

# WE CAN CONNECT



VOL. 1, ISSUE 37

NOVEMBER 29, 2020

## November Worship Themes

November 29<sup>th</sup> is the beginning of Advent. On that day we will begin our journey toward Christmas and explore what it looks like in the current environment. Our theme for Advent this year will be "Hope." On the 29<sup>th</sup> we will also light our sanctuary, including the **Memory Tree**. If you have lost someone dear to you in the last two years, we invite you to let us know their name and we will place a chrism on the tree in their name while their names are read out during the service.



## Please Pray For:



- Claresholm Valley United Church
- Doctors, nurses, health care aides working in ICU with Covid patients
- Those who are facing financial uncertainty
- People working and living in long term care facilities

## In-person Worship Seating Registration Reminder

In order not to exceed our minimum numbers, you will be asked to register to attend the service. Each week, you may phone the office (403-938-4357) or email ([okunited@telus.net](mailto:okunited@telus.net)) to register for the upcoming Sunday. Seating will be assigned. If we exceed the number allowed you will be placed on the list for the following week. You may also register for a week you wish to attend, but will not be able to register for more than one to allow everyone equal opportunity to come. We hope that you will register and not hesitate because you think someone else needs to go more than you. We want everyone to have an opportunity to attend who wants to. You may not be able to attend weekly but we hope that most people who want to will be able to attend regularly. And if you know some others with whom you'd like to attend, give them a call and ask them to register for the same Sunday.

## 1st Annual Ugly Christmas Sweater Contest



Don you now, your ugly sweater, fa la la la la, la la la la. Please join us for an ugly Christmas sweater contest on Sunday, December 13, 2020 after the service. You can join in person or Zoom in to show your Ugly Christmas Sweater. Remember, the uglier the better! You can win a prize of a food or gas card donated in your name to the 2020 White Gift donations.





## WOW

I don't know about you, but I find myself saying "wow" a little more these days.

Wow feels like it sounds. Sometimes it is the only thing we can think of to say. Of course, wow can go both ways. "Wow, that is stupendous" or "Wow, that is horrifying." Wow moments are mind-blowing experiences that take our breath away. People inspire both responses in me. I have seen so much sacrifice, compassion and generosity over these last months. And I have seen so much stupidity, selfishness and disrespect in people. They both boggle the mind.

Anne Lamott writes that "Wow is often offered with a gasp, a sharp intake of breath, when we can't think of another way to capture the sight of shocking beauty or destruction, of a sudden unbidden insight or an unexpected flash of grace. "Wow" means we are not dulled to wonder." (Anne Lamott. **Help! Thanks! Wow!: Three Essential Prayers**, p. 71)

Each day brings a host of wows if we are attuned to our lives. We cannot stew about the past or worry about the future and still experience the wows all around us. We need these moments to remind us that we are alive.

I know that this has been a difficult, gut-wrenching, tragic, time for many people these past months as seemingly everything has changed. What we were so comfortable with and certain of just a year ago is anything but comfortable and certain now. And we don't know what the next months will hold.

These days as I get up in the morning for a quiet time of reflection and prayer I find myself immersed in wonder, gratitude and peace. I am trying to explore life, my life as it is rather than what I would like it to be. That frequently results in wow moments.

Perhaps it is time to settle into these quiet fall/winter months and explore what is going on in our inner lives. It is an amazing adventure, this exploration of the self. Through this work we can build up insight, wisdom, resilience, peace and courage. And for those who don't have the time, perhaps we can pray for those who are busy and working and tending to the world. Maybe even consider ways to care for them.

I guess what I'm trying to say is, don't get too ahead of yourself or the situation we find ourselves in these days. Try to live in the moment as much as possible. Look for the presence of God in the wows. They're here if we can still our busy minds and bodies to realize that life is amazing and mysterious and complex, with so much to experience.

Let wow be our prayer.

Julia

## NOT EVERYTHING IS CANCELLED

sunshine is not cancelled  
love is not cancelled  
relationships are not cancelled  
reading is not cancelled  
naps are not cancelled  
devotion is not cancelled  
music is not cancelled  
dancing is not cancelled  
imagination is not cancelled  
kindness is not cancelled  
conversations are not cancelled  
**hope** is not cancelled





## White Gifts This Christmas

As we are all aware, this year has been challenging and while we have hope for the possibility of a vaccine for the coming year, we don't know when this will be and what challenges people will face in 2021.

In the past we have had a White Gift Sunday, usually Pageant Sunday, where we offered gift cards for the Benevolent Fund. We are going to continue that tradition this year but ask that you drop your gift cards off at the church office, mail them in or drop them in the offering if you attend Sunday worship in person.

The gift cards will go to the Benevolent Fund to distribute as needed. The cards most used are grocery and gas cards. Please make sure you note your name and envelope number (if you have one) on the envelope. Or, just use a regular offering envelope for the cards. Also, please make sure that the gift cards are clearly marked with the dollar amount as the donation will be noted on your tax receipts for 2020.

We will be taking gift cards up until the end of December. Thank you in advance for your contribution. You are a generous community. I hear it all the time from the wider community.



