




An Affirming Congregation of The United Church of Canada

2024 December 1

Discipleship Sunday

Advent 1



Where there's despair in life,
let me bring hope!

Welcome and Inclusion

We open our hearts and our church family to all people in our community regardless of ethnicity, economic circumstances, sexual orientation, age, gender identity, or differing abilities. Many people's lives continue to be devastated by hatred, prejudice, and inequality, therefore we stand with those who are adversely affected by injustice, alienation and oppression.

Welcome to Robertson-Wesley

Please know that in the eyes of God you already belong here and you are welcome to participate in any of the activities of the community of faith.

We acknowledge that the land on which we gather is Treaty 6 territory, a traditional meeting ground for Indigenous peoples. We acknowledge the Métis Nation of Alberta, Region 4.

ACCESSIBILITY

There is an elevator located inside the building through the glass door entrance. Access ramps can be found: inside leading from the lobby to the sanctuary and outside at the rear of the building, leading from the parking lot. Accessible washrooms are on each floor located near the elevator.



For hearing assistance download the Listen Everywhere app on your cell phone and connect to the R-W network by scanning this QR code. Please bring your own headphones to listen on. Classic hearing assist headsets are available from the ushers.

Large print worship bulletins, and hymnbooks are available from the ushers.

Service animals are welcome, except where food is prepared.

We commit to make R-W a comfortable space for people with cognitive impairment. If you require accommodations please contact the office.

There is a sensory-friendly worship space in the Club Room every Sunday, the service is live streamed to the room with reduced lighting and volume.

CHILDCARE AMENITIES

People can breastfeed anywhere in the building, should you want more privacy there is designated nursing space in the Millson room. Baby changing tables are installed in all washrooms. If you wish to use it, a children's activity centre is set up in the Chapel, and there are activity books available from the ushers.

INFORMATION

The ushers located at the entrances are here to help should you have any questions. More information about the church and church activities can be found in the pamphlet racks outside Memorial Hall.

PERSONAL BELONGINGS

Please do not leave valuables unattended anywhere in the church.

Friends in Christ

Announcements at 10:15 AM

Prelude: *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel*, arr. By Charles Callahan Dr. Allan Bevan, organ

Embracing Our Spirit

Call to Worship:

Advent is here!

What is Advent?

Advent is the season when we prepare for the coming of the child who will be known as Jesus Christ.

How do we prepare for this most precious gift to arrive?

We begin each week by lighting a candle in the Advent Wreath which is round symbolizing that love never ends, and it is green because love always grows.

The first candle that we will light is the candle of hope. Hope reminds us to look to the future with trust and faith.

Hope is what gives us the courage to keep moving forward.

What do we hope for this Advent?

We hope that people learn to live in peace with one another.

We hope that Jesus will teach us how to do this.

We hope that we will find joy in the coming weeks as we get ready.

We hope that God's love will fill our hearts with the hope, peace, joy and love of Jesus, our Emmanuel, which means God is with us.

Candlelighting:

Hymn: *Hope Shines as the Solitary Star*

More Voices 220

Hope shines as the solitary star,

Faith is the inner light.

You and I together mirror the Light of Lights,

And illumine the pathway home.

Hymn: *Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus*

Voices United 2

Come, thou long-expected Jesus

born to set thy people free:

from our fears and sins release us,

let us find our rest in thee.

Israel's strength and consolation,

hope of all the earth thou art,

dear desire of every nation,

joy of every longing heart.

Born thy people to deliver;

born a child and yet a king,

born to reign in us forever;

now thy gracious kingdom bring.

By thine own eternal Spirit

**rule in all our hearts alone;
by thine all-sufficient merit,
raise us to thy glorious throne.**

Coming into God's Presence:

Gratitude Team

Here at Robertson-Wesley United Church all people are called by God to be disciples of Jesus. To dare to dream of a world where love reigns. To be a hope filled Community of Faith, united in deep spirituality. Spiritly has invited the Finance Committee to come to the table.

Hymn of Invitation: *What Can I Do?*

More Voices 191

**What can I do? What can I bring?
What can I say? What can I sing?
I'll sing with joy. I'll say a prayer.
I'll bring my love. I'll do my share.**

Learning about the Finance Committee:

What does your group do at R-W?

Why have you chosen to do this?

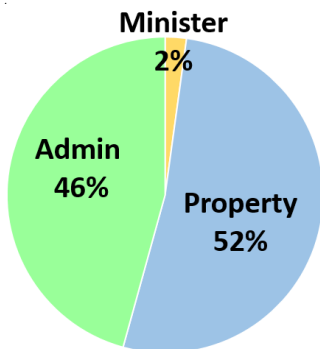
How do you see the Holy Spirit at work in what you do?

