

the front pew



Vol. 15 No. 3 RIVERBEND UNITED CHURCH 14907-45 Ave., Edmonton, AB March 2017

Greetings From the Board Chair

Our congregation has been shaken to the core. We were stunned to learn of the loss of one of our own, a mere two weeks following his confirmation. Givenson Fleck, age 13, passed away on February 10th. A funeral was held the following Friday on February 17th.

RUC has proven to be a tight and caring community in the face of tragedy. The church rallied in support of the Fleck family in so many different ways. I would like to recognize some significant contributions...whenever I do this, I fear missing someone, but there are so many who rose to the occasion.

Ben Severson and Joanne Olson ensured the youth and young adults had togetherness in their mourning during two scheduled vigils. Such grace, love and mutual support were shared – we truly have an amazing community of young people in our church! Having witnessed this with the youth, Jill Spaner suggested a similar event for any others to seek comfort and understanding through fellowship. A dozen of us gathered in the chapel for an intimate and rich

sharing of grief.

Ray Hawrelak deserves an Order of Canada for his outstanding work to ensure that a live feed of the funeral service was shared to the basement on two screens and to the gathering area on a third screen. This took several nights of work, borrowed equipment and love. He was assisted by David Faber and Marv Severson who brought their technical expertise to the task. This technology allowed an estimated 900 people to see and hear the service throughout our church building. Over 70 people tuned in to the livestream link from outside of the church.

The music shared by the ensemble was such a gift. Beautiful songs of significance to Givenson and the family were performed with aplomb. We were honoured by the presence of Chris Giffen and rEvoIve who presented a moving rendition of “Wrapped in Light”. Carolyn Miller provided support in the AV booth.

The gift of welcome was generously offered by many. The usher team of Lynne Welford, Kathleen Korner, Alexis Allen, Jill Spaner, Debbie and Dennis Allen, Bev, Judi Cook and Jim Schetzslle was extremely hospitable and organized, fitting so many people into

our various spaces. Lynne worked hard on Friday to ensure our church was looking its best before and after the service. Without Kathleen’s initiative in copying many song sheets, those in the basement and gathering spaces could not have raised their voices in song.

Jim Schetzslle and Dennis Allen were key to the setup and take down of the seating including pick up and drop off of the 175 generously donated rental chairs. Dennis, aka Senorsafety, thank you for keeping us safe with a thorough message preceding the service.

Where there is grief, there is food. Thanks to Jill for coordinating the food contributions of both Spirit Group and Turkey team; to Lynne for her request to the Women of RUC for desserts; and to Joanne Olson for the use of her kitchen for cooking and fellowship. Bruce and Marie MacLean delivered a LOT of food to the Fleck family home a couple hours before the service.

And Tom Sawyer...what would we do without you? Thank you for your leadership, organization and pastoral care over these past few weeks. RUC is

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Message from the Minister

The first month of my half time interim ministry has been eventful. A congregation that had a dozen funerals the previous year suddenly had four in two weeks including the service for Givenson Fleck, 13 years old, who was confirmed on Don's last Sunday here. I guess God knew we needed to have an experienced minister, who knew the congregation, in place.

I have referred to my role as "team leader" as I knew members would have to carry out so many aspects of ministry with our regular minister gone, our Office Manager taking off some of the many days of time she had banked in lieu of overtime, and the head of the property committee spending a long deserved holiday in Hawaii. The team has responded beautifully, especially in ministering to the Fleck family and our youth. Various estimates of the attendance at Givenson's funeral ran as high as 900 with our two basement TV's, another in the coffee room, the 150 extra chairs supplied and setup downstairs, the supportive network of the youth and another of the Spirit Group, both using the chapel. Everyone teamed up to contribute. It made my role manageable.

It looks as though we will soon know who our new minister will be and when s/he will arrive. I pray whoever it is, they will receive the team support I have had this past month. God has richly blessed us and presents great opportunities for us to be a light shining in our corner of God's world.

*Rev. Tom Sawyer,
Retired Interim Supply Minister.*

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extremely blessed to have you as our interim minister.

Our thoughts and prayers remain with the Fleck family as they mourn this loss.

