

FOLLOWING IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF THE PIONEERS

Rev. Jane Fleming was raised in *the Calgary First Spiritualist Church* during the 1950's when she attended the *Children's Progressive Lyceum*, a Spiritualist Sunday School based on the teachings of Andrew Jackson Davis. Lessons were sent from the British Spiritualist Union (SNU) and examinations were held at the end of the school year. Jane and her three older sisters, Ella, Anne and Margaret, were very apt learners. Their two older brothers, George and Fred, had attended the Lyceum a decade earlier during the 1940's. George became very interested in the life of Yogananda while attending Queens University and really engaged the whole family's interest in psychic phenomena and spirituality. But Jane admits that after her first year of university, she delighted in telling her mother that she was an atheist. Jane never would have believed that one day she would return to the church of her origin and follow in the footsteps of those wonderful pioneers whom she admired by becoming a medium, healer, lecturer, teacher and minister like them.

Jane's mother, Myra Austin Harshman, lectured and played the organ for church services for upward of 50 years and was a continuous member of *Calgary First Spiritualist Church* from the 1930's until her death in 1993. She was part of a vigorous Spiritualist community. As a graduate of the University of Alberta in botany she was keenly interested in the scientific study of mediumship. But her daughters discontinued church attendance during their university and professional years. The sisters now laugh and say that they went to university 'when God was dead' and chuckle to be 'born-again Spiritualists' today. They also consider it very lucky to have been raised in a Spiritualist church.

In 1994 Jane was joined by her sisters Rev. Ella Groves and Margaret McLeod and brother-in-law, Tom Groves, to help other members revitalize the church with renovations, fund raising, new guidelines, expanded membership and mediumship, etc. They really enjoyed developing as platform mediums, studying Spiritualism, becoming Trance and Spiritual Healers, serving and mingling with like-minded people. They still refer to *Calgary First* as their Mother's church and know that her Spirit is guiding us.

After thirty-six years as a speech arts and drama instructor at Mount Royal College, Jane still loved teaching and was President and Trainer for ASHA (Association of Spiritual Healers of Alberta) for fifteen years. She lovingly served in many volunteer capacities, and since her ordination with the *Spiritualist Church of Canada* (SCC) in 2014, Jane has enjoyed serving as Minister of the *Calgary First Spiritualist Church*.