

St. Albert United Church  
Annual Report  
2019-2020



Our Mission:

*As followers of Jesus, we cultivate spaces where everyone has room to grow; we share God's hope for the Earth.*

Annual General Meeting  
June 16, 2019

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## Our Staff

Ministers: Rev. Mervin Gallant & Rev. Deborah Hoekstra

Office Administrator: Laurie Symbaluk

Treasurer: Sandy Skogstad

Music Director: Margaret Ward-Jack

Organist: Donna Graham



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# Semi-Annual GM Minutes Nov. 2019

Chair Troy Sartison called the meeting to order at 11:35 a.m.

**Appointment of Recording Secretary: Motion: to appoint Susan Waldie, Board Secretary, as recording secretary for the Semi-Annual Meeting of St. Albert United Church, November 17, 2019. Moved by Ian Skogstad, seconded by Howard Johnson. Carried**

Rev. Deborah Hoekstra opened the meeting with prayer.

Troy Sartison led the congregation in the Holy Manners Covenant and introduced the Council Members.

**Appointment of Parliamentarian: Motion: to appoint Holly Parker Parliamentarian for the Semi-Annual Meeting of St. Albert United Church, November 17, 2019. Moved by Robert MacDonald, seconded by Joanne Symonds. Carried**

**Confirmation of Quorum:** Cheryl Watson on behalf of Holly Parker asked for a show of hands of membership present. Quorum established.

**Extension of Privileges to Adherents: Motion: that the members present grant voting privileges to adherents present for the business of the Semi-Annual Meeting, November 17, 2019. Moved by Marilyn McSporran, seconded by Frank Parker. Carried**

**Approval of Agenda: Motion: to approve the agenda as presented. Moved by John Robertson, seconded by Neil Lonsbury. Carried**

**Approval of the minutes: Motion: to approve the minutes of the Annual Meeting of St. Albert United Church, June 16, 2019. Moved by Val Ellis, seconded by Anne Carroll. Carried**

**Business Arising from minutes:**

A. **Report from the Transition Team:** Troy Sartison read the Final Report from the Transition Team.

He thanked the members for their service and spoke to how St. Albert United Church (SAUC) is beginning to live out this new structure. Transition is an on-going progress.

B. **Northern Spirit Regional Council Covenant:** At this Covenant service for Rev. Deborah, SAUC also entered into a covenant with Northern Spirit Regional Council (NSRC). Betty Welsby read the covenant document which will be hung in the church.

**Motion: That Betty Welsby, Susan Waldie, and Ken Hutchinson be named as representatives from SAUC to NSRC. The SAUC Council has the authority to name a fourth representative. Moved by Cheryl Watson, seconded by John Robertson. Carried**

**New Business:**

A. **Report from Finance:** Ken Hutchinson spoke to the current financial position of St. Albert United Church. He responded to questions about the Renewal and Renovation Fund, and M & S donations.

B. **Minister's Report:** Rev. Mervin Gallant outlined how the new team ministry has organized the work of supporting the total ministry of the congregation. Rev. Deborah introduced herself with some details about her training and work experiences.

**Closing Prayer:** Rev. Mervin Gallant provided the closing prayer.

**Motion to Adjourn moved by Marcia Scammell. The meeting was adjourned at 12:20 p.m.**



*Rev. Merwin Gallant*

*“For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known. And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love.”*  
- 1 Corinthians 13: 12-13

If I were to rewrite this passage today, it might go like this: “For now we see through home-isolation windows, computer screens, and phone calls, remotely, but then we will see face to face. Right now what we know is uncertain and often frustrating, then we will more confidently see the way forward, even as we are fully confident that God is always holding us in love. For even in this time faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love.”

Remembering back three months to life before the pandemic is difficult enough; recalling what happened a year ago, a distant memory. Yet as I look back, I realize that last spring I was still on sabbatical meeting with representatives of marginalized groups within our community and organizations that offer them support. The goal was to discern how we as a faith community in St. Albert might offer supportive ministry to the marginalized of St. Albert and area.

I returned to my duties of ministry at SAUC in mid-August, thankful: to be able to interact with you all on a regular basis again; to reenter the supportive office environment with our ever diligent office administrator Laurie Symbaluk; to having the dependable Lay Worship Team members to help carry the load of Sunday worship since Rev. Sally Boyle had finished transition ministry year at the end of June 2019; to having our dedicated children and youth leaders and our wonderful committee and Council members continuing their ministries; and, last but not least, to welcoming Rev. Deborah to the ministry team at the beginning of November. Thank you to all for the support you offer me and, more so, to the community of St. Albert United Church.

In addition to my regular responsibilities of ministry within SAUC and within the city of St. Albert

on behalf of SAUC, the fall of 2019 saw the initiating of a new program entitled *What Does It Mean to Love Our Neighbours: A Community Exploration*. It is a program that was inspired from the conversations during my sabbatical with members of the LGBTQ2S+, First Nations, Metis, Muslim and Food Bank communities within St. Albert. It became apparent that we need to get to know their stories and build relationships to be supportive of these neighbours in our community.

