



Robertson - Wesley
UNITED CHURCH *Spirited*

An Affirming Congregation of The United Church of Canada

2024 December 8

White Gift Sunday

Advent 2



Welcome and Inclusion

We open our hearts and our church family to all people in our community regardless of differing abilities, ethnicity, economic circumstances, sexual orientation, age, or gender identity. 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 hymn books 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: *Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme*, BWV 645 by J. S. Bach

Dr. Allan Bevan, organ

Embracing Our Spirit

Call to Worship:

On Peace Sunday we consider the coming of the Prince of Peace, a role model of abundant living within a hostile world. Jesus and his messenger, John, show us how to share our gifts with others so none may be left behind. With faith and trust that there is enough and we are enough; fears of scarcity, fears of missing out, fears of the other, each fall away; to be replaced with contentment, simplicity, and peace.

Everywhere we look we find messages telling us to fear,
may we be messengers of peace.

Where the world is full of individualism and competition,
may we be members of community and care.

In a society preaching scarcity, hostility and greed,

may we be examples of abundance, contentedness, and generosity.

Advent is a time of waiting, of observing, of checking in. When we slow down and take stock,

may we find that together, we have enough, are enough, and in sharing our gifts the world provides enough for all.

Candlelighting:

Hymn: *Hope Shines as the Solitary Star*

More Voices 220

Peace shines as the solitary star,

Faith is the inner light.

You and I together mirror the Light of Lights,

And illumine the pathway home.

Coming into God's Presence

Hymn: *Put Peace into Each Other's Hands*

More Voices 173

Put peace into each other's hands

and like a treasure hold it,

protect it like a candle flame,

with tenderness enfold it.

Put peace into each other's hands

with loving expectation;

be gentle in your words and ways,

in touch with God's creation.

**Put peace into each other's hands
like bread we break for sharing;
look people warmly in the eye:
our life is meant for caring.**

**Give thanks for strong yet tender hands,
held out in trust and blessing.
Where words fall short, let hands speak out,
the heights of love expressing.**

**Reach out in friendship,
stay with faith in touch with those around you.
Put peace into each other's hands;
the Peace that sought and found you.**

Prayer of Confession:

God we confess the task of separating Christ's Christmas and the Consumerist's Christmas is one we are constantly challenged by. We need help to remember the gifts we already possess as well as those that may be shared with others. In this way, may we model peace to a scarcity-oriented society through your example of abundant life.

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.**¹

Scripture:

Tony Jansen

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

See, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to the temple. The messenger of the covenant in whom you delight - indeed, is coming, and who can stand when the messenger appears? For the messenger is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap; the messenger will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and the messenger will purify the descendants of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, until they present offerings to the Lord in righteousness. Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the Lord as in the days of old and as in former years.

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

John said to the crowds that came out to be baptized by him, "You brood of vipers! Who warns you to flee from the wrath to come? Bear fruits worthy of repentance. Do not begin to say to yourselves, "We have Abraham as our ancestor"; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and

thrown into the fire.” And the crowds asked John, “What then should we do?” In reply John said to them, “Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none; and whoever has food must do likewise.” Even tax collectors came to be baptized and they asked him, “And we, what should we do?” John said to them, “Do not extort money from anyone by threats or false accusation, and be satisfied with your wages.” As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, John answered all of them by saying, “I baptize you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.” So, with many other exhortations, he proclaimed the good news to the people.

Hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church,
Thanks be to God.

Anthem: *People Look East*, Trad. French Carol arr. by Malcolm Archer

Choir of R-W

Sermon: *Living abundantly in a scarcity-oriented society.*

Peter Graham

Hymn: *Come and Find the Quiet Centre*

Voices United 374

**Come and find the quiet center
in the crowded life we lead,
find the room for hope to enter,
find the frame where we are freed:
clear the chaos and the clutter,
clear our eyes, that we can see
all the things that really matter,
be at peace, and simply be.**

**Silence is a friend who claims us,
cools the heat and slows the pace,
God it is who speaks and names us,
knows our being, face to face,,
making space within our thinking,
lifting shades to show the sun,
raising courage when we're shrinking,
finding scope for faith begun.**

**In the Spirit let us travel,
open to each other's pain,
let our loves and fears unravel,
celebrate the space we gain:
there's a place for deepest dreaming,
there's a time for heart to care,
in the Spirit's lively scheming
there is always room to spare!**

Grateful Response

Pastoral Prayers

Rev. Karen Bridges

Response: God of Peace, **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:

On White Gift Sunday we remember all that has been offered to us is meant to be shared. God, may we be trees that bear good fruit, recognizing what food, coats or other blessings we can share with those in need. May we find satisfaction in our work, in our families and communities - not seeking more power, more product, more perfection - but finding prosperity only truly comes from peace. You cleanse us with fire, baptise us in the spirit, and help us to live justly and simply. Receive these gifts of life in the Spirit, and continue the work of peace in the world. Amen.

