



The Vine



STRATHMORE UNITED CHURCH NEWSLETTER



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The Magic of
Christmas
is not in the presents
but in *His* presence

Ministers Musings

**“For to us a child is born, to us a son is given,
and the government will be on his shoulders. ...
The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this.”**

(Isaiah 9:6 a; 7; NIV)

We have entered the Advent Season, once again, with all its joys and hustle and bustle.

We have a lot to do and a lot to plan during this period of time.

We decorate and clean; we bake, shop, and plan on giving gifts to family and friends.

We plan for Christmas lunches and suppers, and we invite or visit with loved ones.

We might also remember someone beloved, who is not with us any longer.

In all this busyness of the Season that **we** are involved in, I would like to draw your attention to the Good News, which is at the heart of Christmas: it is **the Lord Almighty**, who accomplished and prepared for us the reason why we can celebrate.

We give because we have been given. We do our preparations because God had prepared the greatest gift to us: the Holy Child, who is called Jesus. He came to heal us, to accompany us, to show us the way how we can love the Lord our God with all our heart and with all our soul and with all our mind, and our neighbors as ourselves.

At the first Christmas, which we remember every year, the Lord Almighty came to us in a child, who is called **“Immanuel”**, and his name means **“God with us”**. He came to shoulder burdens we couldn’t carry alone and to break our separation from our Creator, which had led to so much heartbreak and blind tracks both in human history and our personal lives.

Remember, it is not merely us, who are in action during this very busy time of the year. God has been in work in this world and in our lives, which can give us strength to concentrate on the most important things despite our large to-do list. If we take some time to talk with the One, whose action had given us the reason to celebrate, we can set our priorities right. It will give us peace when we would freak out because of the never-ending chores and tasks. It will enable us to feel: we are not alone, even if we experienced loss, or family and friends are far away. And it can also awaken in us gratefulness towards the Giver, which will bring a joy that is not fading away on Boxing Day.

The words formulated by the New Creed of the United Church of Canada are not just for time of grief: **“We are not alone ... In life, in death, in life beyond death, God is with us. We are not alone.”** Jesus came to be with us in our everyday lives, including celebrations and challenges. He is ready to stand by us in our joys and sorrows. His birth and sacrifice for us tells us we are beloved, no matter what. This is the real gift to all of us, prepared by the Lord Almighty! Thanks be to God.

**Have a Blessed Christmas and a Happy New Year,
Rev. Maria Szabone Berces
Strathmore United Church**



Submitted by Geoff Scott

Marion Brown asked me today if I would read the scriptures on two consecutive Sundays in January. She explained that it was difficult to get volunteers to fulfil that task.

Surely, I thought, there must be lots of capable folks who could do this. So why aren't you stepping up?

I can tell you what steps I take to prepare to read those sometimes-convoluted scripture passages. They might be helpful.

1. Understand all the word meanings and pronunciations contained therein. The Internet has plenty of helpful sites. Sometimes there is a conflict, and I may need to ask the minister which is preferable.
2. Understand as best I can the ideas being presented. Again, there are several internet biblical sources to help with interpretation.
3. Read each sentence and make a slash indicating a pause;/ two slashes for a longer pause.// Mark the **key words** to be stressed.// It makes a world of difference, (e.g. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6gZtW-U6qG4>) Dame Judy Dench to King Charles in a short comedy sketch interpreting the famous line from Hamlet.)

See that the sentences flow and have a rhythm as if I were speaking them.

4. Practice.

5. Reading to the Congregation: I find an attentive face at the rear and begin. I read at a controlled pace. Rapid fire doesn't work with older folks with hearing aids. Pausing is helpful. Be careful to avoid dying off at the end of a sentence.

Eye contact is crucial. That's why it's important to practise so I have a moment to look at the audience while completing a sentence. Losing one's place can be overcome by using a finger to mark the line. If I do get lost the pause is not the end of the world. I try to convey the writer's message as if it were mine.

I need to remember to repeat the customary closing phrase .

So yes, it does take time, but why not give it a go? Perhaps you may have doubts about the Youtube recording. I never give it a thought; it's not as if we're ready to take on TikTok.

And yes, I realize I have read orally to classes for forty-some years and I should be able to do it in my sleep. But if you were willing to try the above you too could experience the tingle of excitement just prior to the call and also enjoy the satisfaction of having made a small contribution to congregational enlightenment.

Cheers (Talk to Marion.)



Treasurer

**We are currently looking for a treasurer for Strathmore United Church, an accounting background and being familiar with Quick Books would be a great asset!
Contact Russ 403-324-3294**

Property Team News

- A. We have received the quote for the window which is \$2468.53 and will be ready in 6 weeks. The quote for the vent window would double the cost of the window so we will look at another solution with Maria for ventilation and cooling in the office.
- B. The alarm system has been working and the company in charge of it had check and tested said all was working.
- C. We have the partitions in the church for the corner SW room in the basement to be placed as needed.
- D. The heat cord has been replaced back onto the shingle by Gene and we also turned on the heat tape for the winter.
- E. The back splash in the kitchen will need to be reglued and place back onto the wall.
- F. John has the plans for making the Banner hangers for the closet and will complete them when time allows.
- G. The wheelchair accessible sidewalk approach will be looked at again in the spring.

NEW BUSINESS

- A. Remote Ceiling Fan in sanctuary front fan not working. Not working for a few years.
 1. We will have to get some scaffolding to reach up to change the remote system in the ceiling fan.
 2. We will also get a new bulb for the projector and service it as well.
- B. Make shelves in corner counting room for Rock of Ages music equipment when putting banner hanger in place.
 1. We have discussed putting shelves in the corner room in the sanctuary to store the music equipment. It is better to just purchase the metal shelves from a store and put them in. Don talked to Pastor John of the Rock of Ages church about them purchasing the shelves and he said it would be better for us to because if they leave, they may not have any need for them.
 2. We will look into purchasing metal shelving to hold the music equipment and remove the counting desk from the room.
 3. We will also be getting the Banner hangers made and installed this winter.

