



August 8, 2024



BIBLE STUDY

Origins of the Abrahamic Faiths & Understandings of God

What is the origin of our faith?

How did it come to be?

How do we come to understand God as we do?

What about other traditions?

Why are there so many religions?

These are the questions and so many more that we will ask as we explore the Abrahamic Traditions (Judaism, Christianity, Islam)

Starting Thursday September 19th

10:00 – 11:30 a.m.

Okotoks United Church (Board Room)

Everyone welcome! No registration required.

Bring your bible and a notebook.

In this issue:

- ♥ Women's Retreat
- ♥ Book club
- ♥ A sermon excerpt from 1925
- ♥ Is praying your passion?
- ♥ In memoriam

Join us on FaceBook!

[https://
www.facebook.com/
OkotoksUnited](https://www.facebook.com/OkotoksUnited)

Quench Your Spiritual Thirst

Women's Retreat

Okotoks-DeWinton & High River United Churches

“COMING HOME TO MYSELF”

KING'S FOLD
COCHRANE



RETREAT CENTRE,

**Facilitated by Rev. Julia Kimmett and
Elaine Mansfield, Spiritual Director**

**Friday November 1, 2024 5:00 pm
to Sunday November 3, 12:00 pm**

Cost: \$325.00

**Accommodation, meals and program
materials provided**

Maximum of 20 registrants

ONLY A FEW SPOTS LEFT!

To register, see brochures on table in church foyer.

Healing Ministry sessions are available the first and
third Monday of each month between 1:30 - 3:30
pm.

To book a session, please contact:
Gisela Dyck at 403-938-2506



Admin Updates from the Church office ...

The Congregational Care Team

invites you to reach out for confidential spiritual and compassionate care by email at:

okcongregationalcare@telus.net.



The Okotoks Fireside Book Club meets on the second Tuesday of each month September to June at 1:00 pm in the Boardroom. **The latest books we'll be reading and discussing for the 2024 season have been updated on the church website!**

You are welcome to attend on a regular basis or simply if a book sounds like one you would like to read and participate in the discussion.

If you are interested in joining our group,
please contact Janet Page at 587-363-5423.

**Okotoks United Church office hours are
Monday to Friday, 10 am to 2 pm.**

**Email: okunited@telus.net
or 403-938-4357.**

We are closed on statutory holidays.



IN MEMORIAM

Gary Voakes passed away August 1, 2024; a private celebration of life for family is being held August 17, 2024.

Burrell Wolsey passed away July 31, 2024; a memorial service will be held on September 3, 2 pm at the DeWinton Hall.



News from St Andrew's United Church

Written by P. Marie Wedderburn

July 21st saw two of us who attend St. Andrew's gather with the people at Okotoks United. In the land acknowledgement Julia once again shared a reading from Richard Wagamese's *Embers*. Jesus' question to be answered this Sunday was "Why do you look at the splinter in your neighbour's eye and never see the board in your own eye?" (Matthew 7:3) Julia spoke of the need to stop criticizing others for when we criticize others we are blinded by the board in our own eye. Rather, as we build positive relationships we realize that our own lives have to change to make the world around us a better place. For the world around us waits for the best version of ourselves as we continue the soul work vital in our everyday lives.

Then on July 28th four of us who regularly attend St. Andrew's gathered with the people of Okotoks United and the United Church in the Valley. Once again for the land acknowledgement Julia read from Richard Wagamese's *Embers*. Julia's message asked us to ponder Jesus' question "Do you want to be well?" (John 5:6) Jesus asked this question of a man who waited at the pool of Siloam for the water to stir so he could be the first one in and be made well. He had been waiting for 38 years when Jesus asks him the question. The man answers Jesus with the excuse that no one was there to help him into the pool when the waters stirred. In answering this question Julia asked "What does being well mean?" For our emotional, mental, physical, and spiritual wellness are all aspects of our being well. Following the service we gathered in the foyer to make ice cream sundaes as we celebrated with the people who celebrate(d) July birthdays.

Then on August 4th seventeen of us gathered with Julia once again at St. Andrew's where we heard Shirle play the "new" piano donated to the church. Julia read an excerpt from Robin Wall Kimmerer's *Braiding Sweetgrass* for the land acknowledgement. Jesus' question to be pondered this Sunday was "My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?" (Matthew 27:46) spoken from the cross. Suffering is inevitable in our lives and as we remember that Jesus was human, he too suffered and so he cries out with his response to his suffering in anger. We ask ourselves "Why is this happening to me?" for we assume that God is not there with us. Suffering is not fair and we can never answer the question "Why?" God never abandons us as we suffer. Perhaps we should ask ourselves this question "My God, my God, why have we abandoned you?" for God is a God of all and does not abandon us.



Crossfield Red Deer Lake
Scarboro

All who've been impacted by the
Banff/Jasper fires

On June 10, 1925 in the Mutual St. Arena in Toronto, The United Church of Canada is formed by a union of Presbyterian, Methodist, Congregational, and the General Council of the Local Union Churches.