On the first and third Wednesdays of each month, we heard stories, asked questions, and discussed possibilities with the following people: Shylo Rosborough (He/Him), Affirming Ministries Coordinator of Edmonton, on "Pronouns, What's the Point?"; Ufuoma Odebala-Fregene, Founder & ED of Reez Community Foundation on solutions to address racism and white supremacy; a book launch sponsored by IDI for *Fethullah Gulen: A Life of Hizmet – Why a Muslim Scholar in Pennsylvania Matters to the World*; Maureen Callihoo Ligtvoet, the Indigenous Relations Coordinator for the City of St. Albert on what can you do to support Reconciliation; four young adults from Michif Cultural Connections on "Indigenous youth initiatives in Reconciliation"; representatives from IDI on the Hizmet Movement: Contribution to World Peace by Education and Dialogue; Dr. Deborah Dobbins led a viewing of an award-winning documentary exploring the oral history of African American settlers to Western Canada; and Lyn, a trans woman who facilitates the PFLAG Edmonton Chapter and Styx, a non-binary volunteer for Outloud shared their life journeys.

As we all know, all worship and programing in the church building came to a halt in mid-March but the ministry of SAUC certainly did not. My technology learning curve was straight up for a few weeks as I learned how to videotape and upload worship services to YouTube and to set up Zoom meetings for groups within our church but ministry is continuing. We do not know when we will regather in person yet will continue to connect as we are able and trust with Paul that faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love.”

Blessings!!!

*Merwin Gallant*

# From Rev. Deborah's desk to yours...

It was a year ago this month, on my birthday no less, that the congregation of St. Albert United Church issued me a call to minister with you. I want to thank you for trusting in me and welcoming me as a part of your ministry and mission in the service of Christ's people. Thank you for your kindness, thoughtfulness and welcome. I want to particularly thank my colleague, Rev. Mervin Gallant for his commitment in ensuring that we truly work as a team in ministry. Thank you for sharing your knowledge and history of St. Albert United Church and its people without bias. Your support as I minister with the congregation is much appreciated.

We have come to a time on the yearly calendar when we take time to look back and reflect on the life and ministry of St. Albert United Church. As we look back at the year from a more global perspective, we realize that the world has faced challenges and difficult times.

We find ourselves living amid a global pandemic. While this means that globally we find ourselves in a position of working together to find a cure, divisions persist. Due to recent events, more mistrust and fear appears to have sprung up between people of different racial identity and political leanings not only in our neighbor to the South, but in recognition of the systemic racism that exists within Canada.

It is in the midst of such times that the people of God hear the call to truly be the disciples of Christ: to respond to the example he set throughout his ministry of hospitality and welcome, of healing and comfort, of generosity and plenty, of hope and love. These are the times when our faith is put to the test. It provides us with the opportunity to be even more courageous in our faith, knowing it is rooted firmly in the love of God, the guidance of Christ and the wisdom of the Spirit.

And while we may not be able to change the entire world mind set, we can, and we do make a difference in the lives of the members, adherents and visitors here at St. Albert United Church.

On Sunday morning this is felt in the warm welcome, the gentle embrace or firm handshake shared, the calming effect of quiet piano music, the rousing hymns of faith and the genuine prayers shared.

At church events, it is in the plates full of food that never seem to run out, lively conversation shared over a cup of tea or coffee, comforting words offered to someone in grief, engaging study groups where the Bible is explored in new ways, in the ongoing work done by the many to ensure that St. Albert United Church continues to be a place of study, care and compassion and a bright spot of hope in the community.

In addition, the people of St. Albert United Church continue to be involved in many outreach ministries and community endeavors. Here are just a few of them:

- AA folks have a safe place to meet.
- Inner City Pastoral Ministries is supplied with tasty sandwiches and hearty meals.
- Food Bank collections are on-going as many are feeling the effects of these economic times.
- Shawl Ministry provides so many with the tangible knowledge that they are God's beloved.
- Hosting learning events where folks engage in conversation regarding Living into Right Relations with Indigenous and Metis neighbours; learning about the reality of living in our society as a person who identifies as LGBTQ2S+; getting to know and appreciate the neighbours whose skin color or whose religious expression is different than our own.

A warm and heartfelt thank you Laurie who offers her administrative skills and a welcoming smile; to our music people: Margaret and Donna and the choir members, to Kathie and Holly and the Bell Ringers, as voices join in harmony and bells ring out enriching the worship experience; to the folks who share their faith with our little ones, children and youth; to those who assist in worship and to all those who serve on the church council and on teams and committees of this faith community.

I am grateful for and cannot forget the many volunteers who share of their time, talent and energy. Thank you all so much for all you do.

Most of all, thank you for your presence on Sunday when together we listen for God's voice amid the clamoring voices of the world; when we receive encouragement from song, scripture and story. Thank you for inspiring others by your faithful devotion, your presence and your ministry.

In faith and with heartfelt prayer,  
Rev. Deborah Hoekstra

## Council Report June 2020

It was the best of times; it was the strangest of times!?! As we draw closer to the end of another program year at St. Albert United Church (SAUC) and reflect upon the year that has been, you can't help but note the stark contrast between the start of the year and the year's end.

Last year, our church embraced the suggestion from our Transition Team, to re-imagine how we organize as a church and how we can become more efficient as we carry out the programs and the vision of SAUC. With the road map that the Transition Team provided, each of our Ministry Circles began the work of taking the vision and making it a reality. Following an energizing and successful sabbatical, Rev. Mervin and the leaders within our church continued the work of re-organizing and several people played important roles helping to coordinate between the various groups within each ministry circle. This work has been ongoing, and I get the sense that the new structure is working quite effectively now. There are always going to be ways to improve and evolve and I hope that we continue to re-evaluate how our church functions with an eye for continuous improvement. While our re-organizing was getting under way last fall, we were also extremely excited and fortunate to welcome Rev. Deborah Hoekstra to the Ministry team at SAUC.

