

A Robertson-Wesley United Church Quarterly

WINTER 2017

Between the Aisles

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, 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.

Hope

Peace

Joy

Love



© Jane Chesebrough

Photo by Jane Chesebrough

Welcome

Welcome to this edition of "Between the Aisles". Dazzling diamonds of white snow crystals are upon us. Bright sunshine and blue skies above us. The century-old caring community of Robertson-Wesley continues to grow and thrive. Inspiring, learning, creating, supporting, celebrating and worshipping. I am delighted and proud to call this church my spiritual home.

Friends, neighbours, church staff, musicians, parishioners, choristers, yogis, and ministers surround one another. Listening, helping, serving, challenging, laughing and crying together sometimes too. We give and receive in the struggles and joy, brokenness and beauty.

How I love the waiting sanctuary. With its strong scent of hymn books and aged oak. The colored glass windows and expansive architecture envelope me in peace and reverence.

Thank-you to each and every soul who contributes and participates in their own special way.

Hallelujah and Amen.

Maria Adria

Grocery Cards

Please consider purchasing grocery cards from Robertson-Wesley in Memorial Hall after Sunday Worship. Any grocery cards that Robertson-Wesley purchases from Superstore in November & December and Safeway/Sobeys from October to December are subject to an additional discount for the church. Specifically, the church gets 5 per cent from each Superstore grocery card you purchase and 8 per cent from each Safeway/Sobeys grocery card you purchase. Save On Foods provides a 6 percent discount all year long. Grocery cards are available in denominations of \$25, \$50, and \$100. Cash and cheques are accepted.



National Gathering of Elders

From September 11-14, 2017, I had the privilege to participate along with 5,000 others in the inaugural "National Gathering of Elders 2017, Coming Home, Voices of Elders". Edmonton, Treaty 6 Territory, which has been a gathering place for Indigenous Peoples since the late 1700's, was chosen as the meeting place for First Nations, Métis, and Inuit elders to share their wisdom and teachings and to be honoured for their legacy and resilience.

The public and visitors were encouraged to use this opportunity "to continue to work towards a greater understanding of the diverse First Nations, Métis, and Inuit histories, cultures, languages, traditions, and protocols from across Canada".

As a volunteer, I was entrusted to contribute to creating a space "where people could come together in the spirit of friendship and reconciliation. A place where laughter, the sharing of culture, traditions, history, and an opportunity for the creation of long lasting connections" was provided. (Quotes from Chief Rupert Meneen, Tallcree Tribal Government, Grand Chief, Treaty 8 First Nations, Alberta.)

Volunteers were invited to participate in a Blanket Exercise led by a Chief from the Blackfoot Nation of Treaty 7. Each Blanket Exercise is unique and this one was no exception! At the beginning, gifts of trade (tobacco pouches, horse sticks, baskets, and cloth) were exchanged at a mingling of the participants. When the trading or gifting ended, you were allowed to keep the item that had been gifted. I was the recipient of a horse stick representing a white stallion, according to the giver! Needless to say, this stick has become one of my treasures. The purpose of the Kairos Blanket Exercise, learning about the history up to the issues of today of Indigenous Peoples of Turtle Island, was fulfilled.

Highlights of the gathering from the Opening to Closing Ceremonies which featured a Parade of Nations, included: health and wellness sessions; Indigenous art exhibits (curated by Dawn Marie Marchand, Edmonton Indigenous Artist in Residence); a trade show; and discussion forums on climate change, missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls, revitalization of Indigenous language and culture, Indigenous cycle of life and reconciliation. As well, an intercultural showcase highlighting Indigenous entertainers, a talent show, cultural excursions and elder dance social were held.

This experience was life changing for me. To be invited into the Indigenous Peoples' presence and feel their respect, spirituality and knowledge is a real step towards my goal of listening and learning as a partner living in Treaty 6 and Métis Territory. As always, when volunteering, the volunteer is gifted with as much or more than they give.

More information about this gathering and interviews with the Elders is available at CBC Edmonton archives in the Indigenous section.

Dawn Allan

More news from the Mission & Outreach Pod on pages 10 and 12



Hello from the Choir

A few weeks ago, the choir had the pleasure of presenting J.S. Bach's Cantata No. 4, Christ lag in Todes Banden. We hope you enjoyed hearing this magnificent work as much as we enjoyed having the opportunity to learn it and sing it. If you have never been part of this choir, I thought you might be interested to know a little more about the choral experience at Robertson-Wesley. Of course, the choir is a group of people who love to sing the great music of the church and we feel especially fortunate to have in our midst many extraordinarily talented musicians and singers. Their presence enables us to do such widely varying things as our Cabaret last year, the Córtes, the trip to Carnegie Hall, the choral residency at Bath Abbey and Gloucester Cathedral, and the Canada 150th Anniversary tour.

