Mission/Services	16,578.00	16,578.00	13,288.32	3,289.68	124.76 %
Memorials / Legacies	1,675.00	1,675.00	0.00	1,675.00	0.00 %
Subtotal Temp. Restricted Income	73,482.94	73,482.94	63,398.12	10,084.82	115.91 %
<i>Budgeted</i>	73,482.94	73,482.94	63,398.12	10,084.82	115.91 %
<i>Non-Budgeted</i>	0.00				
TOTAL INCOME					
	73,483.18	73,483.18	63,398.36	10,084.82	115.91 %
<i>Budgeted</i>	73,483.18	73,483.18	63,398.36	10,084.82	115.91 %
<i>Non-Budgeted</i>	0.00				
TEMP.REST. EXPENSES					
Mission Possible Exp	\$42,239.19	\$42,239.19	\$24,000.00	\$18,239.19	176.00 %
Benevolence (Min)	17,918.11	17,918.11	13,600.00	4,318.11	131.75 %
Outreach Fund exp	0.00	0.00	2,000.00	(2,000.00)	0.00 %
Healing Touch Exp	4,465.44	4,465.44	3,630.00	835.44	123.01 %
Mission/Services Exp	15,445.50	15,445.50	13,288.32	2,157.18	116.23 %
TOTAL EXPENSES	80,068.24	80,068.24	56,518.32	23,549.92	141.67 %
<i>Budgeted</i>	80,068.24	80,068.24	56,518.32	23,549.92	141.67 %
<i>Non-Budgeted</i>	0.00				
TRANSFERS					
Transfer to Other Funds	\$13.96	\$13.96	\$0.00	\$13.96	0.00 %
Transfer From Other Funds	(13.96)	(13.96)	0.00	(13.96)	0.00 %
TOTAL TRANSFERS	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00 %
<i>Budgeted</i>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00 %
<i>Non-Budgeted</i>	0.00				
EXCESS INCOME\EXPENSES					
	(\$6,585.06)	(\$6,585.06)	\$6,880.04	(\$13,465.10)	(95.71)%
<i>Budgeted</i>	(6,585.06)	(6,585.06)	6,880.04	(13,465.10)	(95.71)%
<i>Non-Budgeted</i>	0.00				

Okotoks United Church
Mortgage Information

Mortgage Contributions	\$31,926.60	
Transfers from Fund 01	<u>\$36,000.00</u>	
	\$67,926.60	
Cost of Mortgage		
RBC Principal	\$23,419.82	
RBC Interest	<u>\$11,849.02</u>	
Total	\$35,268.84	
UCC Principal	\$33,983.73	
UCC Interest	<u>\$13,711.79</u>	
Total	\$47,695.52	
Cost Total	<u>\$82,964.36</u>	
Excess cost	-\$15,037.76	
RBC Mortgage Jan. 1, 2017		\$402,890.40
Payments by month (Principal)		\$23,419.82
Lump sum Payment		
Funds on hand	\$25,000.00	
Centennial Appeal donations	\$6,000.00	
Extra from on hand	\$2,100.00	
Funds borrowed from UCC	<u>\$81,900.00</u>	
		\$115,000.00
December 31, 2017 remaining		\$264,470.58
UCC Mortgage Jan. 1, 2017		\$436,168.31
Payments by month (Principal)		\$33,983.73
Additional amount borrowed (2.5%)		-\$81,900.00
December 31, 2017 remaining		\$484,084.58

