

### ***Minister's Message***

Greetings friends in the Olds congregation,

As I put fingers to typewriter keys, the sun is shining, and the sky is a bright blue – so nice after our long, cold winter! It will be just a matter of time before the grass greens, trees with leaf buds flourish, and life emerges from the earth. Already, as you drive through the countryside you can see calves and kids, and signs of spring's arrival.

All those signs are reminders to me of the hope of the resurrection – new life promised in Christ. Easter is the most significant celebration in the life of the church – a time I look forward to as I serve you in ministry. As we continue to journey through Lent, remembering the stories of Jesus' life and ministry, planning ahead has already brought me into times of reflection on the passion story and the joy of resurrection. Please plan on joining us each week as we worship and follow the remainder of our Lenten path, then plan on spending Good Friday with us in Sundre, and celebrate Easter with us as well.

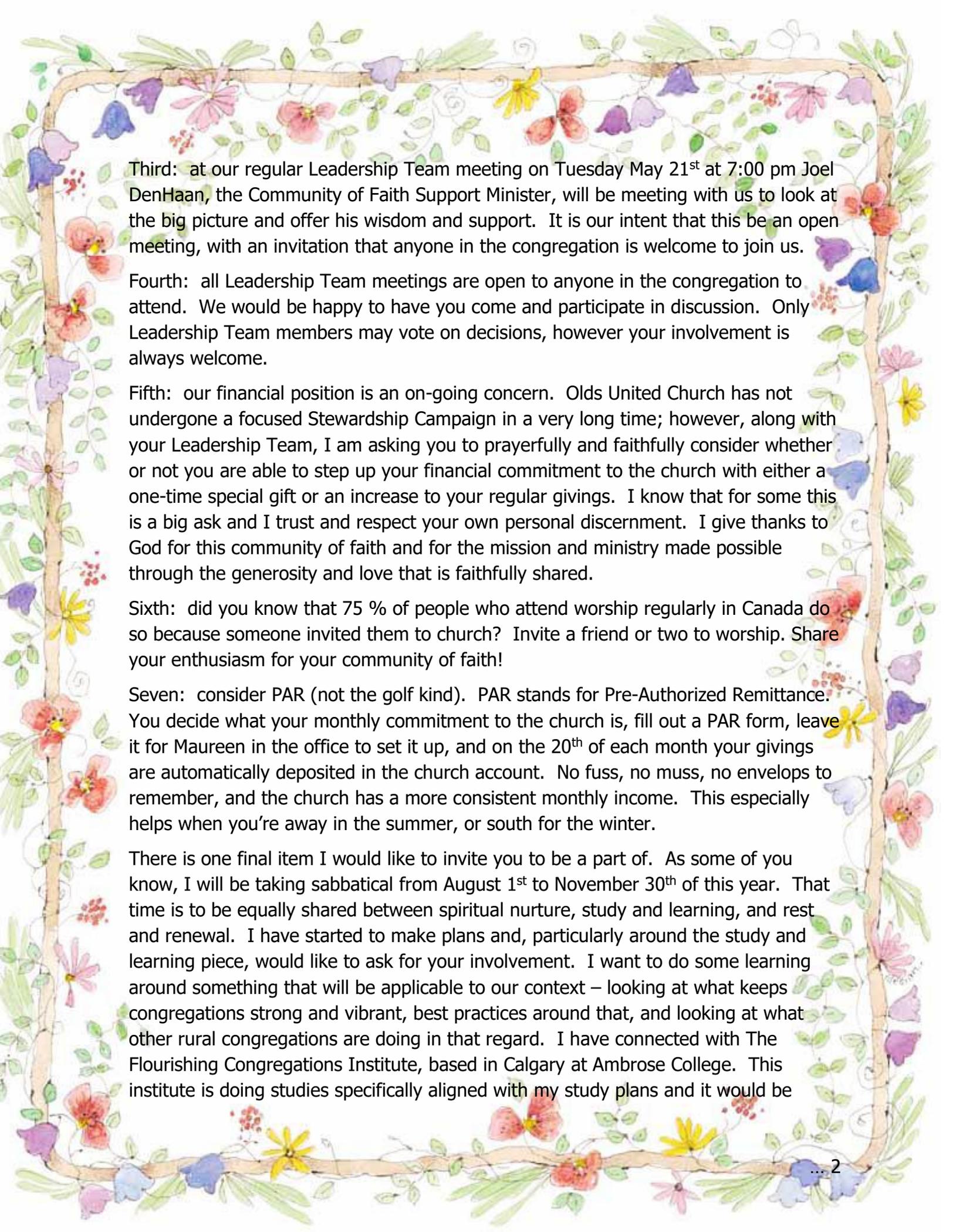


There is another reason I write to you this week. It is out of necessity that I need to tell you of our Church's financial position. On March 3<sup>rd</sup> the congregation passed a budget with a projected deficit of \$50,000. In 2018 our projected deficit was about \$37,000 and we ended the year with an approximately \$24,000 deficit. We can be commended for that accomplishment, yet it still meant that our savings account was depleted. This has left us in a position of needing to take into serious consideration withdrawing some of our invested funds. Currently, we are not able to meet our monthly financial obligations, and the Leadership Team will be meeting to address this reality (and by the time you read this, we will have made some decisions).