Although we enjoy every minute of choir, it is a lot of work and nobody works harder than our intrepid leader, Tammy-Jo. She fearlessly presents us with music from around the world and spanning the millennia. We have learned to sing in Vietnamese, Swahili, Latin, French, German, Gaelic, Danish, Norwegian and Cree. Frequently, her parting words at the end of rehearsal are, "take your music home and work on the parts where you are having difficulty." The rehearsals move at a gallop through lengthy music lists. Be sure to have your music in order before the practice begins or you will find yourself behind the eight ball! Many of us spend weeks at a time accompanied by the Mozart Requiem or more recently, Bach's Cantata No. 4 wherever we are – in the car or in the kitchen - in order to learn the music and how it all fits together.

But belonging to the R-W choir is not all work and no play. Once a month, we stop early to have a chance to socialize and catch up on the news. Once a month we gather for a beverage after practice. Every year, Clara Dyck hosts the first choir practice at her home and we feast on yummy treats as we learn some music for the first Sunday of the choir year. After Lessons and Carols every year the choir gets together to celebrate and enjoy a delicious potluck dinner and the choir year ends with another grand party in June. The choir is a true community.

For us, the focal points of the year are the [somber a cappella](#) Good Friday service sung from the balcony and the serene and hopeful Service of Lessons and Carols for Advent. It is a powerful experience to process down the aisle in an age-old tradition and to sing in such a beautiful sanctuary. As one of our members put it: "The choir loft is a sacred space and it is a fantastic privilege to be there, surrounded by other members of the choir, leading the congregational singing and sharing the glorious music of the church".

Heather Etsell



Photo by Hal Thiessen

"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid."

John 14:27

THE OSCAR[®]

Has "Fame" ever made you feel like dancing?

Does "Sooner or Later" mean more than just a time of day to you?

Do you miss the "Days of Wine and Roses"?

Have you "Just called to say I love you"?

Did you ever want to walk the "Streets of Philadelphia"?

Do you still wonder about "The Way We Were"?

If so, then please set aside the evening of

Saturday, February 24th, 2018.

The Choir of Robertson-Wesley would love for you to come and join us for an evening of Oscar winning and nominated songs, while you sip and munch to your hearts' content...

Hope to see you there!



Robertson-Wesley Book Buddies

Robertson-Wesley Book Buddies, under the facilitation of Nancy Heule, met on Saturday September 23 to discuss *The Earth's Blanket: Traditional Teachings for Sustainable Living* by ethnobotanist Nancy J. Turner. A small group of R-W members and guests shared home baked goodies, animated discussion and fellowship through dialogue and debate of solutions to the challenges presented in this book that "celebrates the connection between people and the land".

The theme of the book is the belief that plants create a protective "blanket" around the Earth and when this blanket is damaged due to overuse of resources, the Earth "is sorry and weeps". Starting with cultural attitudes and beliefs of Indigenous communities of British Columbia, the author explores and examines creation stories of mythical beings who changed into plant and animal forms to create the "gifts" helping the Indigenous communities to survive throughout history. These fables were passed down orally to all children to teach them the belief that everything in nature is a gift to be respected and not abused. This resulted in the Indigenous wisdom and beliefs being able to sustain human communities for thousands of years without major disruptions to natural habitat.

In reflection, how different is this creation story from that of the Judea-Christian version proclaimed in the Bible in the Book of Genesis?

With the introduction of the European explorers and settlers, who came to exploit the natural resources for profit and imperial expansion, we view the conflict of academic scientific knowledge with that of traditional culture. The resulting outcome is the over-use of the natural resources which upset the delicate ecological balance that had been observed for thousands of years. Resulting in the Earth weeping in the form of natural disasters such as floods, wildfires and the lack of fish returning to their natural spawning grounds.

The dilemma for today's society living in urban centres is how do we consciously respect and honour the Earth's Blanket when we are so remotely removed from interacting with nature in the traditional Indigenous traditions? The challenge for our rampant overconsumption and consumerism is regaining a reverence and respect for the delicate respect that sustains life on Earth.

Sandi Darrell

The Fence

Humdrum autumn afternoon...brushing ladybugs off an old fence...before I paint...flick...brush...
Snow soon, so brush now...paint...dip...brush...dip...my EARS
pick up a distant rousing call...WHERE?

Squinting windward...listening...looking...THERE...again! That trilling half remembered cry...
Many voices now...higher...nearer...where? Northwest a sliding smoky line...becomes a tree!
Glancing higher now...I see another huge squadron nearly over me...long necks...great necks...great wings nearly over me...long necks...great wings surging southward.