Okotoks United Church

Balance Sheet

Consolidated - For The Year Ending December 2017

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	Fund 01 - GENERAL FUND	Fund 02 - TEMP. RESTRICTED	Fund 03 - CAPITAL FUND	Total
ASSETS				
BANK ACCOUNTS				
CHEQUING ACCOUNTS	\$27,411.31	\$64,245.95	\$21,462.60	\$113,119.86
OTHER ACCOUNTS	60,000.00	24,122.28	60,000.00	144,122.28
Subtotal Bank Accounts	87,411.31	88,368.23	81,462.60	257,242.14
CASH ON HAND	200.00			200.00
INVESTMENTS				
ACCOUNTS RECEIVABLE	1,799.33	71.36		1,870.69
Subtotal Investments	1,799.33	71.36	0.00	1,870.69
CAPITAL ASSETS				
BUILDINGS			3,580,715.93	3,580,715.93
EQUIPMENT			79,619.02	79,619.02
Subtotal Capital Assets	0.00	0.00	3,660,334.95	3,660,334.95
TOTAL ASSETS	<u>\$89,410.64</u>	<u>\$88,439.59</u>	<u>\$3,741,797.55</u>	<u>\$3,919,647.78</u>
LIABILITIES				
LONG-TERM LIABILITIES				
MORTGAGES & LOANS			\$748,555.16	\$748,555.16
TOTAL LIABILITIES	<u>\$0.00</u>	<u>\$0.00</u>	<u>\$748,555.16</u>	<u>\$748,555.16</u>
EQUITY				
UNRESTRICTED	\$89,410.64			\$89,410.64
Restricted			2,911,779.79	2,911,779.79
TEMP.RESTR.IN CHEQUING FB				
DONOR RESTRICTED		85,133.99	81,462.60	166,596.59

Okotoks United Church

Balance Sheet

Consolidated - For The Year Ending December 2017

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	Fund 01 - GENERAL FUND	Fund 02 - TEMP. RESTRICTED	Fund 03 - CAPITAL FUND	Total
PASS THRU FUNDS		3,305.60		3,305.60
Subtotal Temp.restr.in Chequing Fb	0.00	88,439.59	81,462.60	169,902.19
TOTAL EQUITY	\$89,410.64	\$88,439.59	\$2,993,242.39	\$3,171,092.62
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND EQUITY	\$89,410.64	\$88,439.59	\$3,741,797.55	\$3,919,647.78

Budget Summary 2018

Okotoks United Church

	Fund 01 General Operating	Fund 02 Restricted	Fund 03 Capital
INCOME			
General	\$224,600.00		
Investment, Program, Project	\$1,300.00		
Rental Income	\$29,216.00		
Other Income	\$6,200.00		
Fund Raising Income	\$29,350.00		
TOTAL INCOME	\$290,666.00	\$81,700.00	\$49,920.00
EXPENSE			
Salaried Staff	\$127,358.03		
Support	\$59,370.00		
Administrative expense	\$29,309.00		
Building & Grounds	\$41,752.00		
A-V	\$4,500.00		
Christian Education, Ministries			
Worship, Programs, Fellowship	\$15,075.00		
Fund Raising Expenses	\$10,200.00		
Rental Expense	\$5,750.00		
Other expense inc. Centennial			
Mortgage	\$18,000.00		
TOTAL EXPENSE	\$311,314.03	\$85,600.00	\$81,276.00
Surplus/Deficit	-\$20,648.03	-\$3,900.00	-\$31,356.00
Cash assets on hand end of 2017	\$87,411.31	\$64,245.95 + Benevol. Fund \$24,122.28	\$81,462.60
Includes GIC 3: \$120,000			

OKOTOKS UNITED CHURCH HARMONY GROUP

JANUARY 1,2017 to DECEMBER 31, 2017

Opening balance Jan 1,2017 5696.98

Income

Bazaar	3704.39	
Funerals	2791.10	
Turkey Pie Sale	1910.73	
Shepherd Pie Sale	407.23	
Presbytery Lunch	323.24	
Weddings	240.55	
	Income	Total
		<u>9377.24</u>

Expense

Donation OUC General fund	5000.00	
Donation Anniversary Project	800.00	
Kitchen Maintenance	1410.58	
Bank Expense	60.57	
Fellowship	254.18	
	Total expenses	<u>7525.33</u>

Closing Balance December 31, 2017 7548.89

The Harmony Group would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for their great support. You make our contribution possible.

