



For 5 years Diane Willis has been the friendly face and voice greeting weekday visitors to our church. She has brought a quick smile and a willingness to help everyone she has encountered. We have been so grateful for Diane’s presence among us. Now she is ready to move on to that next phase in lifeRETIREMENT!

Diane is looking forward to more family time and much more time with her beloved quilting projects. Diane’s last day with us is not yet set but it will most likely be late summer as she has graciously agreed to assist us with the transition to a new Office and Facilities Administrator. While we will miss Diane immensely, we wish her much fun as she embarks on this next phase in life. Keep your eyes peeled for places you may see Diane... shopping, the Okotoks Rec Centre, quilting events...as she and Bruce will remain in the Okotoks-Black Diamond-Turner Valley community.

Summer Worship Schedule

Date	Okotoks United Church	United Church in the Valley
July 3	Julia and Matthew: <i>Freeing Jesus</i> Pt. I	<i>Summer Closure</i>
July 10	Julia and Matthew: <i>Freeing Jesus</i> Pt. II*	<i>Summer Closure</i>
July 17	Matthew: <i>Freeing Jesus</i> Pt. III	<i>Summer Closure</i>
July 24	Matthew: <i>Freeing Jesus</i> Pt. IV	<i>Summer Closure</i>
July 31	Julia: <i>Freeing Jesus</i> Pt. V	<i>Summer Closure</i>
Aug 7	Julia: <i>Freeing Jesus</i> Pt. VI	Matthew
Aug 14	Matthew: <i>Final Service for St. Andrew's/OKUC</i>	Julia
Aug 21	Guest Preacher	Matthew: <i>Final Service for UCV*</i>
Aug 28	Julia	Guest Preacher
	*Service includes Communion	

Connections



Next Steps

In light of Matthew's request for a change in pastoral relations, all three Boards (Okotoks, United Church in the Valley, St. Andrew's) involved in the Partnership have been busy discerning next steps for their respective communities of faith and for the larger Partnership itself.

On June 2, all three Boards and two M&P Committees met together to evaluate the Partnership. At that meeting, the decision was made to maintain the overall Partnership model for the foreseeable short-term future (from September to early 2023). Continuing to share Julia—and other resources—between the three communities of faith would efficiently provide more time and spaciousness for intentional long-term discernment and planning.

Throughout June, all three Boards met separately to work through a series of short-term focused questions. These included: "What ministry gaps do we need to be aware of? What internal resources do we have on-hand? What external resources would we need to/could we draw upon? How will we communicate information from this process to the congregation?" etc.

On June 23, all three Boards and two M&P Committees met to compare their answers and come up with definitive short-term action plans. A concise version of these plans is as follows:

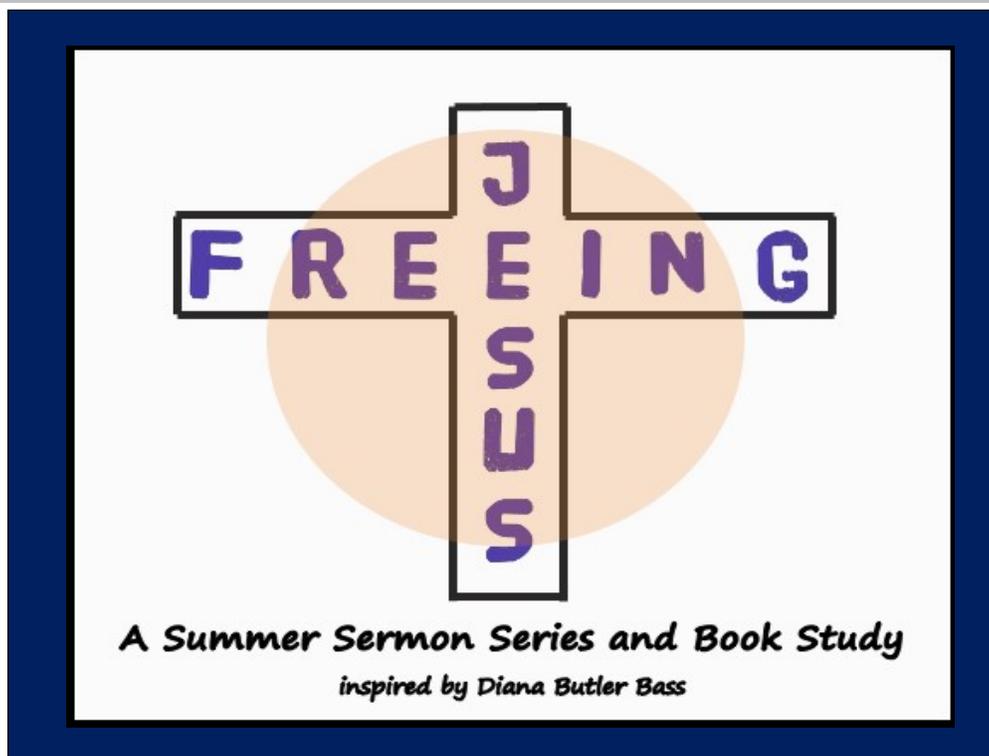
- a) For the short-term, until at least early 2023, **the Partnership model will continue.**
- b) During this time, Julia will remain the minister for **all three** communities of faith.
- c) Services for all three communities of faith will continue every single Sunday.
- d) A **Partnership Executive**, consisting of the three Board Chairs (Tracie Fontana-Wegelin, Mark Dutkoski, Karen Pryznyk), two M&P Chairs (Dianne King, Sally Salter), an M&P Rep from De Winton (Wayne Stordahl) and Julia will continue to meet more regularly.
- e) This Executive will also arrange Pulpit Supply for the first few "gaps" in September and October. With a sizable list of internal and external resources to draw upon, we are confident that these gaps will be filled throughout this short-term period.
- f) A Joint Worship Team will be formed to help plan Sunday services and make arrangements for Supply.

Throughout July and early August, all three Boards will meet separately again to work through a series of long-term-focused questions specifically concerning the Partnership (e.g. Should it continue or not? If so, how? etc.). In late August, another joint meeting will take place.

The Boards are fully committed to communicating as much of this process as possible with their respective communities of faith, along with receiving thoughts and comments from members. Please stay tuned to how everyone can participate in this journey of discerning possibilities.

In the meantime, if you have any concerns, thoughts, or questions, please do not hesitate to raise them with any member of your local Board or M&P Committee.

Thank you for your ongoing support and trust in this time of transition and opportunity.



Freeing Jesus Sermon Series

In her recent book, *Freeing Jesus*, Diana Butler Bass details how her experience of Jesus has changed over the years.

