

MINISTER'S Message

August 8, 2019

Summer Greetings!

A week ago I started 4 months' leave - a combination of a month of holiday and 3 months' sabbatical time. Sunday worship in both Olds and Sundre will carry on as usual (with the exception of August 11 - both will worship at 10:00 am at St. Andrew's United Church in Bowden, and August 25 - both will worship at 10:00 at Knox United in Didsbury. Emergent pastoral care coverage will happen through some of my colleagues, so should the need arise, just call the church, and Maureen (Olds) or Kathy (Sundre) will have the contact information you need. That will also be on the answering machines.

My plan has been to spend much of my sabbatical time travelling the prairies and visiting rural congregations that are flourishing or thriving.

By thriving or flourishing, I mean congregations that:

- have a consistent or growing membership (in the rural context, that doesn't necessarily mean a large membership), and that the membership is reflective of the community context
- are financially stable
- engaged with the community in meaningful ways (town, region, and wider world)
- offer worship that engages and inspires
- offer a variety of educational opportunities
- is engaged in a variety of missional/outreach endeavours

Interspersed with the visiting, I'll be seeking ways that what I learn may be applied to our context, here in south-central Alberta. I hope to create some form of log of my learnings, that I can share with other congregations.

Another piece of my sabbatical journey will be to spend time with the grief that entered my life in June, with the sudden passing of my mom. Our family's world changed on June 23rd, the day after my parent's 66th anniversary. I will also be spending time with my dad, as I am now sharing the role of his primary care with one of my sisters. Dad lives in a wonderful seniors' residence in southwest Calgary, with amazing caregivers and support, however dementia and health challenges only serve to compound the sense of deep loss he is experiencing, after losing the true love of his life.

I have created a blog, which I will be using to share some of my reflections as I journey through these days and weeks. You can find me tammyswanderings.blog. Join me on the journey!

Rev. Tammy Allan

Olds-Sundre Pastoral Charge of the United Church