### ST. ANDREW'S UNITED CHURCH HAPPENINGS *Written by P. Marie Wedderburn*



#### *Birthday Drive-Bys*

On a foggy and damp afternoon last Wednesday (the 18<sup>th</sup>) at least ten vehicles left St. Andrew's United to venture forth on another birthday drive-by. The vehicles proceeded to the birthday celebrant's home honking their horns and waving. The birthday celebrant and family heard the honking horns but could not very clearly see whose vehicles were making all the noise! Anyway, the birthday celebrant wrote an e-mail to the community of faith expressing appreciation for the drive-by. (Hopefully, the weather holds for the forthcoming birthday drive-by this Friday (the 27<sup>th</sup>).

#### *Christmas Concert*

This year's St. Andrew's United's Christmas Concert will be held virtually on Sunday, December 13 at 7 p.m. via Zoom and will feature many of the same musicians that we have heard in the past.

As reported last week no tickets will be sold. This year St. Andrew's United Church has decided to support the Veterans' Association Food Bank of Calgary.

And so if you would like to financially support the concert and to make it easier for everyone, you can do so in one of three ways: send a cheque to Okotoks United Church, give cash to Okotoks United Church, or arrange an e-transfer to Okotoks United Church. Whichever way you may decide to support the concert, please ear-mark your donations for the concert. Then the total of all the donations will be forwarded to St. Andrew's United Church's treasurer who will then send a cheque to the Veterans' Association Food Bank of Calgary.

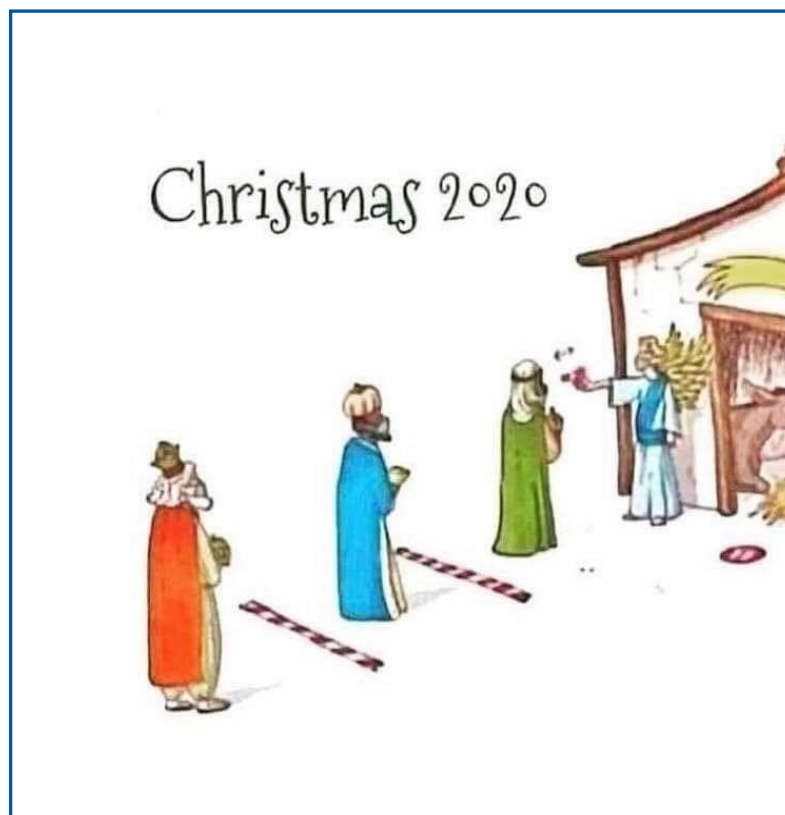
Hope to see you at the concert on December 13<sup>th</sup> and thank you, if you are able, for financially supporting this annual event.





### Poinsettias for Sale

We have 7 poinsettias of various colours for sale for \$20 each. They are currently hung on the windows in the foyer. If you are interested in purchasing one please get in touch with the office at 403-938-4357 or by email at [okunited@telus.net](mailto:okunited@telus.net).



#### Kid's Korner:

We will be having Zoom-only Sunday School following our morning worship service. Youth group will meet every Friday by Zoom until the Christmas break and we will reevaluate in the New Year.

Also, a reminder that the nursery is closed during this time. Any questions, please contact Candice at [cndcsutton@gmail.com](mailto:cndcsutton@gmail.com).





# WHERE TO GIVE THIS CHRISTMAS!

Several organizations provide Christmas support to residents  
in the Foothills region.

Please contact them for details on how or  
what you can give or volunteer.

Please  
donate by  
Dec. 4

Donate  
Early!

**Oilfields Food Bank: 403-612-1291**

Christmas Meal Hampers. Donations of food  
and cash are gratefully accepted.

**Okotoks Food Bank: 403-651-6629**

Christmas Meal Hampers.  
Donations of food and cash are gratefully accepted.  
You may also choose to Adopt-a-Family.

**Baby It's Cold Outside: 403-660-3648**

Christmas Meal Hampers to nominated residents.  
Donations of food and cash.