Rev. Deborah joined us from Beverly United to fill the ¾ time position we were seeking after last year's AGM. Before her official start date in November, she and Mervin were able to take part in a team building workshop which helped them to define which specific roles they would fill and

where they would focus their time and energy.

This was a wonderfully cooperative process and served to lay the foundation for an effective and supportive working relationship.

On November 3<sup>rd</sup>, in addition to holding our covenanting service with Rev. Hoekstra, we also entered into covenant with the newly formed Northern Spirit Regional Council of the United Church of Canada. While this was more of a formality, it also gave us an opportunity to affirm that the spiritual journey of our community of faith is aligned with the core values and beliefs of our National Church.

In November, we were also pleased to enter into a renewed partnership with the Community Refugee Committee of St. Albert (CRCSA), as they seek to sponsor two refugee families from Syria. Following the success of our partnership sponsoring a family back in 2017, we were excited to join, once again, in an effort to bring over two families who are both related to the family we assisted in our first collaboration. This is a long and sometimes tedious process, but the applications have been submitted and are awaiting approval. The CRCSA has done a tremendous job supporting the families that they have sponsored and have raised the majority of the funds required for this sponsorship effort. SAUC Council also pledged to help raise \$3000 to assist the cause.

Our church enjoyed a joyous and exciting Christmas season, and the start of a new decade filled with promise and hope. While we were appreciating another thoughtful and contemplative Lenten journey, suddenly, our world changed. News reports of the outbreak of a virus in China began to dominate headlines in January, and by late February, the virus was spreading globally.

With the help and guidance of our National Church, the Council of SAUC held special meetings to come up with a proactive plan to help prevent an outbreak of COVID-19 within our vulnerable community of faith.

On March 15<sup>th</sup>, Council elected to close the building in response to the pandemic and started the process of planning how to continue to support our community and staff while the entire province, country and world, sought to slow the spread of the virus and to stay safe.

I'm a firm believer in the saying that necessity is the mother of invention, because over the past three months since we had to close the building: worship services have been shared on YouTube, ministry groups have "mastered" the use of platforms like Zoom to continue to meet, and members have stepped up to assist other members with grocery deliveries and other services, while continuing to stay safe. Members and our ministers continued to try to reach out to everyone in the SAUC family to make sure that everyone was receiving the support that they needed.

The closure of the building created a sudden drop in revenue and each of the Ministry circles within the church has been working hard to come up with ways to cut costs and to maintain revenues. The Finance team has been diligent and has been able to access grants from the Federal Government to assist us during the months that we have been closed, and we are grateful for their efforts.

As our province begins to lift restrictions on businesses and churches, we now have started the work of planning for a safe and successful re-opening of our church and of our return to worshipping together in person. Caution will be of utmost importance and we must all remain patient with the process.

The work of the church continues as we prepare for the start of a new program year in the fall, and we are always looking to provide ways for people to get involved with the programming and work of our congregation. This year, we have at least one member of council who has reached the end of their two-year term, so we will be seeking volunteers who are interested in being a part of this group. On behalf of Council, I would like to extend a heartfelt 'Thank You' to Betty Welsby for the leadership and wisdom she has brought to

her dedication and hard work have been a blessing and will be missed.

As I write this report, our world is facing a great deal of uncertainty. The COVID-19 pandemic is still a major threat both globally and locally and protests in the name of social justice are continuing all over the world. It is exactly times like these when we rely on the support, and the love, we find in our SAUC community. We all long for the day when we will be able to join together in fellowship and worship again, but until then, let us all stay connected and stay safe.

Your church Council is always open to your suggestions and ideas, and we are always willing to listen.

Troy Sartison (Chair)

Susan Waldie (Secretary)

Cheryl Watson

Mike Anhorn

Nelda Arnst

Stephen Fitzpatrick

Betty Welsby

Donna Wyatt

Ken Hutchinson

## Property Committee 2019–2020

Members of our team took over this responsibility in the fall of 2019 and have worked diligently making themselves knowledgeable with all the requirements of the building.

Below are just some of the items they have dealt with in this short timeframe.

- Repaired and stained the arm rests of all the chairs within the church facility

- Trimmed all overhanging trees in the parking lot
- Filled in the cracks on the parking lot to avoid further problems
- Cleaned windows
- Replaced locking door hardware on the north door ensuring this door now locks automatically
- Painted Friendship Hall
- Installed security camera with remote access
- Painted parking lines
- Completed all preventative maintenance projects as scheduled
- Removed Christmas decorations from the storage at the back of the Sanctuary and placed above the choir room. This will be their new home!
- Replaced many stained ceiling tiles
- Completed all mandated inspections on time.
- Out of date fire extinguishers have all been replaced

The property team completed the clean-up of the grounds themselves this year. This was only due to the pandemic situation and we did not wish to involve volunteers in case of health issues becoming a problem. Hopefully next year we will be in a better position to request volunteer assistance!  
Sincere thanks to the team for their hard work.

### Upcoming year 2020/2021

As I type this report, these are only a few things that can be looked at for the upcoming year, but we are absolutely sure that many more projects will come forward as the year progresses.

- Eavestrough heat cables are to be checked out over the summer months
- Options are being looked at to replace the flooring in the friendship hall
- The yearly waxing of floors will hopefully be taking place also over the summer months.

