



An Affirming Congregation of The United Church of Canada

2024 December 15

Life Passages

Advent 3



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: *He Whom Shepherds Came Praising*, Trad. arr. by Paul Manz

Dr. Allan Bevan, organ

Embracing Our Spirit

Introit: *Niño Lindo*, arr. Ruth Boshkoff

Cantilon Children's choir

Call to Worship:

God of hope, we come to worship you this day with great joy!

When our hearts are open,

Jesus enters bringing us joy!

When we trust in you O God,

Jesus enters bringing us joy!

When we answer the call to prepare the way for Jesus,

Jesus enters bringing us joy!

When we learn to appreciate the small things in life,

Jesus enters bringing us joy!

You offer us the gift of hope, peace, and joy in this season of Advent through the gift which is yet to come, Jesus our Emmanuel which means God is with us!

Thanks be to God!

Candlelighting:

Hymn: *Hope Shines as the Solitary Star*

More Voices 220

Joy shines as the solitary star,

Faith is the inner light.

You and I together mirror the Light of Lights,

And illumine the pathway home.

Breath Prayer

Scripture:

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

Lauren Wojick

John went into the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, as it is written in the book of the words of the prophet Isaiah, the voice of one crying out in the wilderness: "Prepare the way of the Lord, make the Lord's paths straight. Every valley shall be made low, and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways made smooth; and all flesh shall see the salvation of God."

Coming into God's Presence - Prepare the way of the Lord!

Prayer of Thankfulness

Madison and Claire Foff

**Make a joyful noise all the earth!
Worship your God with gladness.
Make a joyful noise all the earth.
Come to this place with a song!**

**Know that your God has made you.
Know it's to God we belong.
And come to this place with joyfulness and praise.
Worship your God with a song!**

**Make a joyful noise all the earth!
Worship your God with gladness.
Make a joyful noise all the earth.
Come to this place with a song!**

**Enter these gates, thanksgiving.
Enter these courts with praise.
Sing thanks to your God and bless the holy Name.
Worship your God with a song!**

**Make a joyful noise all the earth!
Worship your God with gladness.
Make a joyful noise all the earth.
Come to this place with a song!**

**Ages through endless ages,
seasons of endless years,
the love of our Maker ever shall endure.
worship your God with a song!**

**Make a joyful noise all the earth!
Worship your God with gladness.
Make a joyful noise all the earth.
Come to this place with a song!**

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:

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

Surely God is my salvation; I will trust, and will not be afraid, for the Lord God is my strength and my might; the Lord has become my salvation. With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation. And you will say on that

Lauren Wojick

day: Give thanks to the Lord, call on the Lord's name; make known the Lord's deeds among the nations; proclaim that the Lord's name is exalted. Sing praises to the Lord, for the Lord has done gloriously; let this be known in all the earth. Shout aloud and sing for joy, O royal Zion, for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel.

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

Connor Foff

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church,

Thanks be to God.

Anthem: *Rejoice and Be Merry*, by John Butler

Cantillon Children's Choir

Exploration: *The Joy of Soulful Purpose*

Rev. Karen Bridges

Hymn: *'Tis the Gift to Be Simple*

Voices United 353

**'Tis the gift to be simple, 'tis the gift to be free,
'tis the gift to come down where you ought to be,
and when we find ourselves in the place just right,
'twill be in the valley of love and delight.**

**When true simplicity is gained,
to bow and to bend we shan't be ashamed;
to turn, turn will be our delight
'til by turning, turning, we come round right. (X2)**

Life Passages

Sacrament of Baptism:

Prayer for the Holy Spirit (*in unison*)

Eternal God, whose son the Servant-Lord Jesus Christ has commissioned us to make disciples of people of all nations baptizing them in your name. May your Spirit be upon us and what we do, that this water may be a sign for all of new life in Christ, in whose name we pray. Amen.

Congregation's Promise (*standing*)

We will continue to support you, walk with you, and grow with you. With God's help we will live out our baptism as a loving community in Jesus Christ: nurturing one another in faith, upholding one another in prayer, encouraging one another in God's work.

Please note that the last line of the creed (omitted in some of the hymn books) is:

**We are not alone.
We live in God's world.
We believe in God who has created and is creating,
Who has come in Jesus the word made flesh,
To reconcile and make new.
Who works in us and others by the Spirit.
We trust in God.
We are called to be the church;
To celebrate God's presence
To live with respect in creation
To love and serve others
To seek justice and resist evil
To proclaim Jesus crucified and risen
Our judge and our hope.
In life, in death, in life beyond death
God is with us,
We are not alone.
Thanks be to God.**

Blessing: *(sung)*

Voices United 454

**May God who creates you give you light;
May God who sustains you make you wise;
May God who protects you give you joy;
May God who surrounds you give you peace.**

Grateful Response

Pastoral Prayers

Rev. Karen Bridges

Response: God of Joy, **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:

So often, when we present our offerings to you, O God, we do so out of a sense of duty and of responsibility.

On this Sunday of joy, however, we want to celebrate how you bless us each day.

By sharing our abundance - no matter how insignificant it may seem to us - our spirits dance in celebration of how your purpose, through what we give, changes lives.