**The Salvation Army: 403-652-2195**

Christmas Meal Hampers. Toys & gifts for children (18  
and under). Donations of new, unwrapped toys and  
gift cards are gratefully accepted. Financial donations  
welcome. *Volunteers needed!*

**Seniors Secret Service: 403-257-8339**

Supporting isolated seniors throughout the Foothills.  
Donations of cash or gift cards.

**Magic of Christmas:**

**403-921-0588/403-803-3085**

Christmas cheer and gifts to referred residents.  
Donations of cash and gift cards are appreciated or  
donate new, unwrapped toys at:  
OKOTOKS: ATB, Fountain Tire, Village Lane Dental,  
Monkey Mountain, Papillon Medical Clinic, Fisher  
Crescent Retail, White Bull.

HIGHRIVER: Dance Tech, Ward Tires  
BLACK DIAMOND: ATB, Focus Fitness, Western Financial

**My City Care:**

**mycitycareoko@myvictory.ca**

Toys & gifts for children, teens & parents. Drop off a new  
unwrapped toy or stocking stuffer at one of these drop-  
off locations: Trident Auto Wash, Momentum Physical  
Therapy, Eyes 360  
*Volunteers Needed!*

**Okotoks Family Resource Centre:**

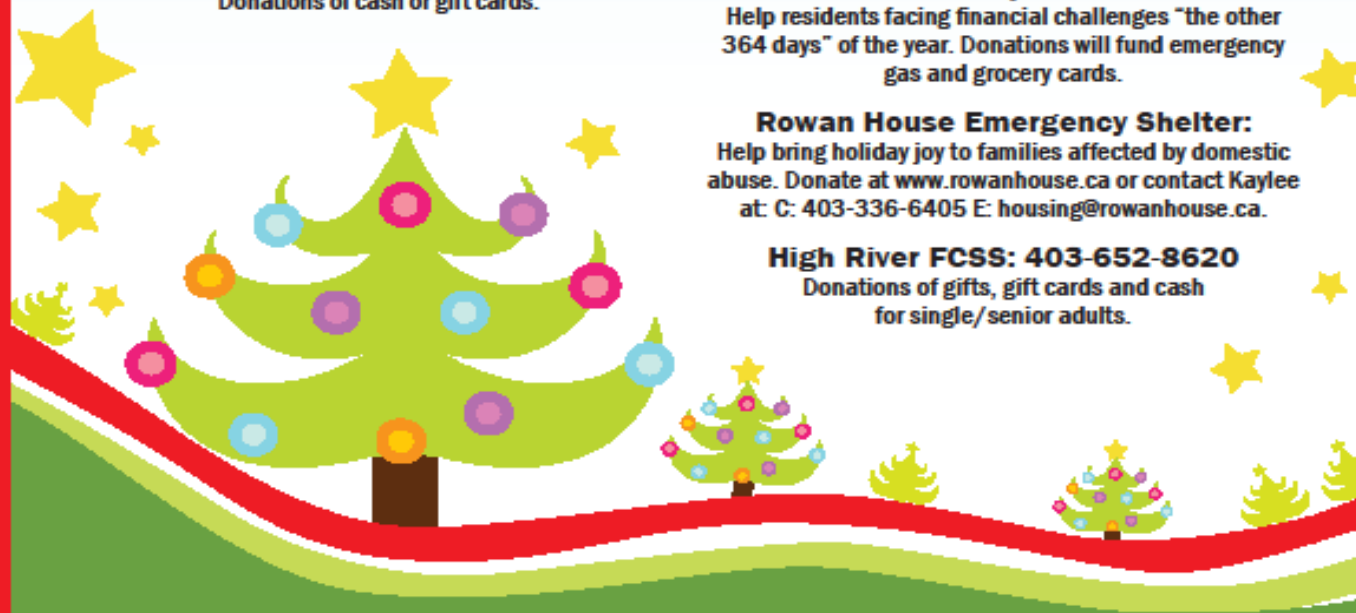
**C:403-995-2626 E: familyresources@okotoks.ca**  
Help residents facing financial challenges "the other  
364 days" of the year. Donations will fund emergency  
gas and grocery cards.

**Rowan House Emergency Shelter:**

Help bring holiday joy to families affected by domestic  
abuse. Donate at [www.rowanhouse.ca](http://www.rowanhouse.ca) or contact Kaylee  
at: C: 403-336-6405 E: [housing@rowanhouse.ca](mailto:housing@rowanhouse.ca).

**High River FCSS: 403-652-8620**

Donations of gifts, gift cards and cash  
for single/senior adults.



**Okotoks United Church Office - We're here for you!**

The office continues to remain open at this time Monday to Friday 9:00 - 2:00. Please  
contact Diane at [okunited@telus.net](mailto:okunited@telus.net) or 403-938-4357 for church related news.

Please contact Julia at [okjulia@telus.net](mailto:okjulia@telus.net) or 403-702-2249 (cell) at any time.

**Congregational Care Team** invites you to reach out for confidential spiritual and compassionate  
care by email at: [okcongregationalcare@telus.net](mailto:okcongregationalcare@telus.net)