

Freeing Jesus Sermon Series

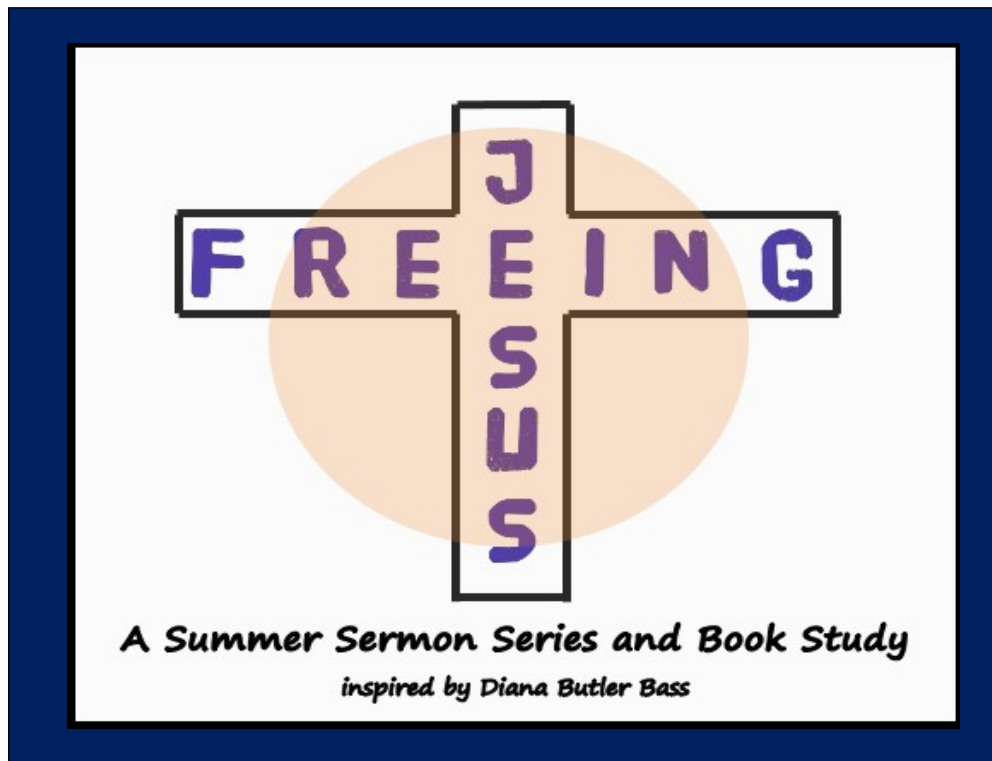
In her recent book, *Freeing Jesus*, Diana Butler Bass details how her experience of Jesus has changed over the years.

It can be so easy to try and fit Jesus into a “one-size-fits-all-box,” she writes,
“yet, we change,
and because of that,
Jesus goes with us *in and through* change,
growing with us as we grow.”

For six Sundays, starting **July 3**, join Julia and Matthew at Okotoks United Church as we reflect on what it means to follow Jesus as Friend, Teacher, Savior, Lord, Way, and Presence.

Want to take the conversation further?

See the separate announcement for the Summer Book Study on *Freeing Jesus*!



Freeing Jesus Summer Book Study

In conjunction with our sermon series,
we'll be doing a **summer book study**
on Diana Butler Bass' book *Freeing Jesus*.

Each week, we'll read and discuss
a chapter corresponding to the sermon series.

Come for whatever sessions you can—
whether one, two, or all six!

The Book Study will take place
on **Thursdays, 10-11:30** at Okotoks United Church,
starting **Thursday July 7th**.

You are encouraged to have your own copy
of *Freeing Jesus* in advance of the first session.

If you'd like to order a copy for \$15,
please contact Matthew or the church office by **June 24th**.



We'd Love to See You This Summer!

For the past two years, our ability to offer live worship services over Zoom has been a gift: one that has helped to keep us all connected as a community of faith, no matter whether we've been healthy, sick, immunocompromised, quarantined, home-bound, or simply out of town!

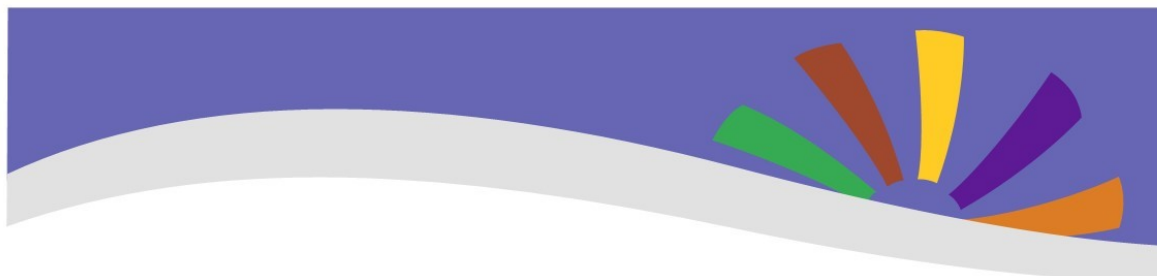
We are so grateful for all those that have made our live-streaming services possible, especially Keith and Betty-Lou Bayley, along with Diane in the office and her weekly reminder emails. Thanks also to everyone who took the time to learn the ins-and-outs of Zoom from home!