Giving Thanks:

The sharing of PIE

Congregational Blessing:

We are grateful for your commitment and dedication to living out the call of R-W through the ministry and outreach you do. We thank you for giving us what we need to be grateful. Without you, the body of Christ is incomplete. We recognize that we are all needed. Wanted. Loved! We thank you God for these beloved people. We have been blessed.



Finance Committee Costs

This total of this pie chart is \$47,336.43 which is the Finance Committee cost.

The slices of the pie represent the areas in which the Finance Committee cost is spent.

Property \$24,669.72

This is based on the hours of facility usage, used by the Finance Committee and includes the cost of Facility staff time doing Finance Committee work.

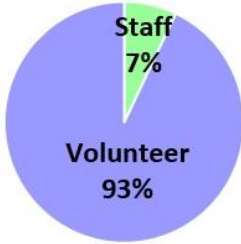
Admin \$21,638.90

These is the cost of administrative costs of the Finance Committee, this includes printing, photocopying, materials, postage, etc. and includes the cost of the Office Administrators time doing the Finance Committee work.

Minister \$1027.86

This is the cost of the Ministers time doing work on the Finance Committee.

All of the staff costs are part of the current wages staff are paid, and these numbers represent the part of the wages allocated to the Finance Committee work done in the year.



Volunteer & Staff Time

This pie chart represents the hours worked by staff and volunteers for the Finance Committee in a year.

| | |
|--------------------|----------------|
| Staff: | 45 hours |
| Volunteers: | 590 hours |
| Total: | 635 hours/year |

Deficit & Available Funds

The budget for 2024 includes a significant deficit. We have divided the deficit up proportionately to the various groups. This chart represents the expenditure percentages that will be covered by projected 2024 givings, along with what we predict the deficit will be.



| | |
|-------------------------|-------------|
| Deficit: | \$11,834.12 |
| Available Funds: | \$35,502.36 |

Prayer of Confession:

God of all hope, we gather this morning, a people after your own heart, wanting to draw near to you, wanting to declare our devotion to you, wanting to live lives worthy of our calling. We long to feel your Spirit move through this gathering. We long to feel your presence with us in the long, lonely days. We long to notice evidence of your healing power. We long to notice you in the people we meet, in the children and grandchildren in our midst. We long for forgiveness and a fresh start. We long for a broken relationship restored.

God of all hope, help us to journey in faith, through these Advent days. Give us the senses to perceive your kin-dom come. Give us hearts open to the songs of angels. Give us the courage to share the Good News of a baby born, the answer to all of our longings, the hope of the world. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.¹

Sung Prayerful Response:

**O God, hear my prayer,
O God, hear my prayer:
when I call answer me.
O God, hear my prayer,
O God, hear my prayer:
come and listen to me.**

Voices United p. 948

God's Holy Word

Prayer of Illumination:

Holy God, help us to give voice to the wonderful news: you, yourself are coming to dwell among us! Quicken our imaginations to find new and creative ways to proclaim Christ's coming. **Amen.**²

Scripture:

Vicky Mah, Trisha-Lee Wasmund, Bob Klakowich

Jeremiah 33:14-16 • A righteous branch from David's line.

The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will fulfill the promise I made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah. In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch to spring up for David; and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. In those days Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will live in safety. And this is the name by which it will be called: "The Lord is our righteousness."

Luke 21:25-36 • Signs in the heavens and on earth.

There will be signs in the sun, the moon, and the stars, and on earth distress among nations confused by the roaring of the sea and the waves. People will faint from fear and foreboding of what is coming upon the world, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then they will see the Son of humans coming in a cloud with power and great glory. Now when these things begin to take place, stand up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near. Then Jesus told them a parable: "Look at the fig tree and all the trees; as soon as they sprout leaves you can see for yourselves and know that summer is already near. So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that the kingdom of God is near. Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all things have taken place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away. "Be on guard so that your hearts are not weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of this life, and that day catch you unexpectedly, like a trap. For it will come upon all who live on the face of the whole earth. Be alert at all times, praying that you may have the strength to escape all these things that will take place, and to stand before the son of humans."

Hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church,

Thanks be to God.