Myra Lonsbury, Coordinator  
Mike Anhorn  
Bob Poirier  
Gord Welsby  
Neil Lonsbury



## The Board of Trustees

The current Trustees for St. Albert United Church are :

Bruce Partington (Chair)

Susan Waldie (Secretary)

Iris Chodan, Howard Johnson, Michael Anhorn, Robert Poirier, Bobbee Healy, Rev. Mervin Galant and Rev. Deborah Hoekstra.

The role of the Board of Trustees is an oversight role. When things are being taken care of well, the trustees have a minor role in the life and work of the church. This past year has been that kind of a year. Thank you to all the volunteer hours that made this possible. A special thank-you to all the members of SAUC that have adjusted to the new COVID-19 world and the challenges that have come with it.

The Board of Trustees works with the Property Committee to look after our building and grounds. The day-to-day operation and maintenance of the church property is the responsibility of the Property Committee. In the fall, the trustees and members of the Property committee have a joint walk around to note anything that might require attention. Thanks to members of the congregation who continue to step up with special call funds to finance the replacement of the much needed property upgrades, i.e. building painting, roof replacement and upgraded audio visual sound/video system. We are encouraged by the effectiveness of our upgraded AV system and the importance of it during COVID-19. Earlier this spring, the Trustees had a new first: it used the Zoom meeting technology to hold a meeting specifically to pass a financial motion supporting the need for a potential bank loan to help us through the COVID –19 crisis.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the Board of Trustees,

Bruce Partington



# Worship Committee

**Committee Members:** Stephen Fitzpatrick (Council representative), Rev. Mervin Gallant, Donna Graham, Rev. Deborah Hoesktra, Holly Parker (Chair), Wendy Poirier, Margaret Ward-Jack, Betty Welsby. Ad Hoc Members: Amy Bautista, Lori Sartison, Donna Ward, Audrey Zalasky

This past 2019--20 year has been one of welcome, change, and renewal. We welcomed Rev. Mervin back from his sabbatical in mid-August and welcomed Rev. Deborah to her new 0.75-time position with us in November, though she had begun to spend some time with us off and on since July. Rev. Mervin has been sharing with us the results of his sabbatical experiences. With the new governance circles put in place at the June AGM, Sunday School and Adult Education have now joined with Worship in one circle.

This past year we enjoyed another six-week Advent season. The closure of the church building in mid-March due to the COVID-19 pandemic has pushed us to approach services and fellowship in a whole new way. Thankfully, Rev. Mervin and Rev. Deborah were both willing to venture outside their respective comfort zones to create online services for Holy Week and beyond, complete with sermons and hymns via YouTube! Thanks to our resident web expert Kathy Hutchinson for her assistance in helping our worship move online. We will continue to worship online as we await government directions about when we will be allowed to worship together in person again in our sanctuary.

We want to recognize Amy Bautista, Lori Sartison, Donna Ward, and Audrey Zalasky for their leadership in our Sunday School and Youth ministry programs. Marilyn Eyre has now provided care in the nursery for 15 years so many thanks to her for her dedication. Marilyn had to take some time off this year to allow a broken leg to heal so we recognize Jennifer Brodgesell who filled in while Marilyn was off. Our Sunday School year was abbreviated but so much fun! We learned Old Testament stories (Daniel and Abraham and Sarah) and New Testament stories (Jesus Walks on Water and the Prodigal Son) with a

group of 15–20 eager learners each week.

We also explored new ways to walk around through Advent and Lent thoughtfully and purposefully. It was a joy to share children's hymns as a congregation each month after the Time for All Ages—what fun to connect our work in Sunday School with the service upstairs!

SAUC youth continue to provide an essential role and perspective for our congregation. This year included another fundraising highlight chosen by the youth: Souper Sunday. Thanks to the assistance and participation of many, Souper Sunday raised \$550 in support of the St. Albert Food Bank. The Youth were also involved as greeters. A new curriculum by Seasons of the Spirit has facilitated our Sunday morning discussions by encouraging reflections on liturgy and how faith can guide us in our understanding of current events including the effects of globalization, technology, and social media.

Over the spring and summer of 2019, Rev. Mervin was on sabbatical, meeting with a variety of marginalized community groups. Through these conversations, it became clear that to be supportive of these neighbours in our community we need to get to know their stories and build relationships. In response, Rev. Mervin created the *What Does It Mean to Love Our Neighbour: A Community Exploration* program on the first and third Wednesdays of each month. Each week participants heard the stories of a different group of folks, got to ask questions, and join in a discussion of how we can be more supportive neighbours to each other. Further details of this program can be found elsewhere in this annual report.

Worship throughout the year has been supported by many volunteers who so willingly offered their time and gifts to our worship experiences: greeters, ushers, service assistants, readers, storytellers, lay leadership leaders, musicians, communion coordinators, communion assistants, communion servers, baptismal assistants, audiovisual and sound technicians, coffee servers, sanctuary decorators,

vocal and handbell choristers, banner and flag attendants, bulletin folders, and those who tidy the sanctuary after each service on Sunday. Thank you for these contributions of time, talent, and treasure—ensuring that St. Albert United is a vibrant, welcoming church. In addition, many thanks to all the lay leaders (Val Ellis, Stephen Fitzpatrick, Fern Klassen, Holly Parker, Troy Sartison, Susan Waldie, and Betty Welsby); the Affirming Ministry, Living in Right Relations, and Outreach committees; and Rev. Tyler Powell who have stepped forward to help lead worship services (~1 in 4).