I know we are in difficult economic times. Each of us has, in various ways, felt the effects of that. The Leadership Team (our Board) has asked me to communicate with you about this concern. How can you help?

First: prayer. Help us as we seek God's wisdom in this time.

Second: consider sharing any ideas you have with the Stewardship and Finance Committee who are working diligently to address this challenge. That committee meets the second Saturday of each month at 9:00 am, and we would be happy to hear from you or have you join a meeting.



Third: at our regular Leadership Team meeting on Tuesday May 21<sup>st</sup> at 7:00 pm Joel DenHaan, the Community of Faith Support Minister, will be meeting with us to look at the big picture and offer his wisdom and support. It is our intent that this be an open meeting, with an invitation that anyone in the congregation is welcome to join us.

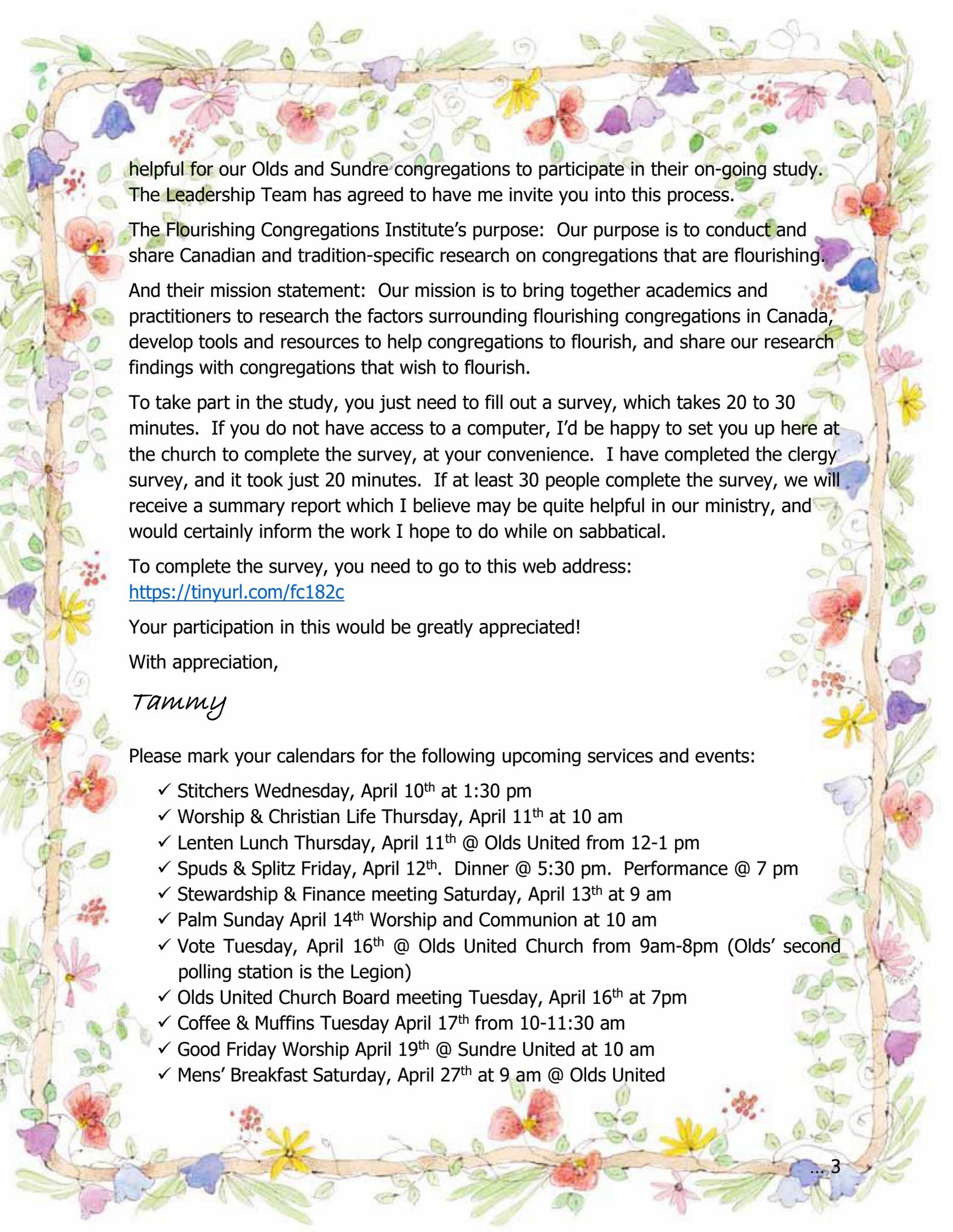
Fourth: all Leadership Team meetings are open to anyone in the congregation to attend. We would be happy to have you come and participate in discussion. Only Leadership Team members may vote on decisions, however your involvement is always welcome.