Anthem: *How Lovely Are the Messengers*, by Felix Mendelssohn

Choir of R-W

Reflection: *Where there's despair in life may we bring hope.*

Bob Klakowich and Trisha-Lee Wasmund

Hymn: *God of All Places*

Voices United 4

**God of all places: present, unseen;
voice in our silence, song in our midst.
we are your people, knowing, unsure.
come, Lord Jesus, come!**

God of all dreaming, near and yet far;
vision unheard of, wake us to rest.
We are your presence, sent forth afraid:
come, Lord Jesus, come!

God of all people, dust and the clay.
breath of a new wind, fire in our heart.
light born of heaven, peace on the earth.
come, Lord Jesus, come!

Grateful Response

Pastoral Prayers

Andrew Hopkyns

Response: God of Hope, **hear our prayer.**

Lord's Prayer: *A Paraphrase*

Voices United p. 916

**Eternal Spirit,
Earth-maker, Pain-bearer, Life-giver,
Source of all that is and that shall be.
Parent of us all,
Loving God, in whom is heaven:
The hallowing of your name echo
through the universe!
The way of your justice be followed
by peoples of the world!
Your heavenly will be done
by all created beings!
Your commonwealth of peace and freedom
sustain our hope and come on earth.
With the bread we need for today, feed us.
In the hurts we absorb from one another, forgive us.
In times of temptation and test, strengthen us.
From trials too great to endure, spare us.
From the grip of all that is evil, free us.
For you reign in the glory of the power that is love,
now and for ever. Amen.**

Offering:



Your donations today support R-W Church programs and operations, as well as outreach projects and programs in the city and around the world. You can donate by e-transfer to pay@rwuc.org, cheque, debit/credit by speaking to an usher, pre-authorized remittance, or PayPal by scanning the QR code. Tax receipts are issued at the end of the year for donations over \$20 if your name and address are provided.

Offertory: *O Ancient Love*

Voices United 17 vs. 4

**O suffering love, that bears our human weakness;
O boundless love, that rises with the morn;
O mighty love, concealed in infant meekness:
O living Love, within our hearts be born,
O living Love, within our hearts be borne.**

Offering Prayer:

Spirited God, your gift of hope comes to us through the advent of the Christ child. We offer these gifts back to you as signs of hope: hope that nestles into your loving presence, hope that these donations help turn the world upside down, hope that trusts in your promise of transformation, hope that opens us to strangers, to neighbours, to enemies, and to friends. Bless our journey on the way of Jesus. Amen.³

Hymn: *Hail to God's Own Anointed*

Voices United 30

**Hail to God's own anointed,
great David's greater Son!
Hail, in the time appointed,
God's reign on earth begun!
Christ comes to break oppression,
to set the captive free,
to take away transgression,
and rule in equity.**

**Christ comes with justice surely
to those who suffer wrong,
to help the poor and needy,
and bid the weak be strong,
to give them songs for sighing,
their darkness turn to light,
whose souls, condemned and dying,
are precious in his sight.**

**Christ shall come down like showers
upon the fruitful earth,
and love, joy, hope, like flowers,
spring in his path to birth.
Before him on the mountains
shall peace, the herald go,
and righteousness in fountains
from hill to valley flow.**

**To him shall prayer unceasing
and daily vows ascend,
his kingdom still increasing,
a kingdom without end.
The tide of time shall never
his covenant remove.
His name shall stand for ever:
that name to us is Love.**

Commissioning:

Pay attention! Put your senses on alert! Your redemption is near. Look after yourselves. Have light hearts, for love is everywhere. Look out for each other and anyone who will need your help in the coming days.

We will go from here to love and serve the Lord. Amen.⁴

Question for reflection:

What message has God given you for the world?

Where do you find hope?

How will you share your hopes and dreams with others?

R-W Report

Next Sunday, Dec 8, 2024

Advent 2/ White Gift Sunday

Children and Youth: Children begin in the sanctuary, then go to Kids' Church. Youth meet in the youth room at the beginning of the service.

Scripture: Malachi 3:1-4 • A refiner's fire and a launderer's soap.

Luke 3:7-18 • John warns the crowds, "You brood of vipers!"

Sermon: Living abundantly in a scarcity-oriented society

Christmas messages of consumerism abound, all saying one thing - you do not have enough. But Jesus shows that abundance is not measured by how much one has, and certainly not in competition with others. Instead, when we act as the collective we are, we see there is enough. We find peace, knowing that we are enough and have enough to feel generous with what we have already.

Through faith we will break through the hostility and build a peaceful world, one act of generosity at a time. On White Gift Sunday, what can you do to live abundantly and share your gifts with others?