We would specifically like to thank Margaret Ward-Jack for her music leadership of the congregation and choir; Donna Graham, Debbie Gallant, Karla Boddez, and Margaret Crerar for piano and organ playing during our services; Kathie Zalasky and Holly Parker for their bell choir directorships; Betty Welsby for her work as our Sunday School liaison; Marcus Hoople for his decorating of the sanctuary for Christmas; Irene Hill for her decorating in other parts of the church; Holly Parker, Jessie Parker, Marjory Wong, and Wendy Poirier who have worked as communion coordinators; Wendy Poirier who looks after the communion elements; Shannon Larcombe for her work as baptismal assistant; Beryl Watson for coordinating the ushers, readers, and service assistants; Lionel Larcombe and Wade Hayden for their audiovisual and sound technicians work; Amy Bautista for leading the PJ Christmas Eve service; and Laurie Symbaluk for her work in the office on our behalf.

If you are interested in learning about or becoming a communion coordinator, or if you are willing to be a communion assistant or communion server, please be in touch with any member of the Ministry of Worship and Education committee.

Our committee would encourage you to consider bulletin sponsorship. This an opportunity for anyone in our congregation to sponsor the Sunday bulletin for \$25 (to help cover costs). You may sponsor simply because you are moved to do so, or the sponsorship may be in honour of a special occasion or a loved one.

Respectfully submitted,  
Holly Parker, Chair

# United Church Women

The United Church Women are a vital and integral part of the Ministry of St Albert

United Church. The women give of their time, treasures and talent freely and willingly for the good of others within the congregation as well as the broader community.

The St. Albert UCW is comprised of 3 units, involving approximately 55 members. New members are always welcome at any time of the year. The individual units meet in the lounge as follows:

3<sup>rd</sup> Monday – 1pm            *Mary & Martha Unit*  
3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday 1:30pm        *Mizpah Unit*  
2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday 7:30pm   *Shalom Unit*

The UCW started the 2019-2020 fiscal year by sourcing and paying to have a new floor installed in the kitchen.

The congregation was very supportive of and helped with our Bake Sale and Pie & Coffee Sale in November.

We held our annual Christmas Pot Luck Dinner and Vesper Service in December for all ladies of the church.

We started the new year by planning and holding a Soup Luncheon on Sunday Feb 9<sup>th</sup> for the Jessica Martel Memorial Foundation. Over \$3200.00 was donated to the Foundation to help open Jessie's House in Morinville.

When requested by families, we catered for funerals. We maintained the kitchen with supplies and cleaning and delivered Meals on Wheels on Mondays.

Our plans for a bake sale in April and another Enrichment Day in May came to a sudden stop when the church was closed down, thanks to COVID-19.

Even though we are not meeting, cheques are still going out to support the following on a regular schedule – M&S, Bissell Centre, Operation Friendship, Jelline K Society, George Spady House, Youth Emergency Shelter, WIN House, St. Albert Community

The continued support and willingness to lend a hand by congregational members is greatly appreciated. We are truly blessed with friendship and help, and hope to see all of you in September.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Ann Sargent

# Broadview Discussion Group

On the fourth Wednesday of each month, a group of twelve people meet in the lounge of St Albert United Church from 10:30am to noon to discuss the latest issue of the Broadview (formerly Observer) magazine. A volunteer leader from the group selects the 2-3 articles per issue which usually results in stimulating and challenging discussions among the participants. We are respectful of each other's opinions and enjoy the lively debate, usually discussed over a cup of coffee and a small snack. We have been meeting for seven years and were pleasantly surprised to find out there are similar groups in other United Churches across Canada- we thought we were unique!

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic we have been holding our discussions via Zoom from the comforts of our own homes. It has been interesting adapting to the challenges of this new technology, and we thank Helen Arnott for keeping us on our toes so we can all see and hear each other. Our last discussion will be on June 24, before we take a recess for summer. We would welcome any newcomers to join us on that date or when we start up again in September.

Respectfully submitted by,  
Janice McGregor



## Music Ministry

Singing or playing in one of St. Albert United Church's musical groups provides an opportunity for involvement in the congregation while contributing to worship experiences. As our organist/pianist, Donna Graham is always an integral part of our music ministry. This year, I would particularly like to thank Donna for conducting the choir during the month of February when I was on a leave of absence. We have also benefited from the musical talents of Peter and Mary Jensen, our summer soloists and our alternate pianists Debbie Gallant, Karla Boddez, and Margaret Crerar.

St. Albert United Church is fortunate to have two handbell choirs which attract members of the community as well as the congregation. Special thanks to our talented, and dedicated, volunteer handbell choir directors: Kathie Zalasky, director of United in Bronze, and Holly Parker, director of Genesis Ringers.

## Genesis Ringers

The early end to the Genesis handbell ringing season due to the 'coronavirus closure' has left the choir with a few regrets about the performances we were not able to do in church or our usual Bells and Dessert concert at the end of May. We are also missing the fun, laughter, and camaraderie we share when we are ringing our bells during rehearsals. Many thanks to the choir members and the substitute ringers for their dedication to ringing and learning new music. We had a great time with United in Bronze and the choir for the Lessons and Carols service in church on December 8 and with United in Bronze at our outreach concert at Chartwell – also on December 8th but in the afternoon. We all look forward to when we will be able to ring together again.

