



*An Affirming Congregation of the United Church of Canada*

2016 Dec 11

White Gift Sunday

Advent 3

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



*Courage  
to  
Stand together*

Prelude: *Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus (Stuttgart)*, Flor Peeters

Embracing Our Spirit

Opening Prayer

Holy Presence, you have led us to this moment in time, reassuring us when we face uncertainty, prodding us into action when we become hesitant and fearful, and comforting us when we are in the midst of surprising changes, both great and small. Be with us as we continue our journey through Advent.

**May we be aware of the ways in which faith is a constant journey, a pathway on which we seek new meaning and new opportunities to experience God. We are a pilgrim people; we set out on journeys that lead to new insights and reveal new experiences, knowing that God will be with us wherever we go. Let us not be discouraged. Let us be open to the light. Let us give thanks to God, now and always.<sup>1</sup>**

Opening Hymn: *Hope Is a Star*

*Voices United 7*

Coming Into God's Presence

Rev. Karen Bridges

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God's Holy Word

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Introit: *Winds Through the Olive Trees*, Gascon carol, arr. Michael Neaum

Cantilon Childrens Choir

Scripture

Donna Krucik

Esther 4: 1-17 • Esther agrees to help the Jewish people

When Mordecai learned all that had been done, Mordecai tore his clothes and put on sackcloth and ashes, and went through the city wailing with a loud and bitter cry; he went up to the entrance of the king's gate, for no one might enter the king's gate clothed with sackcloth. In every province, wherever the king's command and his decree came, there was great mourning among the Jews, with fasting and weeping and lamenting, and most of them lay in sackcloth and ashes. When Esther's maids and her eunuchs came and told her, the queen was deeply distressed; she sent garments to clothe Mordecai, so that he might take off his sackcloth; but he would not accept them. Then Esther called for Hathach, one of the king's eunuchs, who had been appointed to attend her, and ordered him to go to Mordecai to learn what was happening, and why. Hathach went out to Mordecai in the open square of the city in front of the king's gate, and Mordecai told him all that had happened to him, and the exact sum of money that Haman had promised to pay into the king's treasuries for the destruction of the Jews. Mordecai also gave him a copy of the written decree issued in Susa for their destruction, that he might show it to Esther, explain it to her, and charge her to go to the king to make supplication to him and entreat him for her people. Hathach went and told Esther what Mordecai had said. Then Esther spoke to Hathach and gave him a message for Mordecai, saying, "All the king's servants and the people of the king's provinces know that if any man or woman goes to the king inside the inner court without being called, there is but one law – all alike are to be put to death.

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<sup>1</sup> Written by Bill Steadman, **Gathering**, Advent/Christmas/Epiphany 2016-2017, page 30. Adapted and used with permission.

Only if the king holds out the golden scepter to someone, may that person live. I myself have not been called to come into the king for thirty days.” When they told Mordecai what Esther had said, Mordecai told them to reply to Esther, “Do not think that in the king’s palace you will escape any more than all the other Jews. For if you keep silence at such a time as this, relief and deliverance will rise for the Jews from another quarter, but you and your father’s family will perish. Who knows? Perhaps you have come to royal dignity for just such a time as this.” Then Esther said in reply to Mordecai, “Go, gather all the Jews to be found in Susa, and hold a fast on my behalf, and neither eat nor drink for three days, night or day. I and my maids will also fast as you do. After that I will go to the king, though it is against the law; and if I perish, I perish.” Mordecai then went away and did everything as Esther had ordered him.<sup>2</sup>

This is the witness of Israel.

**Thanks be to God our loving Creator.**

Anthem: *Away in A Manger*, arr. Mark Hayes

Cantillon Childrens Choir


Sermon: *Stand together...no matter the cost*

Rev. Karen Bridges

Sermon Response:

*Silence*

*Sung response: Send out your light*



Send out your light, Lord, send your truth to be my guide.



Then let them lead me to the place where you re-side.

*Lighting of the Advent Candle*

Hymn: *My Soul Cries Out*

**More Voices 120**

Pastoral Prayers

The Lord’s Prayer

(*Voices United* p. 921)

### Grateful Response

Offering: *Come Thou Bright and Morning Star*, Flor Peeters

***White Gifts may be brought forward as the offering is being gathered***

*The work of the church relies on the generosity of your donations to maintain the beauty of this building and the ministry that it provides along with outreach programs such as the community dinner and the Food Bank depot. Donations of over \$10, placed in the envelopes found in the pews, will receive a tax receipt. Thank you for your support.*

<sup>2</sup> *The New Oxford Annotated Bible: New Revised Standard Version.* (1991, Oxford University Press)

Offertory Hymn

(*More Voices* 20 v 4)

**Word true and faithful, hope bringing Spirit,  
God of enfolding love: come in your fullness and grace;  
work through our lives for your praise.**

Prayer of Gratitude

Closing Hymn: *Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus*

***Voices United 2***

Commissioning

Postlude: *Rejoice and Be Merry*, John Butler  
Choir

Cantilon Childrens

*Following worship, all are invited to the Memorial Hall  
for fellowship, and refreshments.*

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### Music Notes

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Thanks and welcome to the choristers of the Cantilon Childrens Choir, their conductor Josephine Huedepohl and accompanist Shannon Hiebert. They are sharing some beautiful arrangements of carols this morning. The Away in a Manger arrangement has three different tunes commonly sung to that text! Continuing on the theme of “stars” for Advent, a setting for organ by the Belgian organist/composer Flor Peeters (1903-1986). He was a great teacher and wrote many pieces to aid in organ pedagogy.