Music: Dr. Allan Bevan, organist; Robertson-Wesley Choir

WEEK AT A GLANCE

| | | | |
|------------|------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|
| Sun Dec 1 | Sunday Worship | Sanctuary & Online | 10:30 am |
| | Youth Discussion | Youth Room | 10:30 am |
| | Kids' Church | Garden Patch & Air Room | 10:45 am |
| | Fellowship | Memorial Hall | 11:30 am |
| | Instrumental Ensem. | Lower Hall | 11:30 am |
| Mon Dec 2 | Spirited Art Studio | Art Studio | 1:30 pm |
| Tue Dec 3 | Scripture Reflections | Club Room & Zoom | 12:00 pm |
| | DEAP Meeting | Club Room | 5:30 pm |
| Wed Dec 4 | Spirited Art Studio | Art Studio | 1:30 pm |
| | Counselling | Club Room | 12:00 pm & 5:00 pm |
| | R-W Choir | Lower Hall and Sanctuary | 7:30 pm |
| Thur Dec 5 | Not Falling for You | Memorial Hall | 10:00 am |
| | R-W Ringers | Lower Hall | 7:00 pm |
| Sat Dec 7 | R-W Christmas Party | Memorial Hall | 6:00 pm |

ON THE HORIZON

| | | | |
|-----------|----------------------------|-------------------------|----------|
| Sun Dec 8 | Sunday Worship | Sanctuary & Online | 10:30 am |
| | Youth Discussion | Youth Room | 10:30 am |
| | Kids' Church | Garden Patch & Air Room | 10:45 am |
| | Fellowship | Memorial Hall | 11:30 am |
| | Instrumental Ensem. | Sanctuary | 11:30 am |

| | | | |
|-------------|------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|
| Mon Dec 9 | Spirited Art Studio | Art Studio | 1:30 pm |
| Tue Dec 10 | Scripture Reflections | Club Room & Zoom | 12:00 pm |
| | Property Committee | Room 11 | 1:00 pm |
| | UCW Meeting | Memorial Hall | 1:30 pm |
| | Finance Meeting | Room 11 | 7:00 pm |
| Wed Dec 11 | Spirited Art Studio | Art Studio | 1:30 pm |
| | Counselling | Club Room | 12:00 pm & 5:00 pm |
| | R-W Choir | Lower Hall and Sanctuary | 7:30 pm |
| Thur Dec 12 | Not Falling for You | Memorial Hall | 10:00 am |
| | Men's Group | Away | 10:00 am |
| | R-W Ringers | Lower Hall and Sanctuary | 7:00 pm |
| Fri Dec 13 | Koinonia Dinner | Memorial Hall | 5:00 pm |
| Sat Dec 14 | Youth Group | Youth Room | 4:00 pm |
| | Community Dinner | Memorial Hall | 5:00 pm |

Volunteer Opportunities

JUSTICE AND OUTREACH (M&O) POD COORDINATOR

The role of the J&O Pod Coordinator is to gather and engage interested members of the congregation in conversation about our current and future directions in Justice and Outreach, along with different justice issues that are emerging in the world. In keeping with our statement, the Pod Coordinator will host conversations, empower others to develop, implement and evaluate ideas, events, projects, resources, and programs. As needed or requested, the Pod Coordinator will report back to the Official Board. The term for the J&O Pod Coordinator will be two years. The Coordinator, in conjunction with and with the support of ministry personnel, will set up three to four Pod meetings per year. Required skills: Facilitation and diplomacy skills, Good listener, Ability to identify skills and resources in the congregation, Communication skills, and basic computer skills. If you have questions about this position you are welcome to contact Peter at p.graham@rwuc.org.

CANDLESTICK POLISHING

Help the R-W Sanctuary shine! Sign-up to help polish the brass candlesticks that are used in Lessons & Carols and Christmas Eve services. Thursday, **December 5** at 12:30 pm in Memorial Hall.

R-W News & Notes

R-W CHRISTMAS PARTY

On Saturday **Dec 7, 2024** at 6:00 pm we are inviting all people of R-W to come and feast with one another over some turkey and all the fixings. This will be a night to celebrate and have some fun with each other. We want to make this accessible to all people. The ticket price is \$30.00. But if you can't afford it

don't worry about the price, and come for free. If you are not able to attend, but would like to purchase a ticket for someone else we invite you to do so. Please reserve your spot! Tickets are available after church on **Dec 1**. You can also call the church office to reserve your ticket.

STAFF

Rev. Karen Bridges is on holidays from **Nov 28 - Dec 1**. She will be back in the office on Monday Dec 2.