Property team continued :

- C. Outside water shut off valve should be replaced with a new ball valve type.
 1. We discussed on changing the outside water shut off valve which is very hard to turn for closing and opening to a ball valve type. Will look in to replacing the valve soon.
- D. The sink light upstairs in the library needs to be replace due to very hard to turn on.
 1. Robert will investigate purchasing a new light.
 2. New light has been purchased and installed for over the sink in Library.
- E. Need to look at moving the thermostat out of the library into the inside wall of the Sanctuary for better heat control.
 1. Need to look at the toys and puzzle area in library for a more organized clean up when children are finished playing after service. We are investigating.

Submitted by, Don J





How Can I Help?

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Session 1 | Genesis 1:26–31: Caretakers of Creation

Then God said, “Let us make humans in our image, according to our likeness, and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over the cattle and over all the wild animals of the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.”

So God created humans in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.

God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.” God said, “See, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is upon the face of all the earth and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food. And to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the air and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food.” And it was so. God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

1. From the beginning, our identity as human beings has been rooted in being stewards of Creation. Yet, we’ve struggled with the concept of having “dominion” over it (other translations say “take charge” or “be responsible for”). We remember, though, that we’re created in God’s own image. What kind of a caretaker is God? If we are like God, what kind of stewards should we be?

2. In the other Creation account, we hear that God placed the man in the garden to till and keep it (Gen. 2:15). Have you ever kept a garden? What are some of the joys and challenges?

3. When you think of your community of faith, surrounding neighbourhood, and wider world, what is yours to tend together? What and who are you responsible for? How might you help these aspects of Creation to grow and flourish? Prayer: Creator God, thank you for making us in your image—creative, generous, and caring. Stir in us joy and compassion as we live into our calling as stewards—nurturing your good Creation together. Amen

Submitted by Laura J.

ARTS ON 817

Arts on 817 had our first concert of the year the **Heebee Jeebees**. What an amazing talented group.



Up Coming concerts

Jan 18th The Calgary Burns Club Singers and Guests

Feb 8th ReMix: Powered by REV52

Mar 15th Steve Pineo with Horns

Tickets are now available on line at: smoreuc.com one month prior to the show, at The Vault or by calling Donalda L. at 403-934-5871 Individual Tickets are \$35.00



We look forward to our concert season and reconnecting with all of you.

Pastoral Care Team

If you are aware of anyone who would appreciate a visit, please let us know. Please email or phone Donalda. gledene1@telus.net or ph 403-934-5871.



Vision Statement
Strathmore United Church lives out our faith through worship, music, fellowship and outreach.

**S T R A T H M O R E
 U N I T E D C H U R C H**

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 Alberta T1P 1B4

Phone: 403-934-3025

Fax: 403-934-3081

Website: www.smoreuc.com

E-mail: Office

smoreuc@gmail.com

Office Hours

The church office is open 9am to—12 noon Wednesdays and Thursdays. Feel free to drop in or contact Susan B. during that time.



If you have questions, concerns or wish to contribute to The Vine please contact Karen W. at 403-934-3579 or email at ckwilkie@shaw.ca

Upcoming Events



- ◆ Although we are no longer required to wear masks, feel free to if you wish. Please remember if you are not feeling well to please stay home as COVID and the flu is definitely in the air!!
- ◆ Dec. 18—5 pm Agape Pot Luck dinner in the church basement.
- ◆ Dec. 24—Christmas Eve Service 7 PM
- ◆ Jan. 18/25—Arts on 817—Calgary Burns Singers choir 7:30 pm Tickets available at the Vault or on line at Smoreuc.com. \$35.00 each
- ◆ March 16, 2025—Annual Meeting & potluck lunch.
- ◆ Watch for upcoming activities, Shrove Tuesday, Guess Who's Coming to Dinner, Meals to Go, and a special evening of fun.



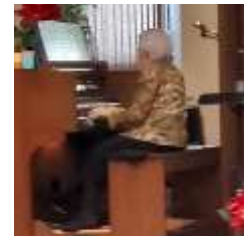
Our Mission Statement

Strathmore United Church is a community of faith, striving to make a difference for Christ.

- ◆ If you wish to sign up for Pre-Authorized Remittance (PAR) or to receive envelopes, please contact Susan in the church office—403-934-3025 or Karen— 403-934-3579



Ongoing Events



- * Quilting group—Will meet Wed. 10-2.
- * Book Club—Tuesdays—1:00 in the church library.
- * Agape Group— the second Tuesday 7:30 pm in the church Library.
- * Council Meet—Next meeting Jan. 14/25—7:00
- * Property Team Meet—3rd Saturday at 10am
- * The Mary Martha UCW group meet from September to June. All women of the congregation are welcome. Contact Peggy at 403 934 3197 for information and location
- * Food Bank—Donations are gratefully accepted in the bin in the foyer.
- * Ongoing Bottle drive—There is a bag in the foyer to put all refundable beverage containers. All proceeds are given to the Guatemala Project.

ARTS ON 817 PRESENTS

Calgary Burns Club Singers



January 18, 2025— 7:30 pm

Adult - \$35.00

Youth - \$10.00 - 17 and under

Upcoming concerts:

ReMix—REVV52—February 8, 2024—7:30 pm

Steve Pineo with Horns—March 15, 2025—7:30

Tickets can be purchased at the Vault Cultural Collective or online at www.smoreuc.com. Online purchases must be picked up at the door the night of the concert.



STRATHMORE **TIMES**