## United in Bronze

United in Bronze was reveling in their successes this year which was unfortunately cut short by the pandemic. Along with our ringing for worship and the outreach concert we gave at Christmas at Chartwell, we were also nominated for the Mayor's Celebration of the Arts,

Arts Champion Award. Many thanks to Stacy Giroux for spearheading this venture and organizing the application. The celebration has been delayed to November of 2020 and in addition to the nomination we were invited to play for the introduction of the ceremonies! Hopefully by September we will be able to gather again and re-rehearse our repertoire. This year we also purchased our deep bass chimes down to the tall C3. These will add a great vibrancy to our music!

## Choir

The choir helps lead congregational singing and works hard to prepare beautiful music that is not necessarily suitable for congregational singing. Thank you to each choir member for your dedication and commitment throughout this year.

From July 2019 to March 8, 2020, the choir prepared and sang 23 anthems, often in partnership with United in Bronze and Genesis Ringers. The Lessons and Carols service on December 8 was a wonderful opportunity for all three groups to work together to enhance the congregation's worship experience. On December 15, the choir participated in the Community Carol Sing at the Arden Theatre which benefited the St. Albert Food Bank. Since the church had to close in March due to COVID19, choir members have stayed in touch with each other via email and even Zoom. We miss our choir practices and raising our voices in song!

Many thanks to all of our ringers, many of whom come to us from the community to share their talents, and also to the Genesis ringers who double up and stay to rehearse with us after their Genesis rehearsal! Team players indeed!

Submitted by

Margaret Jack-Ward

Music Director



## Ministry and Personnel

The Ministry and Personnel Committee of St. Albert United Church consists of members: Anne Caroll, Joan Johnston, Gord Welsby, Audrey Zalasky and Donna Wyatt.

We serve as a liaison between staff as well as members of the congregation. The committee is responsible for regularly reviewing the working conditions, responsibilities and compensation of all pastoral charge staff and for making recommendations needed as a result of these reviews to the governing body.

We have welcomed and appreciated the work of Rev. Deborah Hoekstra whose .75 appointment began in the late fall of 2019. She and Rev. Mervin Gallant have worked well together in sharing the duties of the pastoral charge.

The committee has completed their work in gathering the position descriptions for each member of the staff. The annual performance reviews were delayed due to the current pandemic.

We support staff, ensuring that they further their continuing education and take time need for self-care. At the same time, we have been monitoring the financial support needed to support all members of our pastoral charge staff and have made recommendations for cost savings.

Respectfully submitted,  
Donna Wyatt, Chairperson

## Rites of Passage

### Marriages 2019–2020

Geoffrey Taylor & Jennifer Brodgesell  
Spencer Bosworth & Kassandra Harvey  
Cory Drewes-Isaac & Samantha Sinclair

### Baptisms 2019–2020

Riley Topilko  
Elsie Miyagishima

## Annual Statistics for the Year of 2019

Total Confirmed Membership	344
Households on Pastoral List	387
Identifiable Giving Households	343
Members Removed by Death	2
Total Giving' to Pastoral Charge	\$269,294.91

## In Loving Memory 2019–2020

Maurice Durand  
Margaret Humbert  
Betty Kolada  
Alan Herbert  
Olive Hetherington

Beryl Richardson  
John Beedle  
Harvey Schults  
Isobel Thornton  
Domitrios Tomaras



# Outreach Committee

St. Albert United Church's Outreach Committee for 2019 – 2020 was chaired by Percy Zalasky. Active members included Betty Mackey, Alice Hinds, Laureen Wright, Marilyn Nelson, Kathy Packford, Lorna Allen, Irene Sauvé, and Joanne Wilson-Symonds. Rev. Mervyn Gallant served as our liaison to church Council.

In September, as part of Rally Sunday, Outreach outlined its planned activities for the year. Starting off in October, Outreach members served 3 meals to Habitat for Humanity workers at the pre-fab shop.

Our annual book sale fundraiser on November 2 raised \$1076. \$1000 of that was donated to the St. Albert Community Village Bridge Fund to assist with their response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Once again, special thanks to the Parkers who collected and stored the books for us and to Wes Smart who loaned his truck to haul books.

On November 26, Lorna Allen organized a meal for the Campus Ministry folk at the University of Alberta.

Christmas activities took center stage in December, starting with Outreach organizing White Gift Sunday on December 8. This year congregants were encouraged to include gift cards as another option. Over 50 gift cards, along with over a hundred gift bags were distributed among the Bissell Centre, the Mustard Seed, and St. Albert's Community Village. Our annual Cookies and Cider Fundraiser in support of No Room at the Inn raised over \$1100. December of 2019 ended with Outreach worshipping with, and serving lunch to, inner city folk in support of Inner City Pastoral Ministry.

January saw us planning for our February 8 outreach church service. We chose to focus this year's service on family violence and "Breaking the Silence". Our guest speaker was Lynne Rosychuk, the mother of Jessica Martel, a victim of family violence. It was a difficult but very moving service! Thanks to Janice MacGregor for telling the

children's' story and to everyone for an excellent job.

Congregants shared a UCW sponsored lunch after the service with proceeds donated to Jessie's House in Morinville.

In spite of COVID19, we fulfilled our commitment to the Inner City Pastoral Ministry to provide lunch on May 24. It was a different format, and involved a dozen volunteers making 10 lunches each, some financial donations, and no in-person participation. Thanks to all who were able to help!