Respectfully submitted

Ellen Kneiss ,Treasurer, Harmony Group



IN THE NEWS

APPENDIX



Nader and Kinda Khazaal, with their daughter Senta, came to Canada in early December after fleeing the Syrian war.

After waiting nearly a year to hear the news, a Syrian family learned it would be emigrating to Okotoks in December.

Nader Khazaal, his wife Kinda and their three-year-old daughter Senta fled war-torn Homs, Syria in 2015 and spent one year in Lebanon where they applied to move to Canada.

Just as Nader was losing hope during the summer, the family received word they would be relocating to Canada once everything was in order. Three months later, their transportation documents were ready.

“The first day we knew we were leaving was Nov. 8,” said Nader. “It was about a month that we knew we were coming to Okotoks. I don’t forget this date, never.”

The Khazaals were sponsored by a trio of local churches – the Okotoks United Church, United Church in the Valley (Turner Valley), and the Red Deer Lake United Church. The group raised funds to support the Khazaal family for one year while they adjust to life in Canada, find work and move into their own home. For now, the Khazaals are living in the third-floor apartment above the Okotoks United Church.

Okotoks United Church pastor Julia Kimmett said the family arrived Dec. 8 and their first month in town has been a flurry of activity. “They’ve got their IDs, Nader’s passed his driver’s test, the little girl will start preschool [Jan. 10], and they’re starting in English classes,” said Kimmett. She said it takes close to 30 volunteers to manage the family’s resettlement in town, between people driving them to appointments, arranging classes, and helping with shopping or job searches. “It’s that old, ‘it takes a village,’” said Kimmett.

The community has helped with other things as well, like filling young Senta’s room with toys and sewing handmade quilts for the family. Now, the family is adjusting to a different life and learning a new language.

While Kinda and Senta have a long road ahead to learn English, Nader arrived in Canada with a good grasp of the language after spending a year in Sweden in 2014. He said he picked up the language by studying movies and music. Nader said learning English is crucial to finding work and making friends – something important to the Khazaals, who come from a very social culture. “We need to have good English to help connect with all the people around us,” said Nader. He said Kinda was too shy to speak with anyone at first, but she’s beginning to pick up words and phrases, which are allowing her to speak with more confidence. It’s important for her to learn so she can find work in Canada, he said. In Syria, Kinda was a trained aesthetician and hopes to take up the trade again once she has a better grasp of the language.

Nader, a Syrian Orthodox Church priest for eight years, is waiting to be ordained in Canada. In the meantime, he said he’d gladly take part-time work in any field to begin making a living. “When you have work here you will have the connection with the people, your language will be better,” said Nader. “And it’s boring really if you don’t work. It’s not usual to me to wake up in the morning, be at home, go shopping, come back home, home, home, home. It’s difficult.”

The Khazaals have also struggled to adjust to the climate. Nader was accustomed to the cold after living in Sweden and is getting used to Canadian winter, but Kinda despises it. Senta, however, loves the snow and cool air. “When we go shopping she loves to eat ice cream outside,” said Nader. “She loves the snow. My fingers are frozen, but she loves it.”

The family is taking in Canadian culture as much as possible, like going to the New Year’s Eve skating party in Turner Valley and trying out different foods, he said.

He said Kinda's favourite so far is pizza, and she's found a penchant for margarine. Some things she's not so fond of. "She don't like the hotdog, but I like it," said Nader. "I made it two days ago, and me and Senta ate it, but Kinda ate something else." The family enjoys what they call "Canadian breakfast" – things like pancakes, French toast, eggs and bacon. Pork was not found in Syria, where meals are made primarily of lamb, beef and chicken, so bacon has become Nader's favourite.

They've also brought pieces of home to Okotoks. Kinda spends a lot of time cooking Syrian treats like sweet or savoury cookies, and she's made traditional pickles, yogurt and cheese.

One thing they couldn't do without, which Nader was pleased to see in a Calgary store specializing in Arabic and Syrian foods, is maté tea. Originally from Argentina, Nader said maté has become a popular beverage in Syria. "We couldn't come without it," said Nader. "We were so happy to find it here."