Starting in July, however, we will be taking a "summer sabbatical" from live-streaming. This was the decision of the OUC Board at their meeting in May. **For the months of July and August, Sunday worship services will just be offered in-person.** During this time, intentional feedback will be sought from everyone to help discern whether live-streaming should resume in the Fall.

While live-streaming does bring many benefits, the Board is also aware of some limitations, and wants to carefully weigh the reasons for—and impacts of—live-streaming or not. Stay tuned for opportunities to share your own thoughts and participate in this discernment process.

In the meantime, we hope individuals will consider attending (or continuing to attend) services in-person. As a reminder, we do maintain hand-sanitizing measures and offer N95 masks to anyone who asks. There is also ample seating in the sanctuary to distance from others. We have resumed coffee fellowship and passing the Offering Plate, and have no restrictions on physical touch (hand-shaking, hugs) other than respecting each individual's own comfort level.

If you have questions or concerns about any of the above, please do not hesitate to contact a member of the Board, Julia, or Matthew.



Outreach and Justice Group

What inequities people experience?

Who doesn't have access to basic human necessities?

What is the cause of injustice and what can we do?

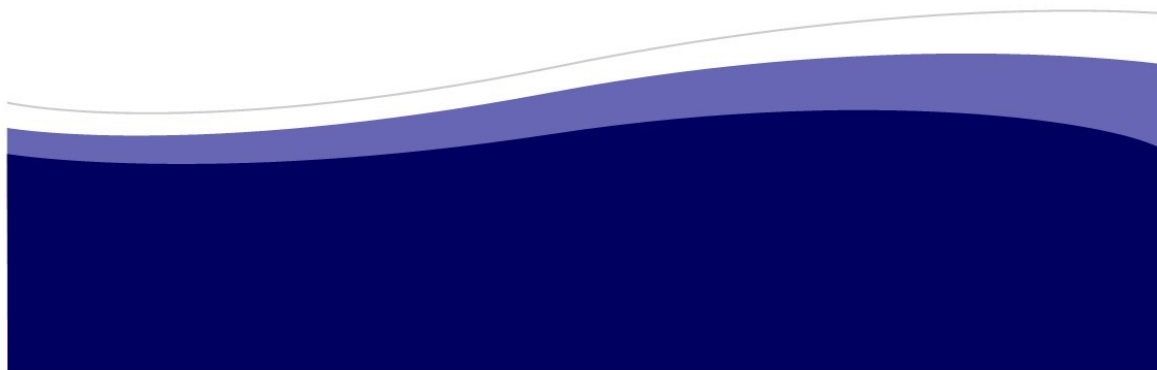
All good questions. Let's talk about them.

June 28th, 2022, 6 to 8 p.m.

Pot Luck Dinner and Discussion

Okotoks United Church
43 Riverside Dr. Okotoks

Please sign-up on sheet provided or
RSVP to okjulia@telus.net if you plan to attend





Now Available:

Where Do We Go from Here?

Sermons for an Uncertain Time

If you missed part of our last sermon series,
or would like to re-read or have it as a reference,
we have now *compiled all six sermons*