Sandhills...the sandhills...they're back!
Outstretched wings like galley oars
Pulling in formation...
Each catching helpful lift from their neighbours wing tip vortices.
Each throat yodeling urgent calls..."we're on our way...we're on our way...don't fall behind...this way...this way..."

More huge flotillas pull nearer and even further hundreds catch my eye...
The sky rings everywhere now with glorious hair raising choruses...
multitudes of great wild cranes arced over our block city that day,
moving as one towards the next urgent phase of their lives.

Oh timeless autumn afternoon...remembered long...
I continued to stare at the empty sky...listening...listening to the retreating trills,
brush in hand...caked dry...eyes brimming...cheeks swimming in tears of joy.

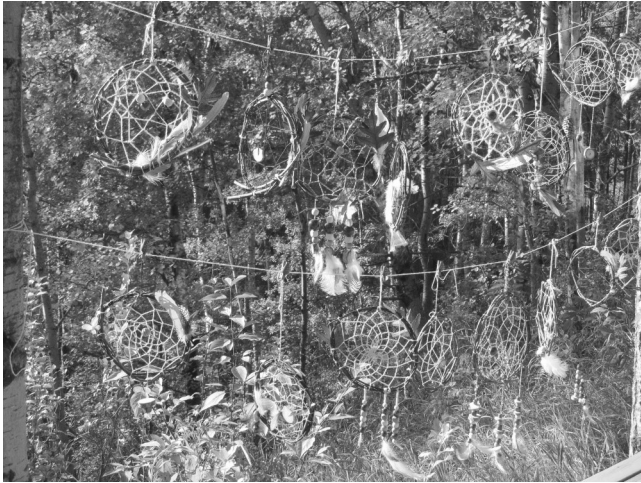
Garnet Thomas

Do you have an experience you would like to share with the congregation?

Between the Aisles accepts unsolicited submissions from members for each quarterly issue. Submissions can be emailed to: rwucnews@gmail.com



Women's Weekend Moments and Memories



The 14th annual Women's Weekend is now behind us and I say it was a success. This year we had many repeat guests and some new faces. Having been in a number of positions throughout several different weekends I think I have made some fairly significant steps in personal growth and I hope the ladies attending our weekends have had at least some success in their own spiritual development.

There were many opportunities to share stories and reflect on how our lives are interwoven and where we could possibly continue or start to foster relationships that we would not normally consider. Personally, I attend these weekends because my everyday life lacks fulfilling contact with other women. It also allows me time to focus primarily on my relationship with God and examine my spiritual practices in relation to my everyday life. I hope that the other women who attend take the opportunities to do this as well because I would hate to be the only one who thinks this way.

The planning committee, of which I was a member this year, tries to plan and execute a number of sessions which are generally designed to assist, or at the very least, open a dialogue for the women in attendance; in essence a doorway to examination through which we encourage spiritual and personal growth experiences. Each woman learns from the weekend according to her individual needs and wants and the take away is that it is different for everyone.

This year our theme was Earth's Weavers: Making Connections.

We worked hard on our sessions and as the weekend drew closer the excitement for it became a sustained buzz between us. As with everything there were some bumps along the way, but I believe we made the weekend special and inviting for the ladies in attendance.

The activities of the weekend are somewhat abstract in their arrangement and sometimes in their purpose. Some are artistic endeavours designed to get the mind to focus on the interconnectedness of the world around us and how God works within those realms. Others were reflective in nature, allowing for time to think about our past, present and potential futures. All of the activities had purpose and some took a winding path to get to their destination while others were entirely about the journey of discovery.

Overall I believe the women who attended learned quite a lot about themselves. I know when I first attended I was confused and a little lost. I thought these "church retreat weekends" were things that you attended and your group cloistered itself away in a room examining and contemplating Bible verse and meaning. I know that sounds so prosaic, but I am serious, this is what I thought. It was so much more entertaining, interesting and fulfilling and I began to understand how much further you could get on your spiritual path if you don't have to play by hard and fast policies.

In closing I would invite you ladies to contemplate joining us next year. We start planning in the spring. See you then.