With some comforts of home and a number of new experiences, he said the family is looking forward to their Canadian life. Sometimes, living in Okotoks still feels like a dream, he said. In the first two days, he said he would wake up and walk into the living room, where he could hear the train running along the tracks and see snow outside the window. To him, the sights and sounds were like a wake-up call, reminding him this was real, and bringing tears of relief and joy. "Every man in this world needs the best life for his family," said Nader. "The best life, I couldn't have found it there. I would have gone anywhere in this world for anything for Kinda, for Senta. "Senta will have a big thing in the future, I can see this from now. This is the reason we came here."

Okotoks Western Wheel Article January 12, 2017



The Methodist Church shortly after it was built in 1906. The building became home to the Okotoks United Church when the Methodist and Presbyterian congregations combined in 1917, and served the church until 2002.

Photo courtesy Okotoks Museum

One of the first United churches in Canada is celebrating its 100th anniversary this weekend.

In 1917, the Okotoks Methodist Church and St. Luke's Presbyterian Church amalgamated to form the Okotoks United Church.

On Saturday and Sunday the church is welcoming its congregation and the public to celebrate its history and a century of the United Church in Okotoks.

Joanne Dzurka, United Church member, said the celebration includes two main events: an evening at Rotary Performing Arts Centre called Music and Memories on Saturday at 7 p.m., which will relive the church history through music with free refreshments during intermission, and a special church service on Sunday morning at 10:45 a.m. followed by a potluck lunch.

“There are so many people in the community who are connected to our congregation, and we just really wanted people to come out and join us and celebrate with us, to relive some of the memories and reconnect,” said Dzurka.

There are no tickets for the event at RPAC, but seating is limited so Dzurka said she recommends people come out early to take it in.

Some special guests will be in attendance, including former ministers Rev. Doug Powell and Rev. Marilyn Evans, who was the first female minister in Okotoks and served from 1989 to 2000.

The church will also be unveiling some new projects in its building, like stained-glass windows that were commissioned in honour of its 100th anniversary, and a history book that was researched and written by Dzurka and a team of volunteers.

It's all about celebrating a rich history of a church that's been around for a century and witnessed a lot of growth, and plenty of services, baptisms, weddings, funerals, and other events, she said.

The Okotoks United Church was one of the early pioneers of the United Church of Canada, which formally combined the Methodist and Presbyterian churches in 1925 – eight years after the local church had formed.

Kathy Coutts, Okotoks museum specialist, said the amalgamation was originally borne out of a need for St. Luke's Presbyterian Church to expand its walls. The Presbyterian church was the first built in Okotoks, in 1892, on the site of the current provincial courthouse. Prior to that, services had been held in homes and stopping houses, she said.

The Methodist Church (RPAC building) was built in 1906, officially opening in 1907. Its congregation was smaller than the Presbyterians, who were bursting at the seams in a small wooden building, she said.

“It was initiated by St. Luke's, because they had outgrown their space, and the vote was on April 22, 1917,” said Coutts.

After the churches combined, the small Presbyterian church was transformed into a feed mill before it was later torn down, she said.

The United Church remained in the church (currently RPAC), which was built with bricks from Alonzo and Cyrus Serviss's brickyard at Sandstone Coulee, until 2003. At that time, the building was purchased by the Town to be turned into a performing arts centre.

There were some treasures found beneath the floorboards during construction, said Coutts.

“There was stuff that had fallen through the floorboards – pieces of dishes, some letters, a little toy car, as well as horseshoes,” she said. “We wondered if, when it was under construction in 1906, the horseshoes were left there on purpose, for good luck.”

If so, they'd served their purpose for the Okotoks United Church, which saw its congregation grow significantly over the years. Dzurka said talks about how to manage an escalating population in an aging building began as early as the 1960s.

In the 1990s, the house next door to the church was purchased and called United Church House, which became home to its offices and the Sunday school program, she said. By the late 90s, the cost of insurance and repairs for the old church forced the congregation to move out.

