



Connections

Mill Woods United Church

15 Grand Meadow Crescent
Edmonton, AB T6L 1A3
780 463 2202
mwuc1@telus.net
millwoodsunited.org

February 2014

Calendar of Events

Communion

February 2

Mardi Gras Evening

February 8 - 5 to 11 pm

Men's Breakfast

February 22 - 9 am

Youth Understanding Youth

February 22 - 6 to 10 pm

Demography and destiny

- by Ian Kellogg

Over the years, I have thought a lot about population and the study of demography. As a teenager, I worried about the exponential growth of human population and its effect on the natural environment.

Since I returned to the United Church more than 12 years ago, I have been aware of the decline of the numbers of people who are active in church. And now I have just moved from one of the least populated parts of Canada – the border area between Montana and Saskatchewan – to one of Canada's fastest growing cities and the ever-changing community of Mill Woods.

"Borderlands," which was the name of the pastoral charge where I served as minister from July 2011 to December 2013, is in the last area of southern Canada to be settled by non-native people. Ranchers and farmers did not homestead there until 1910. The three towns of the charge (Coronach, Fife Lake, and Rockglen) were not created until the late 1920s. At first the population soared. People flooded in from all over Europe. There was a homestead on each quarter section, and dozens of little towns supported the ranchers and farmers.

Continued on page 2





Demography and destiny Continued . . .

But since World War II, farms and ranches have become more mechanized and are now so large that the countryside is quite empty. There is sadness among people who remember all the departed farmers and ranchers and the towns that have disappeared.

In the context of general depopulation, the decline of church -- evident today in all rich countries of the world -- becomes even starker. Nothing struck me more when I was settled in Coronach in 2011 to learn that I was the only clergyperson in the town of 800. The Anglican Church building was now a private family dwelling. The Alliance Church had suffered a split and no longer had a pastor. The German and Norwegian Lutherans had merged, but they could no longer afford a pastor. The Roman Catholic parish had a priest -- imported from Poland -- but he lived in Rockglen.

Edmonton could not be more different, of course, and I am thrilled to be living in a city filled with people, services and events. However, the decline of church is evident here as well. Council members last week circulated a column from the January issue of the United Church "Observer" called ["It's not your fault."](#)* The author noted that weekly attendance at United Church worship services has declined from 400,000 in 1984 to 150,000 today. All denominations in Canada, including the fundamentalist ones, are dealing with similar declines.

The shift away from church is one of many cultural shifts occurring around us. Obviously, the decline of church is important to those of us who try to live as followers of Jesus and who worship in Christian churches.

I feel encouraged when I remember that both Judaism and Christianity rose from the ashes of old ways of worship -- the destruction of the First and Second Temples in the years 587 BCE and 70 CE respectively. Finding new ways to worship the God who is Love and to serve and love one another can be difficult on any number of levels. But today seems to be yet another time when God is calling us to something new in a changing world.

I look forward to learning more about Mill Woods and Edmonton, and how we as members of Mill Woods United are acting as "salt, light and yeast" to each other and to our neighbours.

Demography has a lot to say about what is possible, both in church and elsewhere. But we always leave the last word to God who moves in mysterious ways and whose Spirit blows us we know not where.

* You can read this Observer article by going to http://ucobserver.org/opinion/2014/01/reality_check/



What Can I Expect Sunday Morning?

- by Ian Kellogg

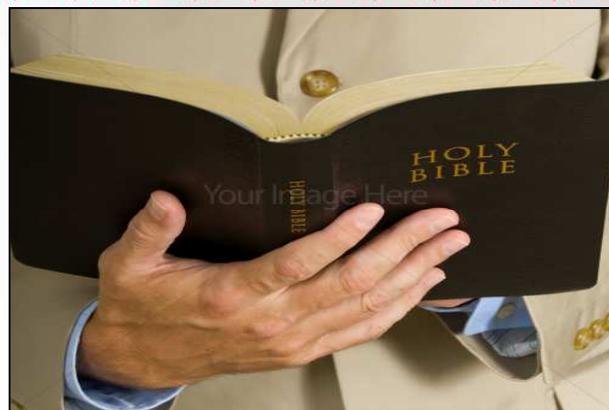
Worship outline for February

During the four Sundays in February will hear all of the fifth chapter of the Gospel of Matthew, which is the first of three chapters that contains Jesus' wisdom teachings called "The Sermon on the Mount."

The Alberta and Northwest Conference of the United Church has requested that churches devote the Feb 2nd service to preparation for the final National Event of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), which will be in Edmonton on March 27-30, and we will do that. We will also celebrate communion at that service.

