

The Christian Year

The regular worship experience is our Sunday to Sunday journey through the Christian year. We join the wider church in celebrating each year the life, death and resurrection of Jesus through seasons and rituals.

Advent and Christmas

We prepare for Christmas experiencing four Sundays of *Advent*, contemplating the world's longing for a Saviour. We celebrate the birth of Christ with the ancient story told for our time. *Christmas* services include an ancient choral liturgy called *Service of Lessons and Carol* (an afternoon celebration held in mid-December). On Christmas Eve, we have three services. A late afternoon service for families with small children is followed by an early evening candlelit contemporary service and the late night candlelit choral service.

Lent and Easter

The whole cycle of *Lent*, *Holy Week*, and *Easter* is a central element of the Christian year. We have a special service on Ash Wednesday to mark the beginning of this time. The next six Sundays comprise the season of *Lent*, a time to prepare for Holy Week. *Holy Week* begins with Palm Sunday and continues with services that include:

- an evening Maundy Thursday service
- a Good Friday morning service
- an Easter Vigil Saturday evening
- the Easter Sunrise early Sunday morning
- the Easter Sunday service at 10:30 am

We celebrate the *Easter season* during the eight weeks following Easter Sunday.

Participation

The worship services involve the whole congregation through the words spoken, sung and expressed in artistic ways. There are many places where children, youth and adults participate in worship. These include greeting, preparing the sanctuary, communion serving, scripture reading, assisting others in life passages or their offering, as well as dramatic presentations, spoken word, dance and other expressions of praise.

Leadership

On Sunday mornings, worship is led by the Ministers and the Director of Music. Preparations for each week include Scripture reflections, theme explorations and coordination by the Worship Committee, which welcomes feedback and suggestions at any time. Additional Worship Services involve participants in the planning and leadership of worship experiences.

Robertson-Wesley United Church

10209-123 Street
Edmonton AB T5N 1N3
Ph: 780-482-1587
Email: mail@rwuc.org
Website: www.rwuc.org

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2018 July



Worship



Welcome to Worship

Spirited. Prayerful. Beautiful. Insightful. Engaging. Playful. Sacred. Inclusive. These words capture the worship experience at Robertson-Wesley, where without exception, all are welcome to join in.

We understand the Christian church to be an all-inclusive fellowship, a place where we can come together across boundaries that separate us in the larger world. Our congregation continually works to expand and deepen our inclusivity which is expressed in our statement of welcome and inclusion.

“In response to God’s call, we, the congregation of Robertson-Wesley United Church declare our commitment to opening our hearts and our church family to all people in our community, regardless of sexual orientation, age, gender, differing abilities, ethnicity, or economic circumstance. We recognize that many people’s lives continue to be devastated by hatred, prejudice, and inequality, therefore, as a compassionate and caring spiritual community we will stand with those who are adversely affected by injustice, alienation and oppression.”



Sunday Morning

Our regular Sunday morning worship begins at 10:30, and last for approximately an hour, in our beautifully designed worship space, featuring the beauty of stained glass windows and hardwood.

The liturgy is designed to be participatory, relevant and Spirited. In the Reformed tradition, the readings and the sermon are central to our worship service and together we seek how best to respond to the Gospel. In the sermon, we reflect on the biblical and theological heritage of the Christian faith and broadly engage the issues at the heart of life and our world. Worship does not stop there. Worship engages body, spirit, heart and mind as we respond in ritual and prayer. Having brought the concerns of our lives and world to worship, we go forth invigorated and inspired to live the vision of Jesus in our daily lives.

The music we use in worship includes a diversity of instruments, voices and styles of music. We have many instruments such as our pipe organ and grand piano as well as handbells played by the *Robertson-Wesley Ringers* and *Nova Bells*. The congregations' voices are lifted and led by large and small choral groups such as the *Choir of Robertson-Wesley* and *Córtet*. In addition, we enjoy regular contributions from the *Cantilon* choirs, visiting choirs and other professional musicians. (For more, please see the pamphlet, *Music in Robertson-Wesley*.)

Sacraments

As a congregation of the United Church of Canada, we celebrate two sacraments – Communion and Baptism.

Communion

The Sacrament of Holy Communion is part of regular Sunday morning worship at least eight times a year. It is a ritual that involves eating a small piece of bread that has been dipped into grape juice, symbolic of wine (and more inclusive). Our communion is inclusive and wherever you are on your journey of faith, regardless of age or religious affiliation, you invited and welcomed to partake. Gluten free options are available.

Baptism

Baptisms also are part of the regular Sunday morning worship. We believe in it being a sacrament because of God's activity in the gathering of the whole congregation together. We express our support of one another and remind ourselves of our own faith commitments.

Baptism can occur at any age. For infants and children, it is offered when requested from families who consider Robertson-Wesley their faith community. Baptism for youth or adults is offered in conjunction with Confirmation, by which one becomes a full member of the church.

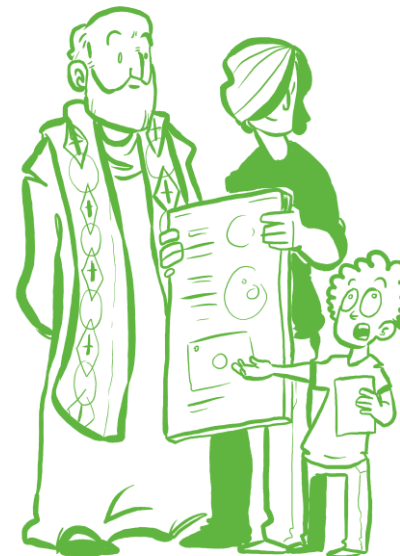
(For more, please see the pamphlet, *Baptism and Membership in Robertson-Wesley*.)

Children and Youth

Children and youth are involved in various ways in the worship life of the whole congregation as well as their own separate programs of worship and spiritual formation.

Some Sundays we begin worship together and then join in these separate programs. Other Sundays we have a *Whole Family Worship* experience in which all ages worship together. (For more information, see the pamphlet *Family Ministries at Robertson-Wesley*.)

Every Sunday we endeavour to make this place a comfortable and engaging place to be for your child. We have a diversity of spaces and resources so no matter how loud or quiet, wiggly or calm – we welcome all to be in our midst! Nursing can happen anywhere and we also provide a quiet private space for you, if you prefer.



Alternative Worship Experiences

In addition to our regular Sunday morning worship, there are opportunities for people to gather for worship that is less formal.

Koinonia

Meaning "fellowship" in Greek, KOINONIA is a monthly Worship and Fellowship service emphasizing informality, fellowship and lay leadership. Koinonia's nearly forty-year history means it is a rich experience for newcomers. For many participants, it has been instrumental in developing knowledge and confidence in expressing their faith. Teams of 3 to 5 lay leaders (with some help by the ministerial staff) plan and lead each service, which begins with a potluck. Twice a year they meet off-site for worship and fellowship.

Soul OUTing

A safe place where Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, 2+ (LGBTQ2+) persons and allies can explore the sacred and connect with one another, this informal service is part worship, part sharing circle. It is held in the chapel at 7:00 PM, on the second Sunday of each month.

Chapel Communion

This informal communion service includes shared reflections on the scripture readings of the day. It is the last Sunday of every month at 9:00 am in the chapel.