



CHRISTMAS 2023

# CHURCH @ HOME

staying connected with God,  
each other, and ourselves

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## Actually Celebrating

For most of us, the Christmas season is a whirlwind of shopping and wrapping and cooking and organizing and meeting and gathering and eating. And this holiday mix of ingredients is topped with constant questions like:

- Did I remember to do this or that?
- Did I call Jeannie?
- Am I supposed to bring something to Johnsons' tonight?
- Do we have enough potatoes?

Ah, yes. It is exciting. And all the planning and running around are indeed an expected part of Christmas. But there's another question to be asked. Am I celebrating yet? Buying gifts and preparing meals and attending parties are certainly important components of Christmas, but they're not what it's really about. So somewhere in the midst of it all, we need to set aside some time to relax and allow peace and love to come into our lives. We must stop serving long enough to allow ourselves to be served. We must stop wearing the crown of responsibility in order to put on the comfortable toque of contentment and take a quiet walk in the woods.

So when you reach a point in the Christmas season when you're facing either exhaustion or frustration, do pause to ask, "Am I celebrating yet?" And if you aren't, then quit whatever it is you are doing, and sit down to relax or to chat or just to watch your loved ones around you. And say to yourself, "Yes this is what it's about. I almost forgot, but now I'm so glad I have remembered.

Merry Christmas to all.

Grant



# CHRISTMAS GREETING, DEAR FRIENDS!

May I take this opportunity to wish all of you the blessings of this wonderful season of the year. It is a season filled with the joyous news of a new baby's arrival. New life is born! And in that, we can take comfort and hope in the promise of renewal for us all.

I am very aware, however, that some of you face daunting challenges during this season: illness, the loss of a loved one, isolation and loneliness, or troubled emotions about the state of our unsettled world. These are all valid feelings. Yet, while acknowledging their validity, we can also take comfort in the message Christmas brings: the gift of Jesus, a holy child who represents light, promise, and a sense of restored balance to each of our lives.

My deepest love and gratitude go to all who faithfully and continually offer their time, talents, and devotion to bringing into your homes the sense that you are loved, valued, and cared for. We thank Angie in the Office for overseeing this magazine's production, and Jennifer, our Communications Administrator, for her creativity with its design and graphics. Our outstanding Congregational Care team, headed by Wilma Clark and Anne Welsh-Baskett (featured in this issue), consists of groups who regularly prepare and deliver both literature and food to shut-ins and to those living alone. You are all so special, and your generosity of heart is truly a testament to the spirit of this sacred season.

Please don't hesitate to reach out if you need support or help in getting through this time of year. As always, we welcome and treasure your submissions. Please keep them coming!

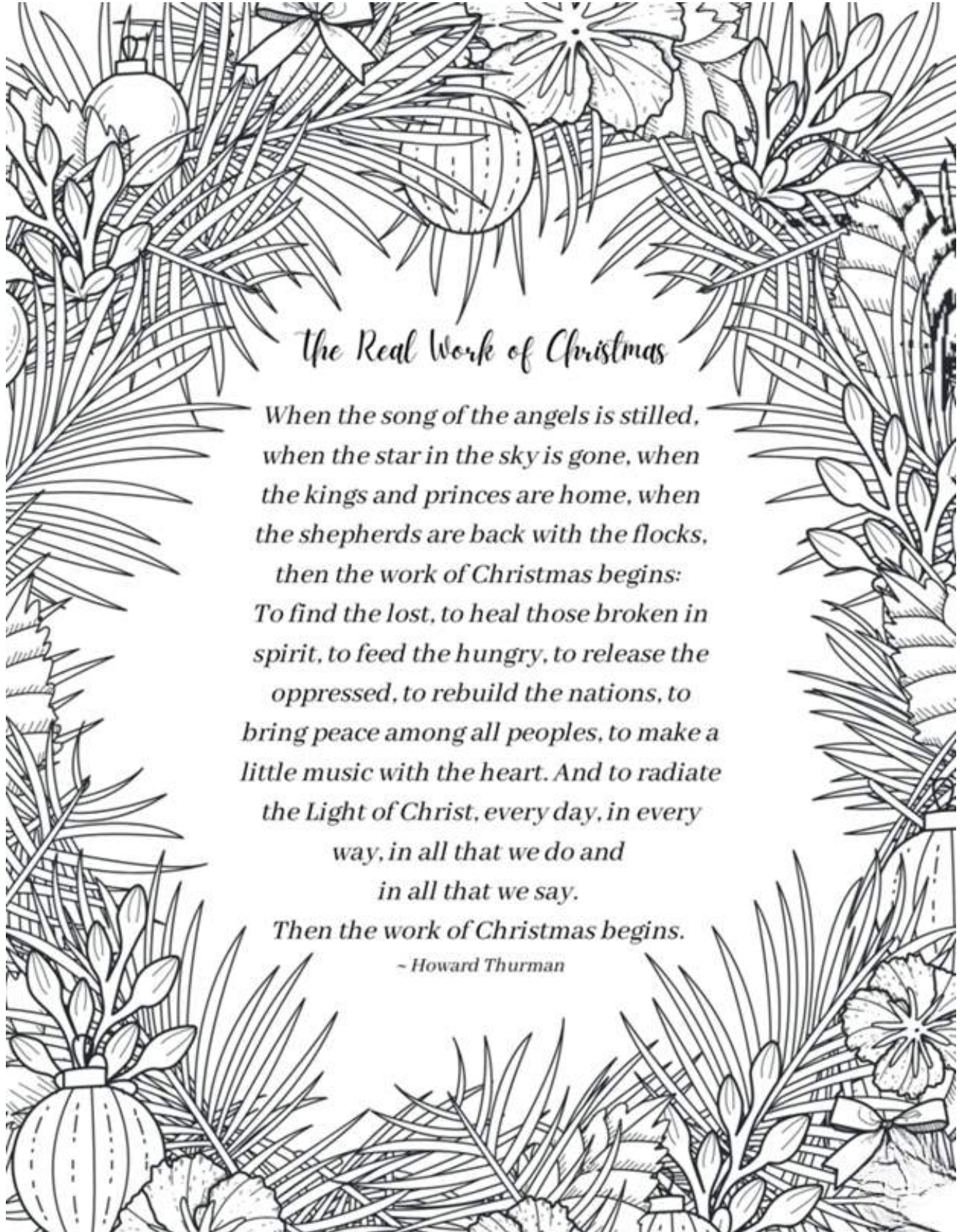
Wishing you a Christmas filled with radiance and wonder, and may your New Year be blessed with the optimism of glimpsing on the horizon new and fulfilling things to come.