Organizing our worship around some of the wisdom teachings of Jesus as found in Matthew will set us up for Transfiguration Sunday (March 2) and the six Sundays in Lent. March 9, which is the first Sunday in Lent, will also be an occasion when we will celebrate communion, providing us with spiritual food for our metaphorical journey to Jerusalem and the cross on Good Friday and to the joy of the empty tomb on Easter Sunday April 20.

I am glad that I will have a chance to witness the final TRC event in March. The fact that this event will occur during the Holy season of Lent also seems appropriate to me.



Prayer Shawl Ministry

- by Ethel Ray & Barb Kitagawa

We have been invited to participate in making shawls and lap blankets for participants in the Truth and Reconciliation Hearings taking place in Edmonton at the end of March. The organizers would like to have at least **500!**

There is some yarn on our shelves in the upstairs loft if you would like to use it to help us in our efforts. Feel free to use your own as well. If you're not a knitter/crocheter, but would like to help us out, a donation of \$25 would help cover the cost for a shawl (Lions Brand Homespun, 3 balls).

The shawls or lap blankets need to be at the church by March 16.

If you're making a shawl, please join us on **February 13 at 7:00 pm** in the church lounge to knit up a storm!



*When Jesus saw the crowds,
he went up on the mountainside,
and after he sat down and the
disciples had gathered around,
Jesus began to teach them.*

— Matthew 5:1-2



To Touch Our Souls

- by Mary-Anne Janewski

MWUC hosted eleven women at a ladies' evening on January 18-19.

Our first activity, walking the Labyrinth, was very popular.



Then we did a workshop prepared by Donlore Hoffman, a motivational speaker and life coach. Nancy Siever facilitated this session on self-care and nurturing ourselves and participants were given a take-home worksheet to continue the process at home.

Next, Nick, a personal trainer student, walked us through many stretching exercises that most of us really "felt". He donated his session to our church, for which we were very grateful.



Guests then got to choose between a mini-workshop on round looms and a lesson on how to make a potato chip snack in the microwave. Thank you to Lesley Verdin for presenting that fun cooking class in the kitchen.

Board games were also provided for entertainment along with lots of teas, coffees, juice and snacks. We finished with the movie "The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel", which delighted us until the wee hours. Three ladies slept overnight in the loft.

Rebecca, a yoga instructor, led us through half an hour of yoga at 8:30 AM Sunday morning. Rebecca also donated her session to the church. Finally, we had breakfast in the kitchen before attending the church service or other activities.





Stress Free Sundays

- by Janice Martin

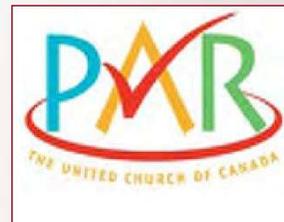
It's 10:10 am, Sunday morning. I'm running late and need to get out the door so that I make it to church on time. I know I'm forgetting something, oh yeah my offering. I quickly check my wallet, 2 loonies – that just doesn't cut it. Quick grab the cheque book. Nuts, I forgot to order cheques. Oh well, nothing I can do about it now, I'll make it up another Sunday.

That used to be me. Only problem, sometimes I just couldn't "make it up". Life got in the way. The \$20 or \$50 that I intended to give to the church easily slipped through my fingers. Sometimes it went to pay for a child's field trip or maybe even a pizza or a movie. Can you relate?

That was before I discovered PAR (Pre-Authorized Remittance). When I joined up for PAR my commitment and contribution to my church became intentional. I actually sat down and budgeted what I wanted to give and then made it happen by having it automatically withdrawn from my bank account. By signing up it helped me and the church because they knew they could count on me every month. It's funny, now I don't even miss that money because I never really see it.

At Mill Woods United Church we have 42 households giving by PAR, many have contributed in this way for many years. It is easy to sign up, forms are available on the hymnbook cart, or you can call me in the church office (780 463 2202) and I will help you with the process. The funds are withdrawn from your designated account on the 20th of each month. We even have a supply of PAR cards so that you can still to put something in the offering plate (they are available on the hymnbook cart.) Using the cards also reminds others of the option of PAR.

Join the movement and make your giving to the church stress-free!



Praise God from whom

All blessings flow!