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### Cover Image

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Cover image: This picture was taken by Albert deVos of an original painting done by Laura Foster with a Candle added for effect Nov 2016.

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### Worship Thanks

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Scripture Reader: Donna Krucik

Thank you to the members of Koinonia for delivering the gifts to the Bissell Centre.

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Minister of Spiritual and Pastoral Care Development: Vacant  
Minister of Congregation and Community Development: Rev. Karen Bridges  
Director of Music: Tammy-Jo Mortensen  
Office Administrator: Tanya Eckenswiller  
Facilities Manager: Brad Campbell

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**R-W REPORT DECEMBER 11, 2016**  
**Robertson-Wesley United Church**

**A WARM WELCOME TO EVERYONE**

Washrooms are located by the elevator.

Baby changing facilities are available in washrooms.

If you wish to use it, a children's activity centre is set up in the Chapel with nursing space in adjacent room (Millson Room).

Activity kits for children are available from the ushers.

Large print bulletins, large print hymnbooks,  
and hearing devices are available from the ushers.

Please do not leave valuables unattended anywhere in the church.

**Next Week**

**December 18, 2016, 10:30 am**

**Advent 4**

**Life Passages**

**Children & Youth:** Children start in the sanctuary, then go to Kids' Church; Youth meet in the youth room.

**Scripture:**

- Matthew 1: 18-25 Joseph's Dream

**Sermon:** *Dare to Dream...and trust in God.*

It is no secret that "God's work often upsets comfortable social expectations and conventions." (Aaron Klink) Dreams can come true, but they are not free. In Joseph's case, his dream is one given to him by God and it requires great strength and courage as he lives out a promise given to him by God in the face of cultural scorn and derision. Love compels us, love empowers us, love never ends.

**Music:** Choir of Robertson-Wesley; Tammy-Jo Mortensen, organ

**After worship:** All are invited to gather in the Memorial Hall for fellowship and refreshments.

**Volunteer Opportunities:**

**Thank you-** Deep appreciation to all those who loaned "singing bowls" for the anthem last Sunday, which will be repeated at Lessons and Carols and Christmas Eve. Thanks to Laura Foster, Rev. Jim Allan, Rev. Lynn Maki, Melisa Guilbeault, Sarah Wiens, and Caroline De Grave.

**White Gift Sunday- Today** these gifts will be delivered to the Bissell Centre. Thank you for your gifts and to the volunteer drivers.

## R-W News & Notes.

### **LESSONS AND CAROLS**

The service of Lessons and Carols takes place at Robertson-Wesley United Church **today at 4:00 p.m.** This is an afternoon of traditional congregational carols, scripture readings and music sung by the Choir of Robertson-Wesley, directed by Tammy-Jo Mortensen and accompanied by Belinda Chiang. The gentle beauty of the dissipating winter light combined with the music, candles and the Christmas story creates a magical afternoon. Please come and invite your friends and neighbours! This has become a favourite tradition for many. Freewill offering.

### **COUNT UP TO CHRISTMAS**

#### **The Robertson-Wesley United Church Advent Calendar**

The community is invited to post or send us their best selfies in front of our manger on our Facebook page or via twitter. There will be a sign hung from our manger starting on Dec 1 till Dec 25. We challenge groups and individuals to create their best manger scene at the stable in front of the church. The added challenge is that we want the number of characters and participants to match the number of the day. So on Dec 10th we want a photo with 10 people, on Dec 3, 3 people etc. We want at least 3 pictures each day! Please send your photos to mail@rwuc.org. Let's have some fun. Be creative and show us what you've got!!

### **GOD ON TAP**

Young adults ages 18-45ish are invited to join Herman and Karen for some spiritual discussion over pints or beverages. We will meet at the Bru Coffee and Beer House (11965 Jasper Ave - Pearl Tower.) **Monday, December 12 from 7 pm - 9 pm.** Your friends are welcome to come.

### **UNITED CHURCH WOMEN**

#### **Tuesday, December 13 beginning at 1:30 pm**

Tony Jansen will present his Africa: Flora and Fauna presentation. **All are welcome.** M&S donations happily accepted. Refreshments served. Contact Janet M Clark if you have any questions 780-483-4261.

