Faith calendar

Sunday
• United Church of Calgary, 1700 13 St. S.W., Service at 10:30 a.m., Rev. Kevin Wauchope; Calgary Day of Prayer.

Upcoming
• Maple Ridge Seventh-day Adventist Church, Calgary, 7020 24 Ave. N.E., Service at 11 a.m.; Women’s Bible Study at 9:30 a.m.
• Crosswalk Church, 2511 36 Ave. S.E., Sunday Services.
• Panorama Community Church, 3605 36 Ave. S.E., Sunday Services.

City Faith & Reason

"Hugging priest in demand"

Graeme Morton

Community Calgary
If life had taken another turn, Father Leo Coutts could have been a standing consultant or a motivational speaker. Instead, the former Roman Catholic priest and thousands of people the 70-year-old has touched over the years can only say “Amens.”

Father Leo is the Catholic priest who would “hug” priests at church entrances. It happened when just a few people came to a hospital in the country in Joaco on the weekend. The “priest hug” has now extended in demand so that he is more of a leader of spiritual growth in the city.

“Father Leo” got a hug in Calgary, and people are asking to hug priests, Father Coutts said.

Next year as a priest, Coutts will bring other priests to his home to have a “priest hug.”

Father Leo Coutts, a priest in High River, said he would "hug priests". That’s why people call him the "hugging priest".

Father Leo said, "If I go to a church, they talk to me. They say, ‘I’m going to keep going to the church, because of you.’"

After taking theology of ministry at St. Paul’s University College in Peterborough, Ont., in 1968, Coutts became a priest in 1970.

He’s currently a parish priest at St. George English Catholic Church in Okotoks. He was a parish priest there for 20 years and 23 years at the same time. He was a parish priest there for 20 years and 23 years at the same time. He has also been a parish priest at two other churches in the city.

Coutts seems happy when he’s with his parishioners. He’s been known to be more of a spiritual leader.

Coutts said he’s often drawn to people who are in need of a spiritual leader.

"I’m a spiritual leader when people need it," Coutts said. "I’m a spiritual leader when people need it."

Coutts is a parish priest who is known for his "priest hug". He’s a spiritual leader who is known for his "priest hug". He’s a spiritual leader who is known for his "priest hug". He’s a spiritual leader who is known for his "priest hug".

"Hugging priest in demand" in Calgary.