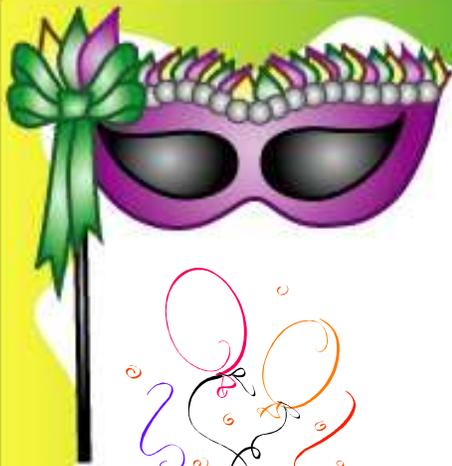


Council members this year have agreed to humor me and participate in this little exercise. Each newsletter is highlighting a Council member and sharing with you their answers to my

20 Questions

This month we hear from our Worship Chair, Celia Conway.

- 1. If you didn't do what you do for a living, what would you be?**
Nurse
- 2. Who would play you in the movie of your life story?**
Sandra Bullock.
- 3. What three famous people would you have dinner with?**
Tom Hanks, Miley Cyrus, Carrie Underwood.
- 4. What's your favorite Edmonton landmark?**
West Edmonton Mall
- 5. What do you enjoy most about Mill Woods United Church?**
the people, the friendship
- 6. What is your favorite hymn?**
Don Besing – the closing song
- 7. What's playing in your ipod or cd player right now?**
Country music
- 8. If you were marooned on an island, what would be the one item you'd want with you?**
A blanket
- 9. Who's your hero?**
Superman
- 10. What's the one gadget you can't live without?**
None, I can adapt without gadgets
- 11. What's your favorite restaurant?**
Olive Garden
- 12. What's your culinary specialty?**
I am not really a good cook. But I can make a descent Lasagna
- 13. What's your favorite vacation spot?**
Nazare, beach in Potugal.
- 14. What's your proudest moment?**
Most recent, buying a new home
- 15. What is at the top of your to-do list?**
Put away Christmas stuff
- 16. What is your favorite animal?**
Dog
- 17. What is your guilty pleasure?**
Coffee, chocolate
- 18. What is your secret talent?**
Know how to use a drill.
- 19. What are your words to live by?**
Don't really have any, just go with it.
- 20. What is your favorite Mill Woods United Church memory?**
Christmas mass a few years ago, feeling a little home sick, because I was by myself that year, and having church friends, and hearing some wonderful music made me feel welcome here. Ave Maria, and Silent Night reminded me of Christmas in Winnipeg with family. Really appreciated hearing the wonderful voice of Amanda, when she sang her final song, before she moved to Calgary.



Fun for the Whole Family

Mardi Gras Evening

Saturday, February 8, 2014

5:00 - 11:00 p.m.

Mill Woods United Church is inviting our neighbours to this FREE event, but do feel free to bring a non-perishable item for the food



5 - 6 pm
6 - 8 pm
8 - 10 pm

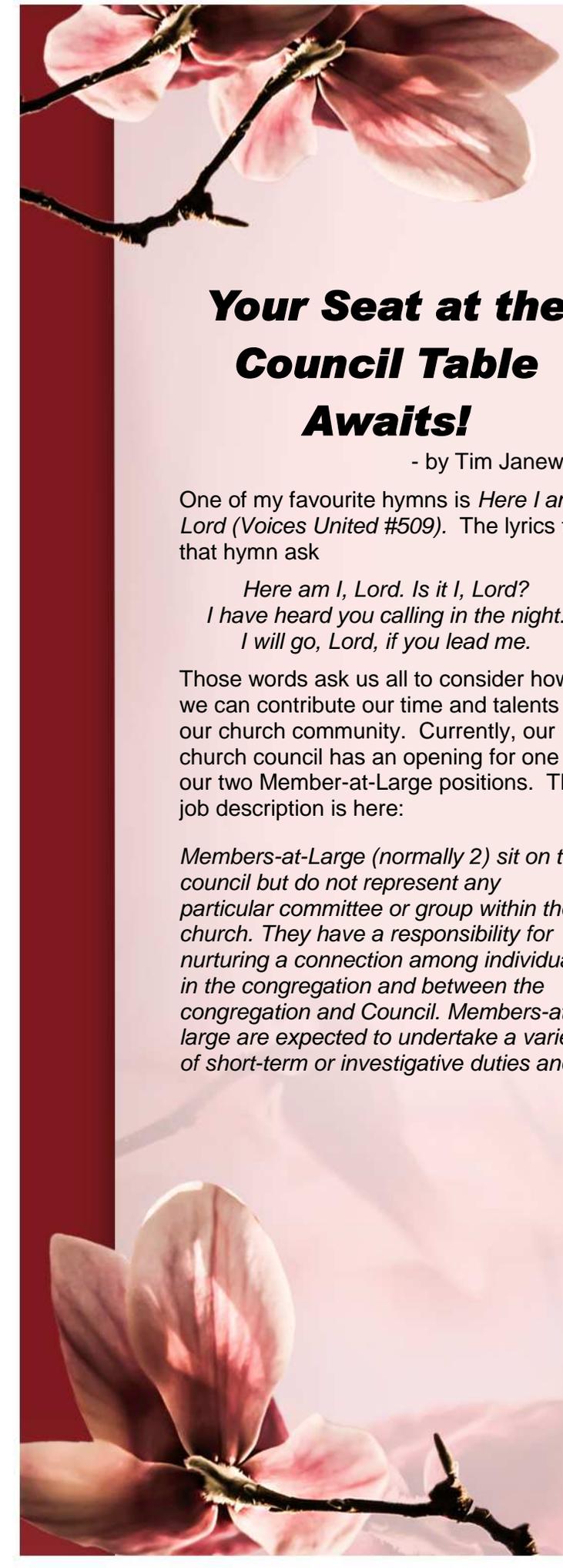
Appetizers
Dinner
Jazz music and dance -
The Sheldon Parker Ensemble