### **ADVENT RECITAL SERIES**

Robertson-Wesley is hosting a noon-hour concert series again this Advent, for the four Thursdays in **December.** The concerts will run from 12:10-12:50, and admission is by freewill offering with donations for the performers and for the Robertson-Wesley Music Society.  
Dec. 15 – Warren Mack, organ  
Dec. 22 – Sandy Adams, harpsichord and Tammy-Jo Mortensen, organ

### **LIVE NATIVITY SCENE & BBQ AT ROBERTSON-WESLEY**

#### **Saturday, December 17, from 4-5:30 pm**

Robertson-Wesley invites the whole community to our Live Nativity Scene this Christmas. Young and old alike, as well as your pets, will

have an opportunity to interact with the nativity characters and even become some of the characters, if desired. We will supply costumes (bring along your cameras for photos), and everyone can sing along with carolers. This year we will be having an outside BBQ, so come have some hot food, cozy up to the fire, and meet your neighbours, while listening to stories and roasting marshmallows.

This all-age event is on the front lawn of the church. Stop by with your family, friends, and neighbours for an evening of festivities, treats, and hot chocolate!

There is no admission charge, but the church will be accepting donations of mittens, gloves, socks, toiletries, or non-perishable food for the Bissell Centre.

### **CHOIR CABARET WINE & CHEESE NIGHT**

We're switching it up this year for a similar but slightly different event! We promise the same kind of entertaining evening though! Come join us for some "jazz licks and hot picks" wine & cheese night on Saturday, Feb. 4, where Memorial Hall will be turned into a "Piano/Wine Bar". Tickets on sale today and next week after the service.

### **CHORAL MORPHOSIS**

Choral Morphosis and Choral Arts – music programs for those with disabilities - is supported by the R-W Music Society and R-W. They are having their annual Christmas concert Sat. Dec. 17 at 10:30 am at St. Timothy's Anglican Church (8420 145 St). Come sing some carols and enjoy the performance of "The Polar Express". Donations accepted.

### **STEWARDSHIP SPEAKER BREAKFAST**

With Award Winning Playwright VERN THIESSEN

Vern Thiessen is one of Canada's most produced playwrights. SHAKESPEARE'S WILL, APPLE, EINSTEIN'S GIFT, VIMY, and BIRD BRAIN all premiered in Edmonton, and have gone on to hundreds of productions in Canada, the US, the UK, Europe, China, Australia and New Zealand.

Vern is the winner of the Dora, Sterling, and Carol Bolt awards for Outstanding New Play. He is also the recipient of the City of Edmonton Arts Achievement Award, the University of Alberta Alumni Award, and the Governor General's Award for Drama, Canada's highest honour for playwriting. He was recently nominated for a City of Edmonton Award for Outstanding Artistic Leadership

After seven years living and working in New York City, Vern returned to Edmonton in 2014 to become Artistic Director of Workshop West Playwrights' Theatre. Tickets are \$20 and can be purchased today after worship in Memorial Hall. and through the church office during regular office hours. Contact the office for more information.



## **GROCERY CARDS- Makes a great Christmas Gift!**

Everyone buys groceries! Pay for your groceries with grocery cards purchased through Robertson-Wesley United Church and the church will receive between 4% - 8% of the proceeds. Gift cards are available in various denominations and are for sale after worship in Memorial Hall.

### **ANNUAL REPORT**

The deadline for reports from the committees of the church is **Sunday, Jan 8, 2017**. Send your information to [mail@rwuc.org](mailto:mail@rwuc.org) with "2016 Annual Report Submission" in the subject line.

### **FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**

Statements to Nov 30, 2016 are available in Memorial Hall for the people who have not provided email addresses to the church. If you do have an email address, please consider giving it to the office so we can send your statements electronically.

### **WEEK AT A GLANCE**

Sun Dec 11	Lessons & Carols– Memorial Hall	4:00 pm
	Soul OUTing– Memorial Hall/Chapel	7:00 pm
Mon Dec 12	Spirited Art Studio– Art Studio	7:00 pm
	God on Tap– offsite	7:00 pm
Tue Dec 13	Scripture Reflection Group– Club Room	12:10 pm
	United Church Women– Memorial Hall	1:30 pm
	Arts Collective with Chaka– Art Studio	6:00 pm
Wed Dec 14	R-W Men's Group– offsite	9:30 am
	Choir of R-W– Lower Hall	7:30 pm
Thu Dec 15	Advent Recital Series– Sanctuary	12:10 pm
	Nova Bells– Lower Hall	5:15 pm
Sat Dec 17	Choral Morphosis - offsite	10:30 am
	Live Nativity– West side entrance	4:00 pm

### **ON THE HORIZON**

Tue Dec 20	Scripture Reflection Group– Club Room	12:10 pm
	R-W Board Meeting– Room 11	7:00 pm
Thu Dec 22	Advent Recital Series– Sanctuary	12:10 pm
Thurs Dec 24	Christmas Eve Services– 4:00 pm, 8:00 pm & 11:00 pm	
Sun Dec 25	Christmas Day service– Chapel	10:30 am

### **HOLIDAY HOURS**

**The office is closed over the holidays from  
December 24, 2015 to January 2, 2017.**

**Regular hours resume on Tuesday, January 3, 2017.**