Fifth: our financial position is an on-going concern. Olds United Church has not undergone a focused Stewardship Campaign in a very long time; however, along with your Leadership Team, I am asking you to prayerfully and faithfully consider whether or not you are able to step up your financial commitment to the church with either a one-time special gift or an increase to your regular givings. I know that for some this is a big ask and I trust and respect your own personal discernment. I give thanks to God for this community of faith and for the mission and ministry made possible through the generosity and love that is faithfully shared.

Sixth: did you know that 75 % of people who attend worship regularly in Canada do so because someone invited them to church? Invite a friend or two to worship. Share your enthusiasm for your community of faith!

Seven: consider PAR (not the golf kind). PAR stands for Pre-Authorized Remittance. You decide what your monthly commitment to the church is, fill out a PAR form, leave it for Maureen in the office to set it up, and on the 20<sup>th</sup> of each month your givings are automatically deposited in the church account. No fuss, no muss, no envelopes to remember, and the church has a more consistent monthly income. This especially helps when you're away in the summer, or south for the winter.

There is one final item I would like to invite you to be a part of. As some of you know, I will be taking sabbatical from August 1<sup>st</sup> to November 30<sup>th</sup> of this year. That time is to be equally shared between spiritual nurture, study and learning, and rest and renewal. I have started to make plans and, particularly around the study and learning piece, would like to ask for your involvement. I want to do some learning around something that will be applicable to our context – looking at what keeps congregations strong and vibrant, best practices around that, and looking at what other rural congregations are doing in that regard. I have connected with The Flourishing Congregations Institute, based in Calgary at Ambrose College. This institute is doing studies specifically aligned with my study plans and it would be



helpful for our Olds and Sundre congregations to participate in their on-going study. The Leadership Team has agreed to have me invite you into this process.

The Flourishing Congregations Institute's purpose: Our purpose is to conduct and share Canadian and tradition-specific research on congregations that are flourishing.

And their mission statement: Our mission is to bring together academics and practitioners to research the factors surrounding flourishing congregations in Canada, develop tools and resources to help congregations to flourish, and share our research findings with congregations that wish to flourish.

To take part in the study, you just need to fill out a survey, which takes 20 to 30 minutes. If you do not have access to a computer, I'd be happy to set you up here at the church to complete the survey, at your convenience. I have completed the clergy survey, and it took just 20 minutes. If at least 30 people complete the survey, we will receive a summary report which I believe may be quite helpful in our ministry, and would certainly inform the work I hope to do while on sabbatical.

To complete the survey, you need to go to this web address:

<https://tinyurl.com/fc182c>

Your participation in this would be greatly appreciated!

With appreciation,

*TAMMY*

Please mark your calendars for the following upcoming services and events:

- ✓ Stitches Wednesday, April 10<sup>th</sup> at 1:30 pm
- ✓ Worship & Christian Life Thursday, April 11<sup>th</sup> at 10 am
- ✓ Lenten Lunch Thursday, April 11<sup>th</sup> @ Olds United from 12-1 pm
- ✓ Spuds & Splitz Friday, April 12<sup>th</sup>. Dinner @ 5:30 pm. Performance @ 7 pm
- ✓ Stewardship & Finance meeting Saturday, April 13<sup>th</sup> at 9 am
- ✓ Palm Sunday April 14<sup>th</sup> Worship and Communion at 10 am
- ✓ Vote Tuesday, April 16<sup>th</sup> @ Olds United Church from 9am-8pm (Olds' second polling station is the Legion)
- ✓ Olds United Church Board meeting Tuesday, April 16<sup>th</sup> at 7pm
- ✓ Coffee & Muffins Tuesday April 17<sup>th</sup> from 10-11:30 am
- ✓ Good Friday Worship April 19<sup>th</sup> @ Sundre United at 10 am
- ✓ Mens' Breakfast Saturday, April 27<sup>th</sup> at 9 am @ Olds United