A Mask Making Activity
for the Children

Please sign-up at church or RSVP to the church office (780 463 2202) by Wednesday, February 5th with the number attending and ages of any children

Mill Woods United Church

15 Grand Meadow Crescent
(on 38 Ave, 2 blocks east of 66 St)



Your Seat at the Council Table Awaits!

- by Tim Janewski

One of my favourite hymns is *Here I am, Lord* (Voices United #509). The lyrics to that hymn ask

*Here am I, Lord. Is it I, Lord?
I have heard you calling in the night.
I will go, Lord, if you lead me.*

Those words ask us all to consider how we can contribute our time and talents to our church community. Currently, our church council has an opening for one of our two Member-at-Large positions. The job description is here:

Members-at-Large (normally 2) sit on the council but do not represent any particular committee or group within the church. They have a responsibility for nurturing a connection among individuals in the congregation and between the congregation and Council. Members-at-large are expected to undertake a variety of short-term or investigative duties and



special projects as required. These positions provide a place for experienced people to serve on the Council, acting as mentors or coaches to individuals or the Council as a whole. They also provide a place for newcomers to learn about the workings of the Council and the Church. Members-at-large perform a liaison function with non-Council Committees and other groups as assigned by Council.

This position is an excellent opportunity for people new to council work or for someone who has had past experience on the council. The time frame for this vacancy is short – the new member-at-large will serve until the end of June (but of course, you can renew your term!) Please talk to Paul Verdin, Council Chair (780 490 1688) or Ian Kellogg, our Minister (780 463 2202) for more details. Come take your place at the table!

Mill Woods United Church Council

Paul Verdin, Chairperson	780 490 1688
Tim Janewski, Chair Elect	780 637 3458
Randy Round, Finance	780 462 1922
Laine Pickle, Member-at-Large	780 461 9202
Ian Kellogg, Minister	780 237 2388
Brian Hudson, M & P	780 436 3878
Lesley Verdin, Presbytery Rep	780 490 1688
Elfrieda Penner, Recorder	780 463 0238
Nancy Siever, Stewardship	780 463 4222
Celia Conway, Worship	780 642 1157



Mill Woods United Church

February 2014

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1 9 am-3 pm SDA
2 10:30 am Worship - Communion	3	4 5:30-6:30 pm Food & Clothing Bank 7-9 pm Tai Chi 7 pm Council	5 4-5 pm Little Green Thumbs 5:30-7 pm Yoga	6 5:30-6:30 pm Food & Clothing Bank	7 Office Closed	8 9 am-1 pm SDA 5-11 pm Mardi Gras Family Eve- ning
9 10:30 am Worship	10	11 5:30-6:30 pm Food & Clothing Bank 7-9 pm Tai Chi 7 pm Worship	12 4-5 pm Little Green Thumbs 5:30-7 pm Yoga	13 5:30-6:30 pm Food & Clothing Bank	14 Office Closed	15 9 am-1 pm SDA
16 10:30 am Worship	17	18 5:30-6:30 pm Food & Clothing Bank 7-9 pm Tai Chi	19 4-5 pm Little Green Thumbs 5:30-7 pm Yoga	20 5:30-6:30 pm Food & Clothing Bank	21 Office Closed	22 9 am-1 pm SDA 6-10 pm Youth Understanding Youth
23 10:30 am Worship	24	25 5:30-6:30 pm Food & Clothing Bank 7-9 pm Tai Chi	26 4-5 pm Little Green Thumbs 5:30-7 pm Yoga	27 5:30-6:30 pm Food & Clothing Bank	28 Office Closed	