



## Summer Worship Schedule

Date	Okotoks United Church	United Church in the Valley
Aug 7	Julia: <i>Freeing Jesus Pt. VI</i>	Matthew
Aug 14	Matthew: <i>Final Service for St. Andrew's/OKUC</i>	Julia
Aug 21	Guest Preacher	Matthew: <i>Final Service for UCV*</i>
Aug 28	Julia	Guest Preacher
	<b>*Service includes Communion</b>	

### Community of Faith Update:

The Board of Okotoks United Church met recently to discuss some long term planning questions regarding our ongoing partnership with United Church in the Valley (Turner Valley). This is just the beginning of a longer decision-making process which will become clearer as time goes by and the other churches in the partnership have their discussions. We talked about the benefits of the partnership, the challenges we faced, and what we have learned. We also looked at how things will change when Rev. Matthew leaves. His departure impacts our ministry decisions for the Fall. We need to decide what to prioritize, what Rev. Julia can reasonably take on and what can be undertaken by us - the Community of Faith. Two areas we are focussing on are Youth and Children's ministries and Congregational Care.

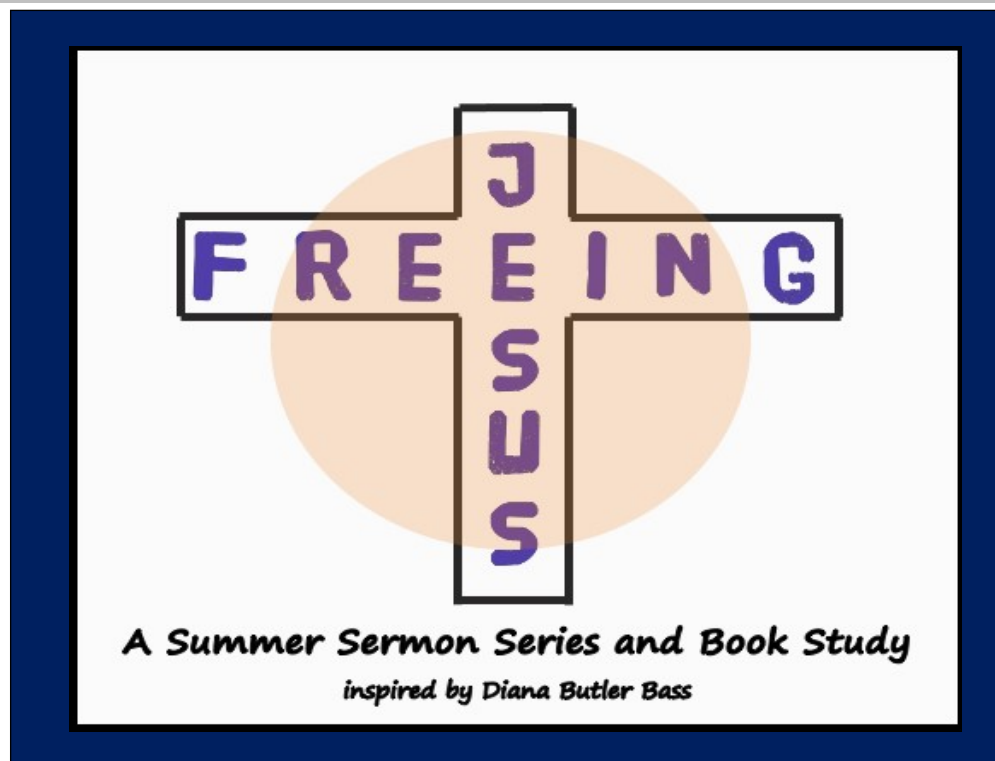
What hopes and dreams do you have for this Community of Faith? What challenges do you foresee? Please talk to any Board member at any time if you have any concerns, ideas or feedback.

We have seen over the past few years how committed, flexible and adventurous you are. We are looking forward to hearing from you.



### Turkey Supper Save the Date!

Sunday, September 25th, 2022



## ***Freeing Jesus Sermon Series***

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

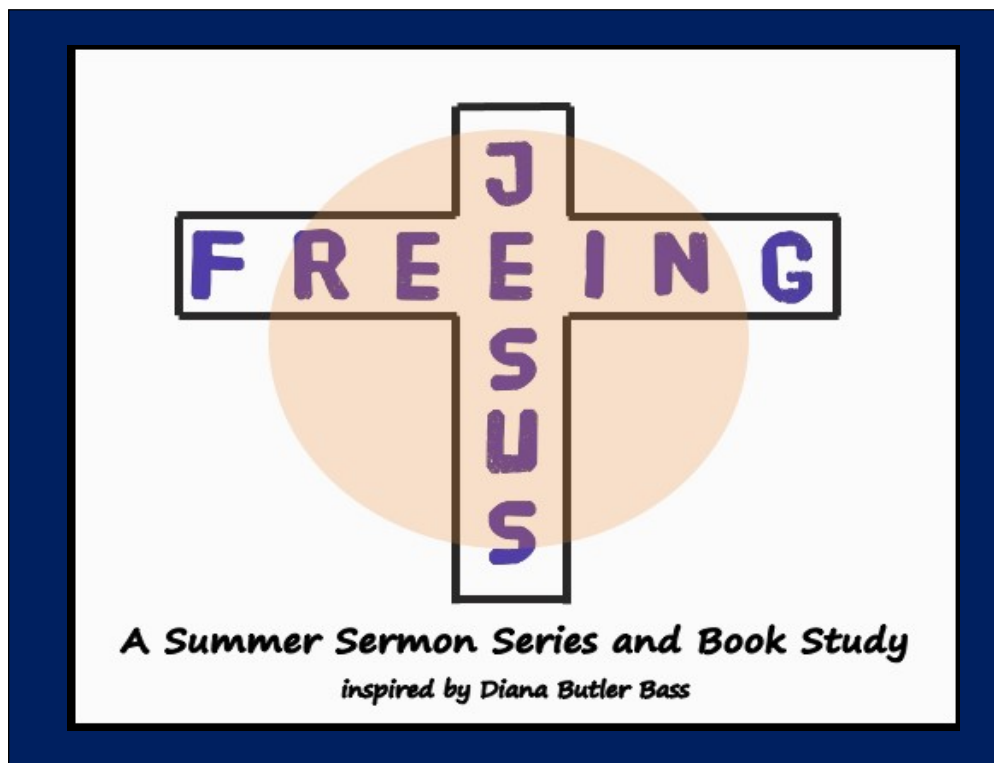
It can be so easy to try and fit Jesus into a “one-size-fits-all-box,” she writes,