Christine Ens, Board Chair

Lent—A Time to Repent

Lent is a great time to "repent" -- to return to God and re-focus our lives. It's a 40 day trial run in changing your lifestyle and letting God change your heart.

I started Lent with two of our church's great traditions -- with the youth group serving up a fine pancake supper on Shrove Tuesday, followed by an intimate and moving Ash Wednesday service (held on Tuesday, just to keep us all on our toes!) Many thanks to Ben Severson for his pancake supper leadership, to Doug Spaner for his rich and relevant service of fire and ash, and to the Ensemble for the perfect music to launch the Lenten season. There is much going on at Riverbend United this Easter; I'd be delighted if you could join us as we continue our journey through Lent and into the joyous celebration of Easter Sunday.

Christine Ens

Two Congregational Meetings in March!

Mark your calendars for two important meetings, both to be held immediately following the 10:30 service.

Sunday March 12 – Who will we call to be our new minister?

The search committee has completed its work and will present the selected candidate for approval. In order to vote, you must be an official member of RUC, not an adherent.

Sunday March 19 – Annual Congregational Meeting

The 2017 budget will be presented along with the 2016 Annual Report. Please come to learn about the financial future of our church.

Please note that due to church policy, these two meetings must be held on separate dates.

March Health Corner

As we continue into 2017, March is shaping up to be one of the busiest months of the year. First up, March is Liver Health Month. Often what people think they know about liver disease can be as difficult to combat as what people don't know. There are a lot of preconceived notions and misconceptions about liver disease that can make it difficult for patients to talk to their families, friends, colleagues and others. Many people, for instance, believe that only those who drink or take drugs are at risk of contracting liver disease. The truth is, alcohol is only one cause of the over 100 forms of liver disease. The Canadian Liver Foundation's awareness efforts try to dispel the myths that stand in the way of the public's understanding of the risks and impact of liver disease on all Canadians. For more information please visit www.liver.ca.

The month of March is Endometriosis Awareness Month. Endometriosis Awareness takes place across the globe during the month of March with a mission to raise awareness of a disease which affects an estimated 176 million women worldwide. Endometriosis affects women worldwide regardless of their ethnic and social background. Many remain undiagnosed and are therefore not treated. The most common symptom of endometriosis is pelvic pain. The pain often correlates to the menstrual cycle, but a woman with endometriosis may also experience pain that doesn't correlate to her cycle – this is what makes this condition so unpredictable and frustrating. For many women, the pain of endometriosis is so severe and debilitating that it impacts their lives in significant ways. It is estimated that 30-40% of women with endometriosis may not be able to have children. For many women, management of this disease may be a long-term process. Therefore, it is important to educate yourself, take the time to find a good doctor, and consider joining a local support group. Please visit www.endometriosis.org for more information.

March is Juvenile Arthritis Awareness Month. What is arthritis? Arthritis is inflammation in the joints, the places where the bones come together. Juvenile idiopathic arthritis (JIA) is one of the more common disorders resulting in chronic disability in children and adolescents in Canada. JIA can be defined as continuous inflammation (pain, stiffness and swelling) of one or more joints lasting at least six weeks for which no other cause can be found. Many people think that arthritis is something only old people get. "Juvenile" means young (16 years of age or younger) and "idiopathic" means the cause is not known. JIA is also

sometimes called juvenile rheumatoid arthritis (JRA). Over 60,000 Canadian children and youths face the debilitating chronic pain of childhood arthritis, robbing them of their childhoods. The Arthritis Society wants to hand back childhood, and help these kids enjoy being kids. In recognition of March as Childhood Arthritis Month, The Arthritis Society is raising awareness throughout the Month with a number of events and initiatives. More information can be found at www.arthritis.ca.

National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month is also in March. Most Canadians don't like to talk about colorectal cancer but the month of March is a great time to change that. It's a good time for survivors, patients, caregivers, and everyone who has been affected by this disease to tell their story and to talk about a disease that is preventable, treatable and beatable. These conversations can save lives. Colorectal cancer is Canada's second leading cause of cancer death. The Colorectal Cancer Association of Canada invites you to help to spread the message: Colorectal cancer is "Preventable, Treatable and Beatable." More information on this disease can be found at www.colorectal-cancer.ca.