Hymn: *When Pain of the World*

Voices United 598

**When pain of the world surrounds us with darkness and despair,
when searching just confounds us with false hopes everywhere,
when lives are starved for meaning and destiny is bare,
we are called to follow Jesus and let God's healing flow through us.**

**We see with fear and trembling our aching world in need,
confessing to each other our wastefulness and greed.
May we with steadfast caring the hungry children feed.
We are called to follow Jesus and let God's justice flow through us.**

**The church is a holy vessel the living waters fill
to nourish all its people, God's purpose to fulfill.
May we with humble courage be open to God's will.
We are called to follow Jesus and let God's spirit flow through us.**

**We praise you for our journey and your abundant grace,
your saving word that guided a struggling human race.
O God, with all creation, your future we embrace.
We are called to follow Jesus and let God's changes flow through us.**

Commissioning:

So go into this hostile and fear-ridden world. Go out with Creator's blessing, go out with attitudes of abundance and spread the word of peace, the life of simplicity and generosity.

In this season of Advent, may we remember we have enough and are enough, and together the world provides enough for all.

Postlude: *Variations on Puer Nobis Nascitur (Unto Us a Boy Is Born)*, arr. by

David N. Johnson

Dr. Allan Bevan, organ

Question for reflection:

What message of enough does God want you to model in the world?
Where do you find fear impeding peace?
How will you share your abundant gifts with others?

R-W Report

Next Sunday, Dec 15, 2024

Advent 3/ Whole Family Worship & Life Passages

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: Isaiah 12:2-6 • Proclaim God's deeds to the nations.

Philippians 4:4-7 • Rejoice in the Lord always.

Luke 3:3-6 • A voice calling in the desert.

Sermon: The Gift of Joy

Paul writes to the Philippians imploring them to rejoice in the Lord always! Sometimes we equate happiness with joy, but joy is different. Joy fills us with delight and hope, it reminds us to enjoy the simple pleasures of life. Joy can carry us through our anguish and the often painful times that exist. Where will we find this inner joy in a world that seems deeply seeded in anguish? How will our joy be heard in the midst of the negative messages in our day to day living? How will we prepare for the arrival of the Emmanuel?

Music: Dr. Allan Bevan, organist; Cantilon Children's Choir

WEEK AT A GLANCE

| | | | |
|-------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|----------|
| 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 & Bake Sale | Memorial Hall | 11:30 am |
| | Instrumental Ensem. | Sanctuary | 11:30 am |
| Mon Dec 9 | Spirited Art Studio | Art Studio | 1:30 pm |
| Tues Dec 10 | Scripture Reflections | Club Room & Zoom | 12:00 pm |
| | UCW Meeting | Memorial Hall | 1:30 pm |
| Wed Dec 11 | Spirited Art Studio | Art Studio | 1:30 pm |
| | Counselling | Club Room | 12:00 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 |

ON THE HORIZON

| | | | |
|------------|-----------------------------|--------------------|----------|
| Sun Dec 15 | Sunday Worship | Sanctuary & Online | 10:30 am |
| | Fellowship | Memorial Hall | 11:30 am |
| | Lessons & Carols | Sanctuary | 4:00 pm |
| Mon Dec 16 | Spirited Art Studio | Art Studio | 1:30 pm |

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|-------------|------------------------------|--------------------------|----------|
| Tues Dec 17 | Scripture Reflections | Club Room & Zoom | 12:00 pm |
| | R-W Board Meeting | Room 11 | 7:00 pm |
| Wed Dec 18 | Spirited Art Studio | Art Studio | 1:30 pm |
| | Counselling | Club Room | 12:00 pm |
| | Gratitude Meeting | Club Room | 5:30 pm |
| | R-W Choir | Lower Hall and Sanctuary | 7:30 pm |
| Thur Dec 19 | R-W Ringers | Lower Hall and Sanctuary | 7:00 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.

CHRISTMAS EVE USHERS

If you are interested in greeting people, handing out bulletins, and other duties on Christmas Eve, please sign-up indicating at which service you would like to usher, 4pm, 7pm or 10 pm. Don't worry if you have never done this before you will be working with others who can mentor you in this role.