**“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*!



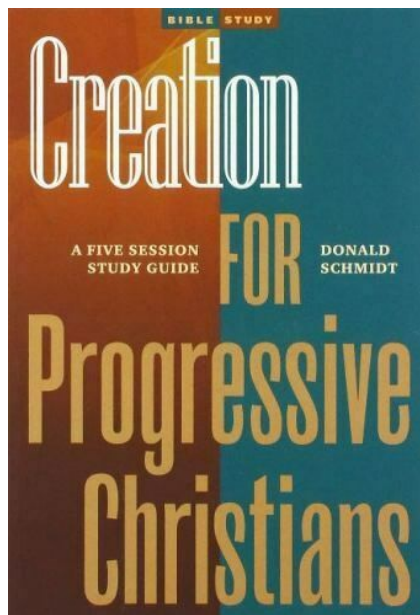
## ***Freeing Jesus Summer Book Study***

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 7<sup>th</sup>**.



How do we enhance our understanding of the Creation Stories in Scripture?

What did our ancient ancestors want us to understand about the creation of the universe, the divine presence in that creation, and how might we live our lives in response to that?

Join Julia for six sessions as we study *Creation for Progressive Christians* a Bible Study by United Church minister Donald Schmidt

**September 20/22 – October 25/27**  
(Tuesdays in Turner Valley, Thursdays in Okotoks)

**10:00 – 11:30 a.m.**  
(in person – unless CoVid circumstances change)

**Cost: \$16.00 for book\***  
(\*can also be purchased as an e-book from Wood Lake Books)



## NEWS FROM ST. ANDREW'S UNITED CHURCH

Written by P. Marie Wedderburn



Once again some of us attended services at Okotoks United during the last three Sundays of July, so thought I would once again reflect on the three services that continued the summer series of *Freeing Jesus*.

On July 17<sup>th</sup>, Matthew spoke of Jesus as Lord using the scripture Luke 2:1-3, 8-14 which speaks of the birth of Jesus proclaimed to the shepherds as “a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord.” (Luke 2:11). Matthew also read the children’s book *God’s Dream* written by Archbishop Desmond Tutu and Douglas Carlton Abrams which speaks of us carrying a part of God’s heart within us. Did you know that the title Lord first belonged to Caesar who dreamed of power through the military? To proclaim Jesus as Lord speaks of people sharing, caring, laughing, loving, and sometimes crying. Matthew asked us to consider who orders our world – Caesar or Jesus. How do we answer this question in our own lives?

On July 24<sup>th</sup>, Matthew spoke of Jesus as Teacher. He read the children’s book *Stuck* by Oliver Jeffers where Floyd is stuck in certain ways causing repetitive futility. Mark 1:14-15 contain the first words Jesus says in both Mark and Matthew where Jesus says “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news.” (Mark 1:15 – NRSV). Now the word repent means to change one’s mind so Matthew asked us to consider in what ways are we stuck with a need to repent, to change our minds, as we follow Jesus the Teacher. How do we answer?

On July 31<sup>st</sup>, Julia spoke of Jesus as Saviour using the scripture Mark 10:17-31. Now the word Saviour is only used twice in the Christian Testament. And the word “salvation” comes from the “Latin word *salvus* which originally meant being made whole, uninjured, safe, or in good health which describes the biblical vision of God’s justice and mercy, peace and well-being, comfort and equanimity.” (Diana Butler Bass, *Freeing Jesus*, (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, c2021), page 76.) Jesus taught how we are to be in this world both wholly and holy. As we learn from the challenging things in our lives how do we follow Jesus as Saviour using the definition of salvation given above?

This coming Sunday as we once again gather at St. Andrew’s we will be joined by Julia as she concludes the series *Freeing Jesus* speaking of Jesus as Friend. Then on August 14<sup>th</sup>, we will share our last service with Matthew before he leaves for his new pastoral relationship. Hope your July has been good and look forward to seeing everyone at St. Andrew’s United.

### Looking for a great read???

OUC member Dean Salter’s new novel “The Mysterious Wisdom of Marcus Dan” is now available at Yooneek Books in downtown Okotoks. Give this great new bookstore a try. Dean also has copies for sale.



## Prayers

- ◆ Donna Smith-Bronson for post operative care and recuperation
  - ◆ Korean United Church - Calgary
    - ◆ Ponoka United Church
    - ◆ Morley-Eden Valley

### 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!



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](mailto:okjulia@telus.net). To contact **Matthew** email him at [matthew.heesing@gmail.com](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto:okunited@telus.net) or 403-938-4357.**



## 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.