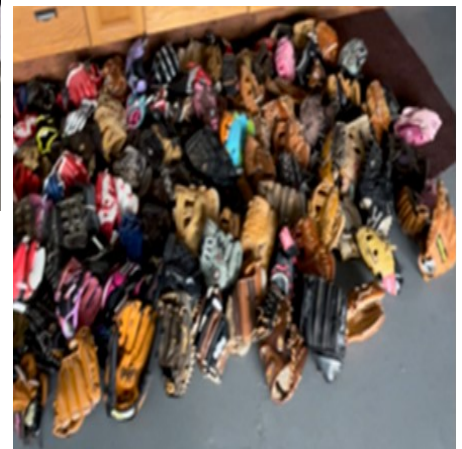
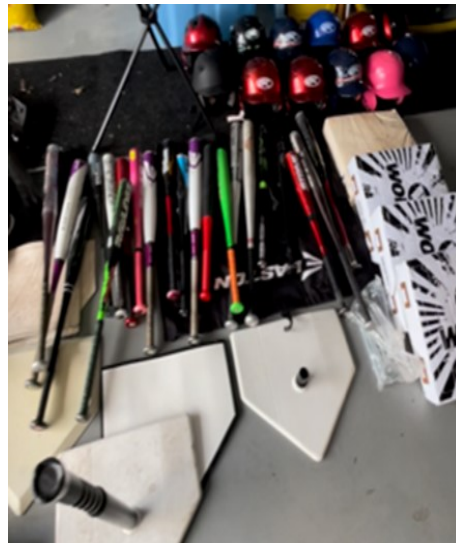
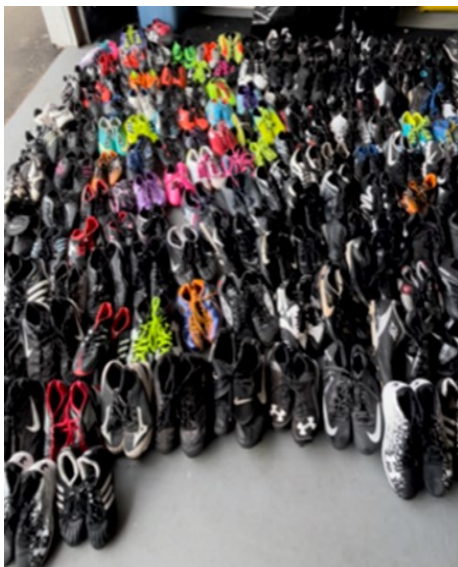
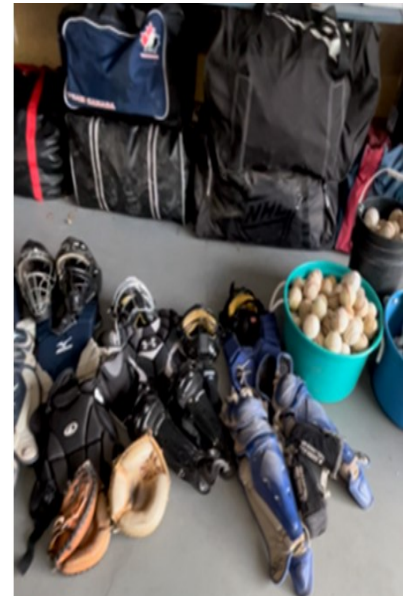
in one complete “book!”

Please contact the office if you would like
a **digital pdf version** OR a **printed coil-bound version**.

Mission Possible Update

Mission Possible has been busy this year with two projects in the Dominican Republic. First was the upgrade to the lighting for the TEARS soccer field. Lighting for the field was first installed in 2021. The original design called for 6 poles with lights – but due to global material shortages only 4 were available. In May of 2022 we funded additional lights for the existing poles and see the results below. The teams are now fully able to practice and play in the evening hours. This is a great blessing for the kids of the community.

The second project is the community baseball camp that will run from July 3rd through July 10th. Three mission possible members will be travelling to the Dominican Republic to host this camp. Over the last two years we have collected 100's of baseballs, gloves and shoes along with bats, bases, helmets and other coaching material. We have 9 hockey bags of equipment (50lbs each) ready to make the trip. 76 children will attend the camp, including 19 girls who have never played organized baseball before. It is our hope that the baseball camp leads to an increased participation for those children that cannot afford either the equipment or registration fees today. Please watch for future fundraising events to provide needed materials to support this program.





NEWS FROM ST. ANDREW'S UNITED CHURCH

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Written by P. Marie Wedderburn



On June 5th, as we continued the sermon series *Where Do We Go From Here?* twenty of us joined Julia as she spoke from Psalm 77. She asked whether we are entrenched or curious as we live life? Some of the statements that I put down from the message include the following we are asked to continue to

ponder: knowing right and doing right are two different things; anxiety can become debilitating; a willingness to be wrong and admit when we are wrong is one of the most loving things we can do; do we admit that we do not have all the answers. The psalmist who wrote Psalm 77 was entrenched in his view of God and required an attitude adjustment. So where do we go from here? We might cultivate curiosity and wonder which leads to expansiveness. So let us cultivate an attitude of curiosity as we experience life to be explored.

After we had sung our final hymn, Julia asked us to be seated as she had a video from Matthew that she wanted us to see. In this video, Matthew told us that for personal reasons he was resigning and that his last day would be Wednesday, August 24th. Our service then concluded with prayer.

On Saturday, June 11th, St. Andrew's United's Strawberry Shortcake Tea was held at Okotoks United Church. As people rushed in through the rain, they were seated and as everyone gathered, we were welcomed by Bonnie and heard Chrissy and Rod sing. After this we enjoyed our tea and strawberry shortcake and conversation among those seated. There was also a bake table. Final financial report yet to come. Thanks to all those who baked, set up, served, greeted, cleaned up, and helped in whatever way. Thanks also to Okotoks United for use of their building's foyer and kitchen for this event.