Bless us by changing our lives too, in Jesus' name. Amen.

Hymn: *Joy Is Now in Every Place*

Voices United 45

**Joy is now in every place,
Christmas lightens every face;
now be with us, in your grace,
O hear us, bless us, holy Jesus.**

**May the star that shone that night,
making your poor stable bright,
fill our hearts with love and light,
O hear us, bless us, holy Jesus.**

**Through the New Year let it stay,
leading us upon your way,
making Christmas everyday,
O hear us, bless us, holy Jesus.**

**Now and ever may we find
your good news to fill our mind:
peace and love to humankind,
O hear us, bless us, holy Jesus.**

Commissioning:

And now may the brightness of joy, peace, faith, and love be our gifts as we leave this time and place of worship.

May we go out strengthened because we have been together in this place and touched by God's Spirit. May we continue to be light to the world, that everyone might see the kindness of God.²

Postlude: *Fugue on "Von Himmel Hoch, da komm ich her"*, by J. S. Bach

Dr. Allan Bevan, organ

Question for reflection:

Where will we find inner joy in a world that seems deeply seeded in anguish?

How will our joy be heard in the midst of the negativity of the world?

How will we prepare for the arrival of the Emmanuel?

R-W Report

Next Sunday, Dec 22, 2024

Advent 4 & Communion

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: Micah 5:2-5a • Out of Bethlehem in Judea will come a leader.

Luke 1: 39-45 • Mary visits Elizabeth

Sermon: The Love of God Found in Companionship

One of the greatest gifts is the gift of life. As Mary and Elizabeth prepare for the pain that comes with birthing, we are witnesses to the love expressed in this. We explore what this birth will mean to the world. It was important to Mary to not be isolated in this journey of motherhood, so she reached out in love to her cousin Elizabeth. Each person has their own way of expressing love for others, and it doesn't always fit with our own love language, which can lead to people feeling that they are not loved. How does this story and the pending birth of the chosen one help us receive the love that is given by those around us? How do we help draw people out of their isolation and into community? How will the love of God be shared in what we say and do?

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

WEEK AT A GLANCE

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	7:00 pm
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
	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
Sat Dec 21	Wild Church	Emily Murphy Park	3:30 pm

ON THE HORIZON

Sun Dec 22	Sunday Worship	Sanctuary & Online	10:30 am
	Fellowship	Memorial Hall	11:30 am
	Blue Christmas	Sanctuary	7:00 pm
Tues Dec 24	Christmas Family Style	Sanctuary	4:00 pm
	Christmas with a twist	Sanctuary	7:00 pm
	Choral Candlelight	Sanctuary	10:00 pm
Dec 25-27	Church Closed for Christmas		

Volunteer Opportunities

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. 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

A big thanks goes out to Koinonia for boxing up all the White Gifts last Sunday and to Charles Sabu who delivered them to the Bissell Centre. The generosity of this community of faith knows no bounds!

Last Sunday the bake sale raised an amazing \$671.45 for the R-W Anniversary Legacy Fund. Thanks to all for your generosity and support.

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! 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. wildchurhyeg.org

A SERVICE OF LESSONS & CAROLS

Today 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.

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.

JUSTICE NEWS AND UPDATES

Do you want to hear about affirming, indigenous, eco/climate, racial or other justice related events and conversations - at R-W and beyond? As the new Social Justice and Outreach Ministries coordinator, Peter is looking to compile emails of interested folks for a variety of different topics. Send them an email (p.graham@rwuc.org) to indicate what areas you are keen on and let's start this transformative work together! Also, stay tuned in the new year for more details and information on the announcement boards in Memorial Hall.

SPIRITED ART STUDIO MATERIALS NEEDED

The art studio is looking to do some unique projects in the coming weeks and are seeking donations of specific items. Leave them in the office labeled art studio. *If you would like something returned please mark it with your name.
- felt sheets and scraps (Dec 15)

**NOTE, the Spirited Art Studio will be on holiday break Dec 23, 25, 30 and January 1. If you want to receive updates, email spiritedartstudio@rwuc.org.

BETWEEN THE AISLES

Hot off the presses! Check out the Advent issue of Between the Aisles online at rwuc.org/between-the-aisles or pick up a copy in church!

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.

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).

Thank you to the Cantilon Children's Choir, Elaine Myhre, director and Julianna Tinga, accompanist for sharing their gift of music today.

Cover Image

Cover image by Rev. Karen Bridges in Dec 2023. Words from Philipians 4:4a.

Lead Minister of Congregation & Community Development: Rev. Karen Bridges
Faith Development & Intergenerational Ministries Coordinator: Kevin Guenther Trautwein
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Endnotes

1. Written by Gord Dunbar, Gathering, A/C/E 2024/25, p. 33. Used with permission.
2. Written by Bob Root, Gathering, A/C/E 2018/10, p. 36. Used with permission.

10209 123 st



Robertson - Wesley Christmas Eve

4 pm **Family Celebration**
An interactive celebration

7 pm **Christmas with a Twist**
A creative candlelit experience

10 pm **Choral Candlelight**
*The birth of Jesus with songs
of joy for the Holy night*

*In person and live-streamed on
youtube.com/RWUnitedChurch/live*