March is also National Nutrition Month. The 2017 Nutrition Month Campaign's slogan is: Take the Fight out of Food! Spot the Problem. Get the Facts. Seek Support. The campaign is dedicated to supporting Canadians to stop their struggles with food. Every year a campaign theme is chosen based on input from members and consumers. The goal of the campaign is to provide information and guidance to make it a little easier for Canadians to end their fight with food. Nutritional fact sheets, videos, along with tasty recipes can be found on the dietitians of Canada website at www.dietitians.ca.

National Social Work Month is also found in the month of March. The theme adopted by the Canadian Association of Social Workers Board for the 2017 is- Social Work: The Power to Empower. National Social Work Month gives all social workers in Canada an occasion to celebrate our social ideals and values. Please visit www.casw-acts.ca for more information.

The Canadian Pharmacists Association is celebrating Pharmacist Awareness Month for March 2017 with the theme- Your Hospital Pharmacy Team: Your Trusted Medication Experts. This was developed to reflect the integral role that the entire pharmacy plays in medication management. It stresses the role pharmacists can play in health care as well as highlight the unified efforts of all

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Property & Maintenance

I am back from my holiday so not a lot is new other than the projects.

There are several projects that need to be addressed with the building and property:

- The wood siding on the original church needs to be repaired and painted/ replaced with a material that doesn't need painting in the future. Dennis Allen and I are getting quotes for both these possibilities.
- Reseal the skylight windows in the Sanctuary.
- Repair the pothole in the pavement near the new addition (beside the manhole drain).
- Repair/replace main front doors of church so they close and lock properly and the main side door lock with the keypad needs adjusting/replacement.
- Replace the lights behind the cross with LED lighting/more efficient lights.
- Sanctuary lighting could be upgraded from compact florescent to LED lights
- Roof repair to be done on new addition.
- Sidewalk warranty repair.

If anyone has a business to make a quote for any of these projects email me at wgalbraith@gmail.com

David Galbraith
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members of a pharmacy team. The pharmacy team works in close collaboration with other health care professionals in the hospital to ensure the most appropriate care is provided to patients. The pharmacy team empowers their patients by highlighting the importance of their treatments so patients can take charge of their health. The pharmacy team ensures patients take their medications properly thereby reducing unnecessary hospital admissions and saving millions on health care spending. Please visit www.pharmacists.ca.

March is also home to Red Cross month. Every year, the Canadian Red Cross observes Red Cross month in March and honours the efforts undertaken by the Red Cross Movement to fulfil the humanitarian mission of the organization as a whole. The Canadian Red Cross mission is to improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity in Canada and around the world. The Canadian Red Cross Society is part of the largest humanitarian network in the world, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. This network includes the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (Federation) and 189 National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies dedicated to improving the situation of the most vulnerable throughout the world. The Canadian Red Cross is the leading humanitarian organization through which people voluntarily demonstrate their caring for others in need. More information can be found at www.redcross.ca.

Blessings,
Dawn Power

Movie Nights!

The Spirit Group is pleased to present our second annual series of four movies, featuring Jack Jervais and Lori Stewart. The movies will be presented on the four Tuesdays in March: 7th, 14th, 21st and 28th, from 6:30 pm until 9-9:30 pm.

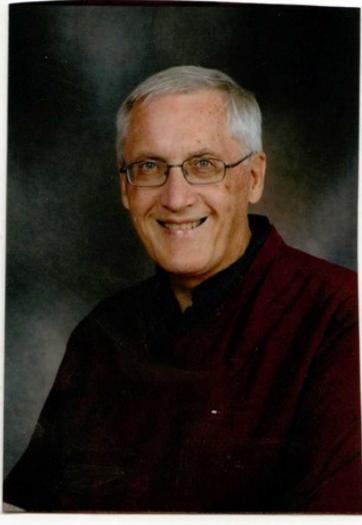
Plan to join us and enjoy great films, great discussion and lots of refectation and fun. Popcorn and twizzlers will be provided.

Watch the announcements for details of each film. They are great to be experienced as a full series, but each can also stand alone.

All are welcome!

A View From the Rear Pew

by Brent Skinner



Rarely do I use this church newsletter as an opportunity to express my personal views on current events. However, we live in interesting and historic times, and I simply cannot hold my feelings back any longer. I hope that my comments will not offend too many of my fellow church members. Here it goes.... Baseball caps have become a sartorial epidemic in Edmonton and area.