Fran



# CHRISTMAS REFLECTION

## THE REAL WORK OF CHRISTMAS



### *The Real Work of Christmas*

*When the song of the angels is stilled,  
when the star in the sky is gone, when  
the kings and princes are home, when  
the shepherds are back with the flocks,  
then the work of Christmas begins:  
To find the lost, to heal those broken in  
spirit, to feed the hungry, to release the  
oppressed, to rebuild the nations, to  
bring peace among all peoples, to make a  
little music with the heart. And to radiate  
the Light of Christ, every day, in every  
way, in all that we do and  
in all that we say.*

*Then the work of Christmas begins.*

*- Howard Thurman*

# CHRISTMAS PRAYER

## A Prayer to Keep Christmas Simple

Heavenly Father, Amid the holiday whirlwind, we seek Your guidance to keep Christmas simple.

Help us focus on the quiet wonder of Your Son's birth rather than the clamor of the world.

May our hearts be attuned to the gentle message of love and humility that Christ brings.

Grant us the wisdom to find joy in simplicity and to center our celebrations around the profound miracle of His arrival.

Amen.



PRAYERSAVES.com

# BE A LIGHT



Our thanks to Jackie Walters for this inspirational submission



## GOOD FOOD BOX PROGRAM

The Good Food Box Program, (GFB) is a program under the Community Kitchen Program of Calgary, whereby anyone can purchase boxes of fresh fruits and vegetables at an affordable price. The Good Food Box Program offers a hands-up approach, opposed to a hands-out. We offer all Calgarians and those in the surrounding areas, access to sustainable nutritious boxes of fruits and vegetables, to ensure that no one has to go hungry. The boxes are assembled by dedicated volunteers, who along with The Community Kitchen, desire to see individuals and families accessing nutritious fruits and vegetables at an affordable price.

### BOX OPTIONS

Small Box: \$30

15-20lbs\* of fruits and vegetables

Medium Box: \$35

25-30lbs\* of fruits and vegetables

Large Box: \$40

35-40lbs\* of fruits and vegetables

Each Good Food Box contains a combination of fruits and vegetable. The content varies weekly due to seasonal availability. The boxes contain the maximum produce to ensure our clients are getting the most value for the price. \*Please note weights are approximate.

There are many depots and deliveries!

For further information contact Lorrie Herrick 403 538-7386

or Judy Andersen 403 538-7387

Good Food Box — Community Kitchen Program of Calgary ([ckpcalgary.ca](http://ckpcalgary.ca))

# FEATURING OUR GREATEST STRENGTH — OUR RDLUC PEOPLE

This series of monthly articles will profile—with their permission, of course—one of the individuals, couples, or families that make our church the unique and special place it is. Who is ‘important’ enough to be featured here? Everyone! This month, we get to know **Wilma Clark** and **Anne Welsh-Baskett**, joint heads of our Congregational Care Team.

