

Diamond Valley Pastoral Charge

Living Faith Story



The Church

In the foothills of the Rocky Mountains, near the gateway to Kananaskis Country and less than 45 minutes southwest of Calgary, is the small town of Diamond Valley. In 2023, the towns of Black Diamond and Turner Valley amalgamated and, as Diamond Valley, have a combined population of just over 5000 people (see the end of this story for links to the region/activities).

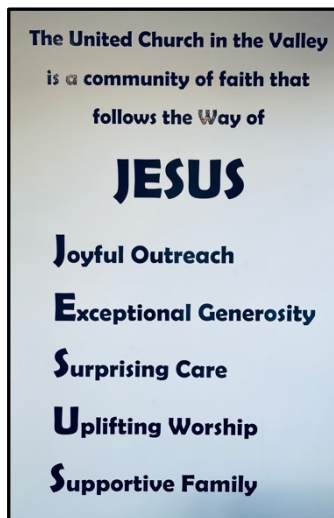
Diamond Valley offers recreational venues with hiking, golfing, cycling and community centre programs as well as musical events, local artisans and seasonal community gatherings.

The church building, approximately 4800 square feet, was constructed in 1990 and, in the continuing spirit of community service, provides space for childcare, a foodbank, and worship services in addition to a safe, welcoming place to belong. This is the United Church in the Valley (UCV).

The Congregation

Our congregation at UCV is small but mighty with over 60 families in our faith community. Our love of worship, people and music flows throughout services on Sunday, church bazaars, picnics, coffee time and all our volunteer endeavours.

We are a strong, welcoming church family who builds our sense of community by hosting coffee time after service, having potluck meals and keeping everyone informed (verbally and through our newsletter). We place a high value on greeting each other and newcomers with a welcoming smile. We are a resilient, flexible congregation with high involvement and we respect each other's talents and vulnerabilities.



As a church who respects the importance of Truth and Reconciliation, we recognize indigenous territories and are mindful of the need to continue education about the issues related to Reconciliation with our congregation.

As you enter UCV, there is a wall graphic stating the core values of the church. Although gathered several years ago, the core values remain meaningful and constitute a reminder to any who enter of the ways in which UCV follows in the practice of Jesus.

These core values express who the congregation is, how we interact with our community and our hope for the future.

We have an abundance of human gifts within our congregation, including public speaking, knowledge of the community, working/talking with elderly, gardening, event organization, assisting in worship services and pastoral care.

At one time very active in our community, the pandemic altered our interactions. We realized, to stay linked, we had to do things differently. As a result, we learned a great deal and remained very connected through Zoom services, phone calls and small gatherings outside.

We love the community of Diamond Valley and want to serve it as best we can and in as many ways as we can. Given this in the post-pandemic world, we are curious about the future.

We see changes in society, in our attendance and in our donations. Our congregational demographic echoes an aging population. We acknowledge change has affected us and see the need for creativity and collaboration.

To enrich our faith community, we partnered with neighbour charges at Okotoks United Church and St. Andrew's United Church (DeWinton). Within the partnership, there was much

collaboration on ministry, worship, Bible study and pastoral care. As a result, we've learned about the importance and value of relationships with other charges.

Worship

At UCV, our congregation pinpoints worship as a high priority. It is the foundation of our faith. Music enlivens and inspires our worship.

We appreciate knowledgeable, creative and exciting interpretations of the Bible that provide different educational perspectives. While many prefer a traditional service, as it's part of who we are, we are open to non-traditional forms of worship. We appreciate messages that are thought provoking and supportive of our every-day lives.

We value worship based on scripture that relates to our contemporary lives and encourages our spiritual growth.

Church Administration

We currently employ a part-time Office Coordinator and a contract Bookkeeper.

Activities that presently support the community of faith include Maintenance, M&P, Trustees, Board, and Pastoral Care committees.

We use a variety of information technology. We hope to see our new Minister using social media platforms and encourage resourceful use of current technology.

Our UCV Board meets monthly to review reports, discuss new and old business and examine the church finances. They share a love of laughter and frozen chocolate chip cookies!

Our current financial situation is reasonably healthy with several sources of revenue - rent from Diamond Valley Early Learning Centre, Yoga and Oilfields Food Bank, in addition to income from community events (pie sales, Christmas bazaar), and congregational contributions.

Community Connection

At UCV, our focus is at the grass-roots level; however, we do aspire to do more! We believe it's important to nurture community relationships.

Recent activities that support outreach and social justice include Jacket Racket, Good Samaritan Fund, Christmas caroling, and a joint Social Justice Committee with Okotoks United Church.

Faith Formation and Christian Education

Existing offerings that support faith formation and Christian education include a shared youth group, a lending library and Bible study which is well attended and effective.

While the number of children who attend service has declined, UCV is open to faith education for children.

Pastoral Care

We have an active and supportive Pastoral Care Committee who devotes time to connecting, calling and supporting those in need in our community. Pastoral care activities include prayer shawls, phone calls/cards, pastoral visits, tea at a seniors' residence and Christmas gift bags.

Our desire is to help people in our wider region stay connected to our faith community. We want to explore how we can engage in more pastoral care in our community as it relates to our core values and continues to lead us in the way of Jesus.

Summary

We at UCV celebrate our faith and rejoice in our time together. We look forward to growing in spirit as we learn and embrace our faith journey.

It is our hope to see our congregation flourish and grow as we engage in service to others and in our relationship with our community at large.

Community Links:

Diamond Valley: <https://www.diamondvalley.town/>

Beneath the Arch: <https://www.beneaththearch.ca>

Kananaskis Country: <https://kananaskis.com/>

<https://www.albertaparks.ca/parks/kananaskis/kananaskis-country>

Foothills region: <https://foothillstourism.com/region/foothills>

Bar U Ranch Historical site: <https://parks.canada.ca/lhn-nhs/ab/baru>

Griffiths Community Centre: <https://www.griffithscentre.ca/>

Valley Neighbours Club: <https://valleyneighboursclub.com/>

Sheep River Ramblers: <https://sheepriverlibrary.ca/Sheep-River-Ramblers>