R-W News & Notes

THANK YOU

The sales held on the past two Sundays during Fellowship resulted in \$604.60 being raised for M&S. Thanks to all for your generosity and support.

UCW

Robertson-Wesley UCW and Friends will be meeting on Tuesday, **December 10** at 1:30 pm. in Memorial Hall. The theme? Christmas! Bring Christmas baking to share if you have some, and also short stories or poems about Christmas. We'll sing some carols too.

CHRISTMAS ORANGES

This is a call for Christmas Oranges for Christmas Community Dinner guests. Boxes of oranges can be dropped off at the church by Friday, **December 13**. Thanks for your generosity.

BAKE SALE

There will be a Bake Sale **today**, after church in Memorial Hall. All proceeds will go to the Anniversary Legacy Fund.

WILD CHURCH

Honouring the Sun, Welcoming the Dark - Join Wild Church on **December 21** at 4:00 pm (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! We encourage people to come at 3:30 pm to catch more of the sunset, mingle, and have refreshments prior to the service start at 4:00 pm. 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.

KOINONIA

On Friday, **December 13**, Koinonia will be gathering for our Advent/Christmas Dinner, starting with appetizers at 5:00 p.m. in Memorial Hall. Come join us for food and a celebration of the festive season. If you have not signed up to bring something, please talk to Joan P. after church or email koinonia@rwuc.org

ROBERTSON-WESLEY MEN'S GROUP

The Robertson-Wesley Men's Group is having its 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.

YEG FAMILY COUNSELLING SERVICES

We are pleased to be working with YEG Family Counselling services to provide mental health support to community members. We have a student therapist providing free to low cost therapy by appointment. **Wednesdays** 12:00-4:00 pm. To register email Ofure ofure@yegfamilycounselling.com.

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 R-W's music groups and guest instrumentalists, and sing some of your favourite Christmas carols.

ART STUDIO UPDATE

As we close our year in the coming weeks please note a shift in our project schedule. Due to Monday the 25 being cancelled, we are adjusting for a second week of celtic knots and painting this week to be supplemented by the string and nails project.

Here are the next few classes:

Dec 9 & 11 (&14) - pointillism

Dec 16 & 18 - felting scenes

Dec 23, 25, 30 & Jan 1 - holidays, studio closed. Stay tuned for New Year updates. Thanks to everyone who has attended or supported this fall, it has been loads of fun. If you or anyone you know wants to be updated directly, send an email to spiritedartstudio@rwuc.org to join our email Monday or Wednesday lists. - Peter Graham

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)

BLUE CHRISTMAS SERVICE OF HEALING

December 22 at 7:00 pm. Christmas is a holy time that is not always happy. It brings up so many memories that heighten our feelings of grief or sadness, pain or loneliness. This is a service of quiet reflection, remembrance and peace. We hope that this service will bring a sense of peace in this sacred season with quiet music, scripture, silence and candle light.

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES

This year there will be four services on Christmas Eve, Sunday, December 24. All services will be in person and livestreamed online.

4:00 pm Family Celebration: An interactive celebration

7:00 pm Christmas with a Twist: A candlelit experience

10:00 pm Choral Candlelight: The birth of Jesus with songs of joy for the Holy night with the Robertson-Wesley Choir.

In the Community

NO ROOM IN THE INN: YESS

2024's No Room In the Inn Campaign is supporting Youth Empowerment & Support Services (YESS) to replace the roof on their Whyte Ave. facility in Edmonton. YESS's Whyte Avenue Facility houses their Youth Support Centre (YSC). The YSC is an evolution in youth care and crisis management. Materials for this campaign can be found at these links: [2024 No Room In the Inn brochure](#) / [YESS information](#) / [2024 Campaign Invitation](#).

CANTILON CEREMONY OF CAROLS

December 8 2024 - 2:30 pm to 5:00 pm. Cantilon Choirs brings their special brand of seasonal magic to the Winspear! Featuring all six of the choirs, with singers ranging in age from four to adult, this concert will have something for everyone to love. Experience the power and connection of the massed, multi-generational choirs unified in song, as well as the intimacy of a candlelight procession. Highlights include special guest, Catherine Daniel, a brass quintet, and Benjamin Britten's masterpiece, A Ceremony of 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 by Joe Plenio from Pixabay

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. **Celebrate God's Presence**, 1V001.