My#2 son lives close to Edmonton in the rapidly growing community of Beaumont. It has the highest birth rate in the western world with babies being born about every 4.5 seconds. Everywhere you go in Beaumont you have to watch where you step as you are surrounded by children. Honestly, it is like being trapped in in the munchkin movie set in the Wizard of Oz. For every 2 to 4 children, there also appears to be a father who drives a Ford 150 pickup truck, sports a beard and wears a baseball cap. I don't mind the trucks (lots of young dads need them for work) or the beards (although my son looks much younger when clean shaven), but I really can't handle the baseball caps. Beaumont has cold winters. Baseball caps are warm weather gear intended for baseball, fishing, golfing, gardening and other summer activities. Surely people living in Beaumont and northern Alberta should encase their winter time heads with more practical headgear, such as mad trapper fur hats, woolen toques or lumberjack hats (or Charlie Brown hats in red and black plaid with ear flaps). After all, the head heat loss through baseball caps must be close to total oil sands carbon emissions when the thermometer hits minus 30!

So why the wintertime baseball caps? I don't get it and can only offer a couple of theories:

Theory 1—Young dads with large families rarely get access to the shower. As a consequence, they hardly ever shampoo and have to hide their unkempt and greasy locks under a baseball cap, which they cannot remove, particularly in public places such as restaurants or churches,

lest they offend other, more fastidious people.

Theory 2—Caps demonstrate membership in exclusive, secret clubs - kind of like Masons, Rotary or the Republican National Committee ...except they are even more exotic, with names like John Deere, United Grain Growers, Make America Great Again or the Great Pickerel Fishing Lodge and Beer Resort. When in trouble - say, your truck won't start in the cold, or a gang of Hell's Angels has you cornered in a bar and are looking for a fight - you have only to appeal for help from strangers wearing the same baseball cap, and you are saved.

Theory 3—Baseball caps have become part of our national costume, which we must wear for the sake of tourists . Mounties have their Smokey-the-Bear stetsons, Greek soldiers have their funny little bean bag hats and crinkly skirts; and Scots gave their kilts and Glengarry bonnets with the funny ribbons. Northern Albertans have baseball caps, along with Edmonton Oiler jerseys, hoodies, baggy shorts and flip flops.

Another mystery is why men wear their caps so differently. Some curl the brim and peer at the world through a shadowy tunnel much like a predator sizing up some potential prey. Others wear the brim flat and kind of resemble innocent tourists enjoying their first day in the big city. Most mysteriously, some wear their caps backwards like a catcher but without a protective mask. Perhaps this is a further argument for cap theory #2, whereby the way you wear your cap indicates your rank within the club (e.g: A person wearing a green cap backwards is a secretary treasurer for the John Deere Secret Society).

So there you have it - my considered opinion as to why so many men wear baseball caps throughout the long and cold northern Alberta winter. So if you are wearing your favourite baseball cap and see me winking, nodding, and pointing at my bare head at Boston Pizza some cold evening, I am not being friendly, I am just suggesting that you take off your hat at the table.



Calendar of Events:

Saturday, March 11, 2017		Mystery Dinner
Sunday, March 12th	noonish	Congregational Meeting—Approval of Selected Minister
Tuesday, March 14th	1:00—3:00 pm 6:30—9:30	Women of RUC Board Meeting RUC Film Series
Sunday, March 19th	10:30 am noonish 2:00 pm	Whole Community Worship Annual Congregational Meeting—2016 Annual Report & 2017 Budget Grandview Service
Tuesday, March 21st	6:30—9:30	RUC Film Series
Thursday, March 23th	10:30 am	Devonshire Worship
Tuesday, March 28th	6:30—9:30	RUC Film Series
Monday, April 3rd		FRONT PEW DEADLINE

Weekly Events

- Mondays 7:00 pm—Handbell Rehearsal
- Wednesdays 9:00 am—Walking Group
- Thursdays 7:30 pm—Choir Rehearsal; new singers welcome!
- Weekly Sunday Worship-9:00 am and 10:30 am (Sunday School and Youth Discussion Group)



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April deadline: Monday, April 3, 2017