COVID-19 has interrupted our most ambitious project of the year, searching for a social justice project to help us move beyond charity. This project involved community members and included Saturday morning meetings on September 21 and October 19 to gather information on potential directions to focus on. As a result of these meetings two subcommittees were formed. One investigated St. Albert seniors' residences' inclusion policies towards LGBTQ folk, and a second group have investigated affordable housing in St. Albert. Our March meeting was to involve a proposal put forward by Alice Hinds and Debbie Hopchin to organize an awareness campaign around the issue of affordable housing and homelessness. Once the issues surrounding COVID-19 are behind us, we intend to resurrect this project.

All of these activities have made for a busy and fulfilling year. Again, our work is made possible by our supportive and generous congregation. You are all part of our outreach and we thank you and look forward to your continued prayers and support!

Respectfully,  
Percy Zalasky

Chair, Outreach



# Community Refugee Committee of St. Albert

## (Serving Greater Edmonton Area)

The Community Refugee Committee started in early 2016 as a community partnership project including volunteers from the community, St. Albert Host Lions and St. Albert United Church. The group successfully sponsored a young Syrian family in 2018-2019. This rewarding sponsorship ended in July 2019 with the newcomers becoming acclimatized to life in Canada and continuing to learn English on their journey to becoming contributing members of Canadian society.

The updated title of the committee includes the words "Serving Greater Edmonton" which will provide clarity on where future sponsored families might locate as well as give us a broader scope of volunteers and donors.

A current group of volunteers formed a refreshed committee of 11 members from the community, St. Albert Host Lions and St. Albert United Church. There are 5 former and 6 new members. The new members come from all walks of life including a social worker, web designer, accountant, business consultant as well as two members of the newcomer family who will give us their valued perspective.

The committee has met twice with the purpose of getting to know each other, deciding on a goal, planning for fundraising, redesigning our brochure and beginning the application process. The goal is to sponsor two refugee families. Each family consists of mom, dad and four children with the children ranging in ages from 5 months to 8 years. The fathers are brothers of the 2018-2019 newcomer family's mom.

Our fundraising goal is \$74,000. The committee currently has \$18,000 left over from the last sponsorship which is being held at the Alberta Treasury Branch in St Albert and approximately \$15,000 already committed from donors.

Our first fundraising activity will be to connect with former donors including individuals, businesses and service clubs.

With the advent of COVID-19, the project is on hold. The families in Lebanon are managing much as we are in Canada with physical distancing and the added challenge of limited food supplies. Once COVID-19 is under control and international flights are allowed, the committee will implement their fundraising activities and application for sponsorship.

CRCSA wishes to thank the Council of St. Albert United Church, our Sponsorship Agreement Holder, for the support of this important life-saving initiative.

Respectfully,

Judy Evans, Chair CRCSA

(Helen Arnott, Consultant)



# Living In Right Relations Committee

**Members:** Marilyn McSparran, Kay Douglas, Betty Mackey, Alice Hinds, Joyce Kidney. (Joyce was welcomed as a new member in the fall.)

Appreciation is extended to Helen Arnott for her contributions during her time with the committee. A guest from another church in St. Albert attended our last meeting and has expressed an interest in becoming a member. We are very hopeful. New members are welcome - come to a meeting and then decide if it would be a good fit for you. Meetings are held monthly.

Witnesses in congregations are called to be instigators and motivators by sharing what they have learned, reaching out to build relationships with Indigenous people, standing in solidarity to seek justice and uphold rights, and striving to make their community of faith a safe place for Indigenous peoples. A witness may expect to be 'a voice in the wilderness', and surprised by grace and joy. Never doubt that you can make a difference! All committee members are considered as witnesses to reconciliation.

The LIRR committee, due to changes in the organizational structure of the Church, is now a part of the Ministry of Outreach and Inclusion, and reports to the Coordinator of the Ministry. Rev. Mervin is the Ministerial liaison for LIRR.

During the year, committee members attended a variety of events to enhance their knowledge of Indigenous relations. The bulletin board was maintained with postings of news items and opportunities for others to gain similar insight. **We are all treaty people.**

The main educational opportunities offered to the congregation during the year were 2 consecutive days of workshops in October at St. Albert United Church. They were co-sponsored by LIRR and Being In Good Relations witnesses from the Northern Spirit Region and the Chinook Winds Region.

**Oct. 25 - Being In Good Relations** - the focus of the discussion was about the future structure, role and activities of the Being In Right Relations regional group. There was agreement that a networking system is essential to share educational resources and news of events, and to facilitate personal contact. A member of Hillhurst United Church in Calgary volunteered to be the contact

The workshop was well attended and evaluations were positive for the speakers, discussion, venue and food.

**Oct.26 - Settler Allies Workshop** -attendance included participants from the church and the local and regional communities. Guest speakers were Dr. Patricia Makokis (Ed.D) and Dr. Davina Rousell (PhD). Dr. Makokis is acclaimed as one of Canada's most outstanding Indigenous leaders and experts. She is an author, speaker and pioneer for Aboriginal education, health and values. Dr. Rousell is a community based researcher and non-Indigenous ally who is committed to building meaningful relationships that bring people together to better understand how we can work in a good way to identify solutions to redress root causes of oppression.

The recognition that we are on the traditional land of Indigenous and Metis peoples has become somewhat rote and therefore seems less meaningful. LIRR, working with Rev. Mervin, is looking forward to proposed changes which hopefully will include revision and variation of the wording.

LIRR was pleased to see a significant increase in the number of orange shirts and other orange attire worn at church on Orange Shirt Day.

Traditional Metis artifacts and clothing were displayed in January in the show case.

Speakers arranged for MMIWG on May 2 and National Indigenous Day on June 21 were cancelled due to COVID 19 pandemic restrictions.