“For several years we ended up worshipping out of Good Shepherd School gymnasium, then we moved to St. Mary's,” said Dzurka.

The United Church bought the former Ginger Team Room in 2002 and ran its offices out of the renovated space, but it would take another nine years for the church to open its doors. In 2011, the Okotoks United Church officially began worshipping at its current location on Riverside Drive, she said.

Through the years, the church has made an impact both on the local community and internationally, she said.

“The heart of the church has really been in service,” said Dzurka. “Right back from the time of union the women were actively engaged in helping those in need both locally and overseas, and there were many different ways in which they provided outreach.”

From visiting people in the community who were ill or elderly to knitting and sewing quilts for those in need to sending clothing to the residential schools outside of town, the ladies worked hard to help others, she said.

A men's group also formed for many years, called As One That Serves, and through the program they had sponsored foster children, she said.

The church has also run Jacket Racket since 1997, has helped the Okotoks Food Bank since its inception in the 80s, ran Inn from the Cold at the church building, and most recently sponsored a Syrian refugee family, who still live in the apartment above the offices, she said.

“It's been a longstanding tradition of service, and the church continues to work for those in need,” said Dzurka.

Okotoks Western Wheel, June 21, 2017

Okotoks United's First 100

Eight years before there was a United Church of Canada, there was a United Church of Okotoks.

After much discussion, points and counterpoints, and proposals back and forth – this is the church after all – the Methodists and Presbyterians of Okotoks formed their official union on June 24, 1917. Practical and faithful folks, the Methodists had a large church but a small

congregation. The Presbyterians had a fairly large congregation but a small church building. Over the years these two churches had done so much together and their belief systems were

so similar that union seemed a logical next step. So the United Church of Okotoks came into being, worshipping in a fine church building erected by the Methodists in 1906.

On June 24 and 25, 2017, this faithful, practical union celebrated its 100th anniversary.

On June 24, a night of “Music and Memories” was celebrated in the historic old church which was sold to the town of Okotoks in 2003 and turned into a performing arts centre. The night was a wonderful event filled with fine choir pieces, lots of history, and lots of musical favourites from over the years.



After eight years of worshipping in local school buildings Okotoks United Church celebrated its first worship service in its new building on February 6, 2011. On June 25, 2017 the new church building held the 100th anniversary worship service, led by Rev. Julia Kimmett. There were written greetings from former ministers, local groups, overseas partners, Foothills Presbytery, the General Council of the United Church, and in-person greetings from Alberta and Northwest Conference President Kathy Yamashita. The service was filled with much music and fond memories were shared.

The Okotoks Centennial Committee, led by Joanne Dzurka, worked for over a year in preparing a multi-faceted celebration of the church. A 133 page history of Okotoks United Church was prepared and published in book form. Two stained glass windows from the old church, long in storage, were placed at the new church's west entrance. Six brand new stained glass windows, created by Okotoks artist Treena Primmer, were dedicated in the church sanctuary. Two new display cases just off the church's foyer are filled with

memorabilia for Okotoks United's first 100 years. Signs and notice boards from the old church have been incorporated into the new church.

Now, as Okotoks United looks to the future the words of United Church Moderator The Right Reverend Jordan Cantwell to the church seemed an appropriate and timely challenge: "As we celebrate with you the life and witness you have shared over the past 100 years, we also offer our encouragement for the future. May you continue to shine Christ's light in the world among the people and communities you serve."

Dean Salter is the Ministry Board Chairperson

At Okotoks United Church we worship and work on the lands of the people of Treaty 7. These are the lands of the Siksika (Blackfoot), Kainai (Blood), Piikani (Peigan), Stoney-Nakoda, and Tsuut'ina (Sarcee) First Nations. We acknowledge with respect the history, spirituality and culture of the Indigenous Peoples on whose land we worship and do ministry. This site is of great spiritual significance to the Blackfoot people. We will live with respect on the land and in peace and friendship with its people.