What, exactly, is Community/Congregational/Pastoral care? In simplest terms, it is the act of meeting people’s needs of mind, body, and spirit through reaching out and responding wherever there is an area to be addressed.



Visitation, compassionate companionship and care for seniors, preparation and delivery of food and church literature to shut-ins or to those living alone, supplying prayer shawls, quilts, and/or gift bags labelled ‘Caring Hugs’ or ‘Chemo Care’ to those facing health or emotional challenges, offering prayers, blessings, or healing touch upon request, and sending lovingly crafted ‘caring cards’ are just some (not all) examples of what Congregational Care entails. It seems a dauntingly huge task.

Formerly, our dearly-loved Vi Sharpe handled the coordination of all this and more—though she continually emphasized she could never do so without help from numerous dedicated volunteers. Now retired from her paid position and still hugely missed, dear Vi leaves in her wake those volunteers—as dedicated as ever, but with a whole lot more to do!



“That’s why working together as a team is key,” stresses Wilma. “Operating in collaboration with the minister, we are the hands and feet of God. Without God and the Holy Spirit as our guide, we couldn’t fulfil these important aspects of our mission. Forming a synergy by combining our various strengths and talents makes the whole effort that much more effective. I now have a ‘Congregational Care’ phone that I carry with me always, so I can be reached whenever someone wants to speak to me. Its number is 587-679-7184. Call me if you need me.” What commitment!

“It’s essential to remember, though,” adds Anne, “that situations change all the time. Needs are different now from what they were during the height of the COVID pandemic. Expectations of the CC team will change accordingly. And the absence of a paid coordinator leaves a hole that volunteers can only do their best to fill. The surest way to lose volunteers is to ask too much of them. We must never do that. We are extremely grateful to all responsible for continuing these wonderful programs. Self care, however, is as important as caring for others. We give our best with pleasure, wherever we are able. It affords us the opportunity to get to know our fellow congregants better, itself a joy. But there’s a fine balance here. And that balance is a reality we must live with and adapt to.” How true!

Will another paid coordinator be part of CC’s future? That, too, will be a decision affected by the changing situation Anne mentions. As we learn to deal with the uncertainty that is part of today’s church scene, one certainty stands out as undeniable. There couldn’t be two finer or more dedicated ladies in charge of our Congregational Care team than Anne and Wilma. A sincere thank-you to you both, for all you so graciously and unselfishly do in our behalf.

Our thanks to Fran Porter for this submission

# RDLUC MEMORIES



## **Alice Brittain**

September 8, 1921 to  
November 18, 2023

Alice was born in Newcastle England by the sea close to the Scottish border. During the Second World War, Alice was pulled from school to work in a factory making heavy-duty cables. In her early twenties, she moved to Canada, to Daysland Alberta, a rural community just east of Camrose, and she married Art Brittain, a farmer. Soon they got the urge to move and join his family on Vancouver Island. Two children, Gordon and Glennis, blessed their marriage. Art eventually got a job with the Alberta Government, so they moved back to our province and lived in Edmonton. There the family joined Avenmore United Church and were involved in every aspect of church life, particularly music.

Art passed in his sixties, and Alice's son Gordon also passed at a young age. Gordon left two children, Erynne and Christopher, with whom Alice spent a lot of time. Three great grandsons, Evan, Blake, and Sidney eventually enriched her life.

On Dec. 24, 2019, Alice was placed in Sky View Hospice in northeast Calgary for ten months, where she had her ups and downs through COVID, her 100th Birthday, and the birth of her third great grandson. She was then transferred to Silverado Seniors Living in Calgary, and eventually, by her own choice, to Providence Care Centre. Living in Calgary brought her to RDLUC, where she loved to accompany Wilma Clark to services and to attend 'Triple F' (a seniors' social group that met monthly to enjoy food, fun, and fellowship). She passed away at age 102, having always made the best of a wonderful full life. (For example, the photo you see above is at 'High Tea' in the Palliser (Fairmont) Hotel, where Alice celebrated her 95th birthday.) There will be no service held here; her ashes will join those of her husband and son in a family plot on Vancouver Island. Alice will be fondly remembered as a lovely lady who appreciated friends and family, helped many, and loved her God.