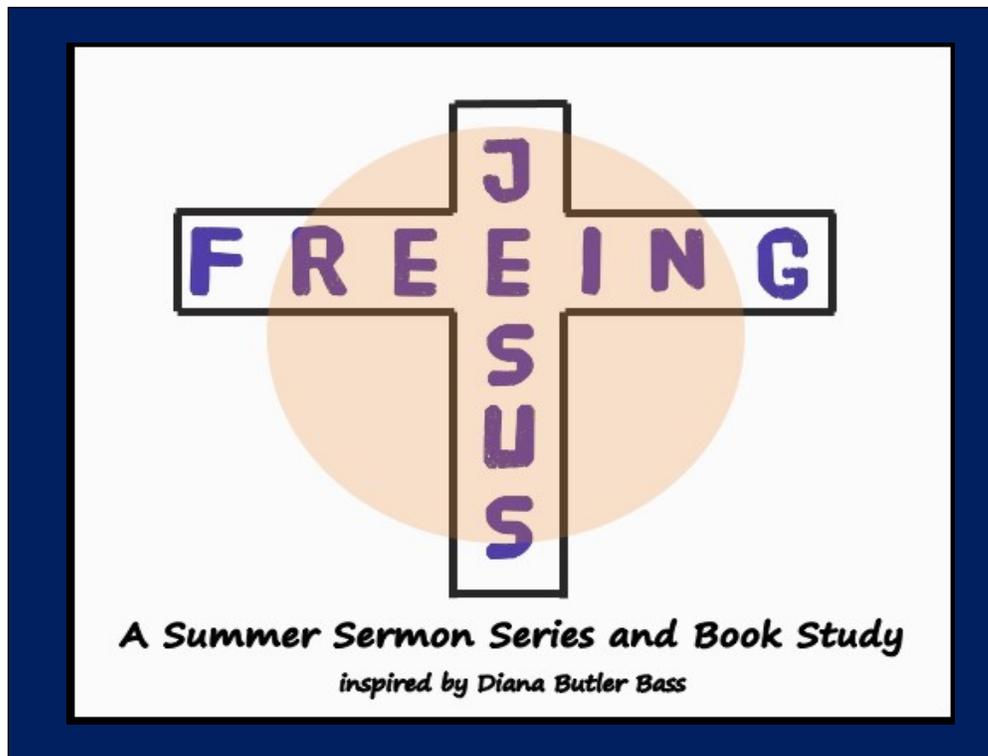
It can be so easy to try and fit Jesus into a “one-size-fits-all-box,” she writes,

**“yet, we change,
and because of that,
Jesus goes with us *in and through* change,
growing with us as we grow.”**

For six Sundays, starting **July 3**, join Julia and Matthew at Okotoks United Church as we reflect on what it means to follow Jesus as Friend, Teacher, Savior, Lord, Way, and Presence.

Want to take the conversation further?

See the separate announcement for the Summer Book Study on *Freeing Jesus*!



Freeing Jesus Summer Book Study

In conjunction with our sermon series, we'll be doing a **summer book study** on Diana Butler Bass' book *Freeing Jesus*.

Each week, we'll read and discuss a chapter corresponding to the sermon series.

Come for whatever sessions you can—
whether one, two, or all six!

The Book Study will take place on **Thursdays, 10-11:30** at Okotoks United Church, starting **Thursday July 7th**.

You are encouraged to have your own copy of *Freeing Jesus* in advance of the first session.

If you'd like to order a copy for \$15, please contact Matthew or the church office by **June 24th**.



We'd Love to See You This Summer!

For the past two years, our ability to offer live worship services over Zoom has been a gift: one that has helped to keep us all connected as a community of faith, no matter whether we've been healthy, sick, immunocompromised, quarantined, home-bound, or simply out of town!

We are so grateful for all those that have made our live-streaming services possible, especially Keith and Betty-Lou Bayley, along with Diane in the office and her weekly reminder emails. Thanks also to everyone who took the time to learn the ins-and-outs of Zoom from home!

Starting in July, however, we will be taking a "summer sabbatical" from live-streaming. This was the decision of the OUC Board at their meeting in May. **For the months of July and August, Sunday worship services will just be offered in-person.** During this time, intentional feedback will be sought from everyone to help discern whether live-streaming should resume in the Fall.

While live-streaming does bring many benefits, the Board is also aware of some limitations, and wants to carefully weigh the reasons for—and impacts of—live-streaming or not. Stay tuned for opportunities to share your own thoughts and participate in this discernment process.

In the meantime, we hope individuals will consider attending (or continuing to attend) services in-person. As a reminder, we do maintain hand-sanitizing measures and offer N95 masks to anyone who asks. There is also ample seating in the sanctuary to distance from others. We have resumed coffee fellowship and passing the Offering Plate, and have no restrictions on physical touch (hand-shaking, hugs) other than respecting each individual's own comfort level.

If you have questions or concerns about any of the above, please do not hesitate to contact a member of the Board, Julia, or Matthew.