PRE-CHRISTMAS GIFT SALE

Sunday, **Dec 1** in fellowship, 11:30 am-12:30 pm in Memorial Hall. Proceeds to M&S.

WHITE GIFT SUNDAY

On **December 8**, White Gift Sunday, we will be collecting items for the Bissell Centre, they have provided the following Wish List of needed items: Art Supplies, Art/Craft Kits, Trucks & Cars, Dinosaur Toys, Superhero toys, Barbie/Disney Princess dolls/accessories, Lego/building blocks, Science Kits, Trains Kits, Puzzles & puzzle games, Balls, Headphones, Pokémon toys, Kinetic Sand/Playdoh, Board/Card games, Sensory Toys, Books for toddlers, children & youth, Makeup brushes, nail polishes, eye shadows. These gifts will be collected during Worship and delivered to the Bissell Centre. You can also donate toys virtually through the Bissell Centres amazon wishlist, more details at bissellcentre.org/festive-giveaway. If you would like to donate financially to the Bissell Centre please do so on their website at <https://bissellcentre.org/helpy-holidays> or write a cheque to the Bissell Centre and mail it to them at 10527 96 st Edmonton, AB T5H 2H6.

SPIRITED ART STUDIO MATERIALS NEEDED

The art studio is looking to do some unique projects in the coming weeks and are looking for some donations (or loans) of specific items. Leave them in the office labeled art studio. *If you would like something returned please mark it with your name.

- embroidery thread (Dec 8) - hammers - *loan only (Dec 8)
- felt and fabric scraps (Dec 15)

WILD CHURCH

Honouring the Sun, Welcoming the Dark - Join Wild Church on **December 21** at 4pm (Emily Murphy Park Picnic Site 3 - near the east end of the parking lot) for an unstructured winter solstice worship. You are invited (if you wish) to bring a snack or a solstice-related poem, reading, prayer or song to share. Bring an empty mug for a fireside drink! All are welcome, including pets. Cancelled below —15°C. wildchurchyeg.org

UNITED CHURCH CALENDARS

R-W has ordered 2025 United Church Calendars. The calendar features United Church photos from all across Canada. They are available for sale for \$10 and will be for sale during fellowship after worship starting **Dec 1**.

ROBERTSON WESLEY MEN'S GROUP

The Robertson Wesley Men's Group is having it's annual 'December Brunch' at Alberts Family Restaurant on 124th Street and 106 Avenue; at 10:00 am until noon on Thursday, **Dec 12th**. All R-W Men and Ladies are welcome to attend, meals paid for by the individuals attending. Any questions may be directed to Mr. Jim Triscott at 780-991-8837.

A SERVICE OF LESSONS & CAROLS

December 15 at 4:00 pm. This gentle candlelight service is a classic, with a series of scripture readings that take us through the story of God's promise, Israel's longing and waiting, and the fulfilment of the promise in the birth of Christ. Listen to beautiful Christmas music presented by Robertson-Wesley's music groups and guest instrumentalists, and sing some of your favourite Christmas carols.

Worship Notes

The season of Advent marks the beginning of the Christian Liturgical Year. This is a time of preparation, waiting, expectation and longing as we await the coming of Christ in the form of a baby. In this season the colour blue symbolizes new life and new beginnings. You will notice that the paraments (the cloth on the pulpit and the communion table are blue). You will also notice that there are 3 blue candles, a pink candle and a white candle in the Advent Wreath. Each Sunday we light a candle to help us mark the next step on the journey to Bethlehem. Each candle represents a different theme: hope, peace, joy and love. The white candle is lit at Christmas in honour of Jesus, (the pink candle is joy).

Cover Image

Cover image on www.pixabay.com by Lorraine Cormier. Words Voices United 684 "Make Me a Channel of Your Peace."

Lead Minister of Congregation & Community Development: Rev. Karen Bridges
Faith Development & Intergenerational Ministries Coordinator: Kevin Guenther Trautwein
Social Justice & Outreach Ministries Coordinator: Peter Graham
Music Director: Dr. Allan Bevan
Office Administrator: Elyse Munro
Facilities Manager: Brad Campbell



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Endnotes

1. Written by Sue Webb, **Gathering**, A/C/E 2024/25, p. 33. Used with permission.
2. **Celebrate God's Presence**, 1V001.
3. Written by Gord Dunbar, **Gathering**, A/C/E 2024/25, p. 33. Used with permission.
4. Written by Robin Wardlaws, **Gathering**, A/C/E 2024/25, p. 34. Used with permission.