Plans for future opportunities to learn more about Indigenous history, culture and current situations included:

- Showing an Indigenous film such as Treaty Talks.
- Visiting Maskwacis and/or Saddle Lake First Nation
- Inuit guest speaker
- Payhonin-accessing and sharing info on

the progress of the city in achieving the 14 recommendations set out in St. Albert's Payhonin Reconciliation plan.

- Exploring the possibility of bringing the theatrical production "New Blood" to the Arden Theatre.

Respectfully,  
Kay Douglas



## Stewardship

The committee has concentrated on keeping all members informed of church activities and encouraging them to volunteer to serve on a committee of their choice. This action occurs around a hub which we call the welcoming table.

The welcoming table operates in the narthex and was primarily established to welcome newcomers by answering their questions about SAUC. They are offered a welcome package listing all our groups and activities and are asked to give us contact information which we forward to the office administrator for entry into Servant Keeper.

The table's purpose has continued to evolve to include the sale of Sobeys gift cards, buying tickets for fundraiser events, musical concerts, and fellowship events. It is also the spot to purchase our church calendars, Broadview magazine subscriptions, and fresh farm eggs! The welcome table has become the place to disseminate any information of interest to our church family.

The committee attempts to answer all questions regarding Council decisions, Property Committee projects, and, for example, when the ladies retreat at Rundles mission is scheduled.

"Stewardship is everything you do after you say I believe"

We would be glad to have a couple of volunteers to help us at the table.

Respectfully,  
Gordon Welsby  
Robert McDonald

## Finance Report to AGM

The year started with a period of waiting – waiting for Rev. Deborah to join us. She was to start officially in October and we worked out an agreement between ourselves, Beverly United Church and Deborah that had her doing some work for us starting in July and working with Beverly through the closing of their congregation. This put an extra burden on Rev. Mervin and our lay leadership. It also provided us with savings of four month's salary costs.

The November through February period saw us start to fit Rev Deborah into our congregation. The efforts of everyone assisted with this. Financially you supported us reasonably through this period. We were developing some concerns about finances for the following year.

Then came COVID-19! The church closed the building and we started into the process of worshiping digitally. Our once strong rental revenue stopped. General offerings decreased. There was never a 'Woe is us' atmosphere, rather how can we get through this. We want to thank the many of you on PAR that have continued to support our church and to the many people who have used alternative methods of making their donations. It is all important at this time.

We appreciate the leadership of our Federal and Provincial Governments.

We are in receipt of money through the Canada Emergency Wage supplement. This gives us about \$10,500 per month until August provided that our revenue is down by more than 30% from the previous year. We may not qualify over the summer months when our donations and rental revenues are normally low.

Robert McDonald and his team audited our books and approved the year end statements as presented. Thank you team!

Next year is going to be a challenge. Our Circles have done their best in reducing what costs we can without making drastic changes. We hope to see new fundraising opportunities as our Harvest Supper is likely not going to happen, at least not in its normal format.

We will all need to work together and support our church as we move into the post-COVID-19 era. Your support and understanding will help us find a way.

We as a committee wish to thank Sandy Skogstad for the effort that she has put in over and above the normal in getting through government red tape and getting us approved for CEWS funding. We also recognize the efforts of too many people to mention (and I would surely miss someone) that have worked to bring St Albert United Church to the place it is today.

Respectfully,

Finance Committee

Sandy Skogstad  
Lionel Larcombe  
Bruce Partington  
Scott Packford  
Howard Johnson  
Rev. Mervin Gallant  
Ken Hutchinson



	Apr-June	July-Dec	
Revenue			
	\$		
General offering	40,000	\$118,000.00	Note 1
Fund Raising		\$10,000.00	Note 2
Rental Revenue		\$19,000.00	Note 3
other revenue		\$6,250.00	Note 4
Government Grants	\$ 31,000	\$10,500.00	Note 11
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$ 71,000</b>	<b>\$163,750.00</b>	

Expenses			
	\$		
M&P	47,000	\$119,000.00	Note 5
Property	\$ 17,000	\$50,000.00	Note 6
Assessment	\$ 4,900	\$9,800.00	Note 7
Office	\$ 2,000	\$5,000.00	Note 8
Worship/CD	\$ 700	\$5,200.00	Note 9
Outreach and Inclusion		\$1,150.00	Note 10
Other			
<b>Total Expense</b>	<b>\$ 71,600</b>	<b>\$190,150.00</b>	

**Net Loss**                    \$  
(600)                    **-\$26,400.00**

*Note 1:* - \$19,000/month plus a bit extra at Christmas

*Note 2:* Possible harvest supper plus other potentials such as dinners or concerts

*Note 3:* Based on rental revenue from last year for similar period

*Note 4:* Gift card revenue - if we can find a way to purchase \$20,000 lots  
\$5000 from an estate

*Note 5:* Some reductions due to possible leave of absence and reduction in Con Ed

*Note 6:* Reductions and looking at installing better security

*Note 7:* Continue current national assessment of \$1640/month

*Note 9:* Worship/CD have done a hard job in reducing their budget. This recognizes that the majority of their costs are paid for in the first 6 months. This recognizes that the majority of expenses are paid in the first 6 months

*Note 10:* Includes donation to the Village and No Room at the Inn

*Note 11:* received \$10,500 for March, will likely get same for May and June  
we may not meet the 30% revenue reduction over the summer months,  
hence, have shown only one month's grant.  
show 3 months grants in current year