NEWS FROM ST. ANDREW'S UNITED CHURCH

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Written by P. Marie Wedderburn

On June 19th, (Father's Day) nine people joined Matthew for the morning service. He asked us the question "What Is God Like?" which of course is a gigantic question. One of the hymns he selected was Brian Wren's *Bring Many Names* which addresses God as "strong mother God; warm father God; old aching God; young, growing God; and great, living God." So how do we describe God for ourselves? Reading the scriptures used this day, we notice in Deuteronomy 32:1-4, 10-11 God is described as the Rock, faithful, just, upright, an eagle. We then heard the children's book *What Is God Like?* written by Rachel Held Evans and Matthew Paul Turner in which God is pictured among other ways as "the stars; three dancers; a rainbow; a gardener." We were then given a sheet with some questions on it which asked us to respond. The questions asked included: "Which image for God was most familiar to you?" "Which image for God was most surprising to you?" and "Which image for God resonates most deeply for you?" A discussion followed amongst the ten gathered together. How do we answer these questions about "What Is God Like?" for ourselves along our faith journey?

Fifteen of us gathered with Julia on the last Sunday of June (the 26th). Using the scripture Deuteronomy 32:48-52 and 34:1-8, Julia spoke of transitions. The scripture tells us of Moses' seeing the land of Canaan from Mount Nebo. He gazed upon the land but did not enter the land as Joshua became the leader who led the Israelites into it. The transition between Moses and Joshua is thus recorded. We live in a world that changes constantly. However, change is different than transition which is how we respond to the changes. God was with the Israelites as they began the transition from wandering to settling. And God will continue to be with us as we are now in a period of transition with Matthew's resignation. As we transition to something new God remains with us. So how do we respond to change – do we welcome moments of transition in our own lives and in the life of the community of faith? (Julia mentioned a book about transitions entitled *Let Go: Leaning into the Future without Fear* written by Matt Miofsky.)

As this was the last Sunday until August 7th that we will worship together at St. Andrew's United Church, we had a potluck lunch following the service. During that time, we heard from Mark about the forthcoming transition as the three boards had met this past week. Also at the potluck we honoured Mark who has now completed the training course's four units on his way to become a Licensed Lay Worship Leader. We presented him with a gift including a card we had all signed for this achievement. Well done Mark!

Even though St. Andrew's United closes for the month of July, let us remember that there are services at Okotoks United each Sunday beginning at 10:45.



Mid-Week Worship

Come and find the quiet centre.

Come catch your breath and pause.

Come be reminded of God's presence.

Come and join us for Mid-Week Worship:

a short contemplative service

of song, Scripture, silence, and prayer

every Wednesday morning,

from 10:00-10:30AM

in the Okotoks United Church Sanctuary.

We hope to see you there!



Broadview Magazine – Subscription Renewal

The Broadview magazine subscriptions are up for renewal. The deadline is July 29th. If you'd like to renew your subscription or add your name to our subscription list please let me know at okunited@telus.net. The cost for a year's subscription to this great magazine is \$25.00. For your convenience you can e-transfer your renewal fees to okunited@telus.net.

Prayers

- ◆ Trochu United Church
- ◆ Hanna First United Church
- ◆ Lee Spice and her sister Lori who is facing serious health concerns, Lori's husband Don and family.



If you have an urgent pastoral care need please call 403-807-9432. This will lead you to the 24/7 on-call minister, Matthew or Julia.

Okotoks United Church Office

To contact **Julia** email her at okjulia@telus.net. To contact **Matthew** email him at matthew.heesing@gmail.com. Both can be reached at the church office phone number listed below during their regular hours.

Congregational Care Team invites you to reach out for confidential spiritual and compassionate care by email at: okcongregationalcare@telus.net

The office is open Monday to Thursday 9:00 - 2:00, Friday 9:00 - 12:00.
Please contact Diane at okunited@telus.net or 403-938-4357.