

Hanna First United Church Newsletter

January 2018

It's a new year! As we stand on the threshold of 2018, we can reflect on the days that have passed, and give thanks for the ways in which we have been able to share the ministry of Jesus. Looking forward, we are able to catch glimpses of new understandings of what it means to be the church, and to be part of a community of faith. As you are probably aware, I will be leaving Hanna First United Church, as I have accepted a call to Gaetz United Church in Red Deer. My last service in Hanna will be on March 4. With this change, as well as the upcoming changes that will undoubtedly unfold within the broader church, I have sensed some fear among the people who hold a sense of home in First United Church. However, as the scriptures repeat to us over and over again, "Fear Not". This is not a time to be afraid. It is a time to reflect on the ways in which God calls us into love, and to take a deeper look at what it means to be a community of faith in a time when other events and opportunities seem to take precedence over church. This is a time not to be afraid, but to boldly engage in the Mystery Unfolding. The church should not be a fearful place, or a place we simply to maintain or attend. As we experience, time and time again, as so many come together for special events – like special services and Christmas Eve - **the church is a family – not a place to go to, but a place to belong**. It is reassuring to know that we have an extended circle of community, as the wider church ensures that you are supplied with a caring and competent team to help resolve any concerns regarding the pastoral charge or vacancy.

As we reflect on the past year, I think we can agree that there is much to be thankful for. We have literally welcomed hundreds of people into our church home, with funerals, suppers, Sunday Services, special services, thrift store and thrift store special celebrations, coffee houses, Lenten prayer circle, healing pathways, and by opening our doors to local organizations like Stage Hanna and the ShowTuners for rehearsals. For this reason, it is more important than ever to discern the life of the church that YOU would like to see and be. This sense of community and belonging can be made possible only with the cooperation of strong ministry, leadership, and volunteerism. We are exceptionally grateful for, and inspired by, the ways in which the good people of First United Church and the surrounding community have lent, and continue to give of themselves to the life of the church and the teachings of The Way of Jesus, as we continue to balance work and play, stillness and busyness, joy and sorrow, and provide this place of sanctuary – all of which makes for a good "home." This is indeed Holy Ground, where the Spirit moves. Blessed be the ties that bind.

Just as MARY "took these things and pondered them in her heart" when confronted with new beginnings, there is much to consider. As our active congregation becomes smaller, our volunteer base and donations of time and money shrinks as well. We are thankful for those who pour their gifts of heart and mind (and sweat) into the life and work of this church, and know that there is much to be done in the continuing ministry of First United. As the annual meeting and elections of offices and committees approaches, and your church family moves into the process of Joint Needs Assessment (as is the natural mandated procedure when a minister leaves), it is now more important than ever to discern YOUR gifts and the ways in which you would like to help your community of faith. How do YOU envision the life of your church and the needs for new ministry personelle in a church that has changed significantly as culture and community life varies dramatically from "the way things used to be"?

Our annual meeting will take place on Feb 11. If you are unable to attend, please advise someone on church council or in our church office if you are willing to serve on council or on a committee. To learn more about your church home, please go to our website at www.hannafirstunitedchurch.ca or to our face book page. Reports are also available at the church.

May we go boldly forward in love and community.

On a more personal note, I am grateful beyond words for the time that I have had the privilege to serve at Hanna First United Church. It is with a very full heart that I plan to leave this place, knowing that the Spirit has been alive and well here as we have shared this chapter of our story.

With Gratitude and Peace

Rev. Leila Currie



Our Church has many committee's that could use your help; if you are interested or would like to know more about the committee please contact the office at 403-854-3772.

- ***Finance, Worship, Christian Education, Pastoral Care, Memorial Park, Ministry & Personnel, Property, Board of Trustees, Mission and Service, Thrift Store and Funeral Luncheon.***
- ***The JOINT NEEDS ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE will be formed to help fill the Minister's position. If you would like to be part of this process please contact the office.***

Our Church cannot function without volunteers, if you have time to be on a committee it would greatly be appreciated. Winona Gutsche – Chair of Council