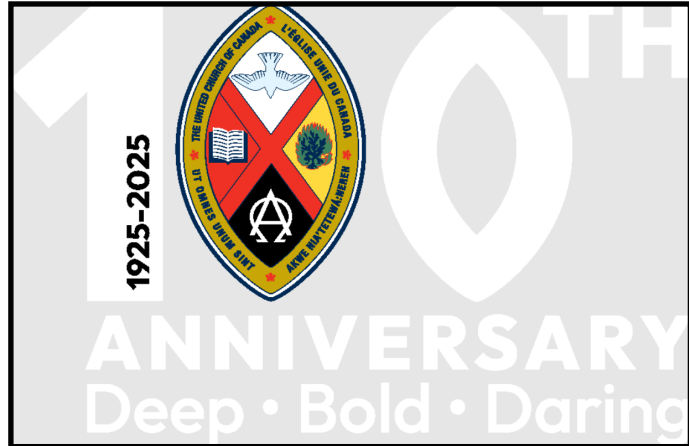
The following is an excerpt from Rev. Samuel P. Roses's inaugural sermon on June 10, 1925.

“Jesus did not discover the law of the Cross, nor was he the first to practice it, though never before nor since has it been obeyed so perfectly and with such glorious consequences.

The law is universal. The grain of wheat that does not die perishes. The life governed by the

maxim “safety first” is a lost life. He who is willing to accept salvation selfishly for himself alone has already become a castaway. You and I find ourselves as we seek not our own but the good of others. And this law is binding upon the Christian community as certainly as upon the individual believer. Only insofar as The United Church of Canada owes her birth to obedience to this law, only to that extent that she is loyal to it in the future, may she vindicate her right to live and grow. There is no prayer so fitting to this hour as the humble petition for pardon for whatever of vanity, or self-love, or self-will has mingled with loftier motives in bringing us together as denominations into this new fellowship. There is no sacramental oath so appropriate as the promise by divine grace, as individuals and as a Church, to follow Christ all the way, for, believe me, thus and thus alone shall we find the way of life ... we must admit that institutionalism runs too readily into selfishness, and comes too easily to think of itself as essential. Against this tendency, fatal to the realization of the highest good, may God preserve us! What an ideal for the United Church of Canada to set before herself, willing as a grain of wheat to die, if thus she may enter into a larger life; ready to be “lifted up,” that she may draw men [sic], not to herself, but to the Christ, who, loving the world, gave Himself for our salvation! Such was the Master's free, unforced choice for Himself; and if to be a Christian is to be Christlike, there is no alternative choice for ourselves as individuals, or for the Church as a whole, if we are truly to bear His name.”

(Note: This section of this sermon was bolded as the current United Church believes it particularly pertinent as we reflect on God's call to The United Church of Canada at this time in our life as a church.)



Prayer Works



Do you have a passion for praying?

We could use more pray-ers on our prayer team.

You would be put on a list that receives regular updates on prayer requests that come into the church. You would be required to sign a confidentiality agreement before being put on the list.

If you are interested, please speak to Julia or Sally.

Coming up on Sunday, August 25, the 6th Annual Citywide Pride Interfaith Gathering will be happening in person in Calgary and live streamed everywhere! Over 20 different faith communities will be represented alongside some very special guests and musical performances. The location is the lovely Calgary Unitarians on 16th Avenue and we invite everyone to join us in person or online.

Citywide Pride Interfaith Gathering
Sunday, August 25 at 7pm, [Calgary Unitarians](#)
In person AND live-streamed!

Our 2024 theme is: **Queerfully & Wonderfully Made**. This celebrates that 2SLGBTQ+ people are created in the image of The Divine: meant to be, exactly as they are. Special guests include [Alex Manitopyes](#), a non-binary Indigenous fashion designer, music and storytelling from singer/songwriter Akira Hesslein, drag artist Jessica Bunny, and more!



“Faith is to believe what you do not see; the reward of this faith is to see what you believe.”

—Saint Augustine

Laughter .. not only the best medicine
but the cheapest.

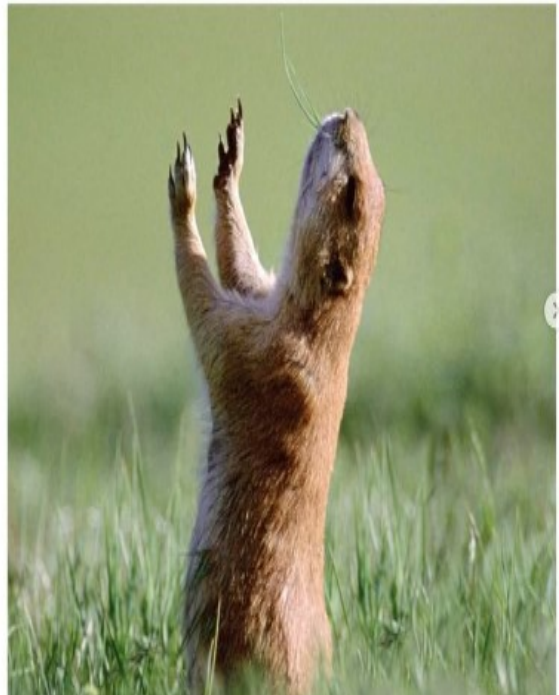


Calvin and Hobbes (the real ones)



That awkward moment in church as a new person when they're looking for volunteers.

Whenever the Lord gives you
the perfect parking spot



Adam blamed Eve and Eve
blamed the snake.

That snake didn't have a leg
to stand on