Sunday, June 12th saw fourteen of us gather with Matthew as he concluded the sermon series by using Psalm 13 which begins "How long, O God...?" Matthew used three concentric circles to describe what we can control in our lives. The smallest circle contains what we can control; the middle circle contains the small number of things we may have influence over in our lives; and the outer larger circle contains all those things we have absolutely no control over in our lives. As we thus move from the larger to the smaller circle we realize there are only a few things that we have control over. This is also where the psalmist moves in Psalm 13. The first stanza of the psalm contains those things we have no control over; the second stanza contains what we might be able to influence in our lives; and the third stanza of the psalm contains the smallest circle of what we can control as we practice gratitude which leads to joy. Thus if we focus on the wrong circle, we will have anxiety. However, if we focus on the smallest circle our anxiety lessens as we practice gratitude. So which circle do we desire to focus on in our daily lives?

Connections



Mid-Week Worship

Come and find the quiet centre.

Come catch your breath and pause.

Come be reminded of God's presence.

Come and join us for Mid-Week Worship:

a short contemplative service

of song, Scripture, silence, and prayer

every Wednesday morning,

from 10:00-10:30AM

in the Okotoks United Church Sanctuary.

We hope to see you there!



HEALING PATHWAY

The Healing Ministry is available for Healing Sessions. Healing sessions are offered on the first Monday of every month except for stat holidays. To book a healing session please contact Gisela Dyck at 403-938-2506.

If anyone is interested in taking a Healing Pathway Workshop please contact Gisela Dyck.

Prayers

- ♦ Brian and Shannon Olson - prayers for Brian in his recovery from surgery and his continued rehabilitation post surgery
 - ♦ Three Hills-Carbon United Church
 - ♦ Sunnybrook

Connections



A PLACE AT THE TABLE feasting at the theological banquet

CHINOOK WINDS REGIONAL COUNCIL
THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA
may 5-8, 2022



A Place at the Table, Chinook Winds Annual Regional Meeting, 2022: Sally Salter and Mark Dutkoski are your representatives to the Chinook Winds Region. This was the first in-person meeting since the pandemic began which caused much excitement among those in attendance (some people attended via ZOOM). The event in Red Deer covered nearly three days, beginning the evening of May 5th and ending with Sunday morning worship on May 8.

Rev. Janet Gear, our theme speaker, spoke about “A Place at the Table: Feasting at the Theological Banquet” in terms of learning the languages of faith (the first language is life). She asked, “What is your faith leading you to do?” because how we live our faith is most important. She also discussed “Hope” – look around and see God’s blessing at work. How the church lives expresses what it believes just like how individuals live expresses what they believe. Her final message was “differences do not divide, our judgement of others creates division”.

Regional Business

We participated in the business of the region including:

1. Overview of the governance model
2. Presentation of the Chinook Winds draft Executive Policy Book
3. Motions were presented, discussed and passed – the intentions of which were:
 - Elect new members to Chinook Winds Executive
 - Chinook Winds Region continue the process of becoming an Affirming Regional Council.
4. The work of different Ministries and Missions were explained with the focus of each presentation describing the support they can provide and how to access it.

The vote for Chinook Winds to continue the work towards becoming an Affirming Regional Council was based on the work of the Affirming Working Group of Chinook Winds Region. The Group has been working since 2020 to lead the Regional Affirming Process, discerning with leadership in our region on what it means to be Public, Intentional and Explicit in our declaration of solidarity with the 2S LGBTQAI+ community and our Affirmation that all people will be included in our Regional ministries, and in all aspects of the Region’s life and leadership without limitations based on identity, expression or orientation. For more information about the process and the motion please refer to the following websites:

<https://affirmingconnections.com/>, <https://pieday.ca/>

<https://chinookwindsregion.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Affirm-Motion-2022-CW-AGM.pdf>

Members of the First Third Ministry visited the general meeting from time to time with a variety of activities for all. First Third Ministry is ministry to and for those in the first of life’s three stages (birth to mid-30’s, including families of all kinds).

The meeting ended with a celebration of ministry worship service with Rev. Dr. Carmen Lansdowne delivering the sermon. The service included the ordination ceremony of Kim Holmes-Younger and the commissioning of Rachel Nadon into Diaconal Ministry.



Pastoral CARE

If you have an urgent
pastoral care need please call
403-807-9432. This will lead you
to the 24/7 on-call minister,
Matthew or Julia.

Okotoks United Church Office

To contact **Julia** email her at okjulia@telus.net. To contact **Matthew** email him at matthew.heesing@gmail.com. Both can be reached at the church office phone number listed below during their regular hours.

Congregational Care Team invites you to reach out for confidential spiritual and compassionate care by email at: okcongregationalcare@telus.net

The office is open Monday to Thursday 9:00 - 2:00, Friday 9:00 - 12:00.
Please contact Diane at okunited@telus.net or 403-938-4357.