Ten years ago, Glennis Brittain moved into Chaparral Villas, 2 doors from me, and her mother, Alice, relocated from Edmonton to be with her. I formed a beautiful friendship with this amazing woman. Alice decided to join RDLUC because she felt very at home in our church. She formed a strong bond with Pat and Martin Claydon and also enjoyed a special friendship with two other seniors, Doris Moore and Edna Dunn. They celebrated birthdays together and attended the Triple F seniors' group. Just before COVID hit, the group invited young families that met at the same time to join them for lunch and games. This new larger group ended up going to the McKenzie Seniors Retirement Centre (where Doris lived) to interact and play games with the seniors there. The children of the young families had decorated cookies which they brought along to share as a snack. A great time was had by us all at this wonderful community outreach effort where Edna, Doris, and Alice played a part!

During COVID, Alice thoroughly enjoyed the monthly RDLUC Church @ Home magazine, which she always read cover to cover. I will greatly miss the warmth and friendship of this fine lady.

Wilma Clark

Our thanks to Wilma Clarke for this submission

# CHRISTMAS FUNNIES AND FUZZIES

“ May the spirit of Christmas bring you peace, the gladness of Christmas give you hope, and the warmth of Christmas grant you love. ”

“ My Christmas wish is to spend more time unwrapping presents than I do untangling lights. ”

“ Perhaps the best Yuletide decoration is being wreathed in smiles. ”

“ What do you call people who are afraid of Santa Claus? Claustrophobic. ”

“ The best of all gifts around any Christmas tree: the presence of a happy family all wrapped up in each other. ”

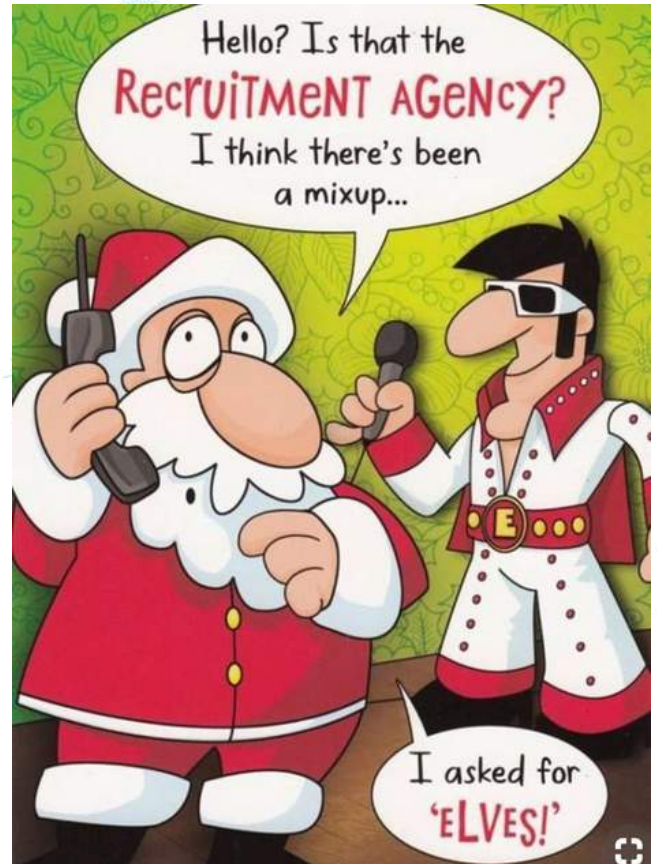
“ I left Santa gluten-free cookies and organic soy milk and he put a solar panel in my stocking. ”

“ Mail your packages early so the post office can lose them in time for Christmas. ”

“ From home to home, and heart to heart/  
From one place to another/  
The warmth and joy of Christmas/  
Brings us closer to each other. ”



# YOUR CHRISTMAS SMILE



# UPCOMING ADVENT SERVICES

join red deer lake united church for the

## **season of advent**

december 17 · sunday worship service led by youth and  
kids collective - 10:30 am

december 24 · christmas eve afternoon service - 1 pm  
christmas eve evening service - 7 pm

\*no services offered on december 25 and december 31



# WE ARE RED DEER LAKE UNITED CHURCH



We are an inclusive and affirming community of faith – people of all ages, perspectives, and stories, who gather to connect with God, each other, and ourselves, and find in Jesus a new way of being human and alive in the world.

**you're welcome, wanted,  
and accepted. join us on  
the journey.**

## **Red Deer Lake United Church**

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 red deer lake united church

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## **our staff & ministry team:**

### **interim minister**

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### **congregational care counsellor**

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Wilma Clark

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### **custodian**

Bill Holman

### **CHURCH OFFICE HOURS:**

Monday - Thursday

9am - 3pm

Do you have a story to share? A memory? A poem? A photograph? We would love to publish it in the next issue of this magazine.

Please call us at **(403) 256-3181** or send your submission to [f.porter@shaw.ca](mailto:f.porter@shaw.ca)

**The next submission deadline is**

**January 31, 2024.**