Trisha-Lee Wasmund



Photo's by Tanya Eckenswiller



Let us gather to celebrate Advent and Christmas

Advent 1: Hope

Dec 3, 10:30 am, Worship
Music: R-W Ringers, Choir of R-W

Advent 2: Peace

Dec 10, 10:30 am, Worship
Music: Nova Bells, Choir of R-W

Service of Lessons and Carols

Dec 10, 4:00 pm
A beautiful afternoon of candlelight, carols & choir anthems

Live Nativity

Dec 16, 4:00 pm – 5:30 pm
An opportunity to interact with nativity characters, sing carols and BBQ

Advent 3: Joy

Dec 17, 10:30 am, Worship
White Gift Sunday—bring donations for the Bissell Centre
Music: Cantilon Chamber Choir

Advent 4: Love

Dec 24, 10:30 am, Worship
Music: Choir of Robertson-Wesley

Christmas Eve Family Celebration

A short and interactive celebration for all ages (especially younger children)
Dec 24, 4:00 pm

Christmas Eve Contemporary Service

Christmas Eve for all ages with candlelight
Dec 24, 8:00 pm

Christmas Eve Choral Service

Music and songs of joy for the Holy night
Dec 24, 11:00 pm
Music: Choir of Robertson-Wesley

Christmas Morning Service

Dec 25, 10:30 am, worship
Music: R-W Córtes

White Gift Sunday

White Gift Sunday dates back to 1904 in Ohio where the wife of a Methodist minister and her two daughters came up with the idea of giving gifts wrapped in white paper to people in need at Christmas time. Gifts were wrapped in white so that they would be anonymous. The United Church has participated in this tradition since the inception of the church.

This year The Bissell Centre has made a few minor changes. Rather than request a wide assortment of individual items as we have done in the past, we simplified our Wish List into “Men’s Stockings”, “Women’s Stockings”, and general presents for Infants, Children and Teens.



Photo by Hal Thiessen

These gifts will be collected and delivered to the Bissell Centre on Sunday Dec 10th, 2017. We thank you in advance for your generosity.

Advent Music Concert Series

Robertson-Wesley is hosting a noon-hour concert series again this Advent, for the three 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 7– Mingmei Xu, violin & Jim Findlay, guitar

Dec 14– Nansee Hughes, soprano & Spencer Kryzanowski, piano

Dec 21– Matthew McGuigan, flute & Tammy-Jo Mortensen, keyboards



Photo by Hal Thiessen

Live Nativity & BBQ

Robertson-Wesley United Church 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 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 Saturday December 16th from 4-5:30 pm on the front lawn of the church. Stop by with your family, friends and neighbours for an evening of festivities, treats, and hot chocolate!



What is Lessons & Carols

Each year Robertson-Wesley United Church undertakes a service of Lessons and Carols. This service was begun around 1880, as Edward Benson, the archbishop of Truro Cathedral in Truro, Cornwall, UK, wanted to get the local people out of the pubs on Christmas Eve to celebrate a different kind of spirit. He came up with nine lessons from the Old and New Testaments interspersed with carols and anthems. It was an immediate success. This caught on and was picked up by the famous King's College Cambridge in 1918 with a few changes. At R-W, we try to follow the traditions set out by the King's College Cambridge service. For example, "Once in Royal David's City" became the opening hymn, its first verse sung by a solo treble. This tradition has carried on in Robertson-Wesley.

The readings at Lessons and Carols help to focus the listener on the story of Christianity, and on the wisdom revealed to us. It allows us to reflect on the message of the upcoming birth, stills our hearts and minds to meditate on hope and promise for the world, and encourages us to hear again the familiar stories, perhaps listening in a new way. The carols and anthems reinforce and enhance the message throughout.

This year, the service of Lessons and Carols takes place at Robertson-Wesley United Church on **Sunday, December 10, 2017 at 4:00 p.m.** The afternoon of traditional congregational carols, scripture readings and music sung by the Choir of Robertson-Wesley, is directed by Tammy-Jo Mortensen and accompanied by Belinda Chiang. This year's music will feature composers Bob Chilcott, Egil Hovland, G. F. Handel and J. S. Bach.

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. There is no charge, but there is an opportunity for a freewill offering.



Photo by Hal Thiessen

Faith and Finances

Donations are on track to meet last year's totals, which was our best year ever -- in history! Expenses, as we know, keep creeping upward. Our expenses as of September 30 were \$531 575, while our revenue for the same period came to \$452 007. This gives us a current shortfall of \$79 568.

So there's a mismatch on the balance (books). Yet, we're not a private business or household, and certainly not a for-profit enterprise. We are a Mission -- a Mission living out the Gospel, hundreds of our neighbours, many who will NEVER be in a position to add to our collection plate.

What does this mean? This is where we get to put our faith into practice: to live out our calling and share all we are, in God's service and to God's glory. We give and we fundraise and evangelize and share our love of this Church with our friends.

We must also faithfully acknowledge the legacy our ancestors have left for us. Our forebearers have— through donations and sale of property and careful investment— filled a good part of the gap. The interest accrued from our legacy funds can and does help subsidize our daily work. This interest money covers the contributions of those who can't give

financially, and we give thanks to God for this rich blessing.

As churches go, R-W is in a great position. We are able to live our our mission generously. Should more money come raining down, we would continue the work of our forebearers even more generously. We shall continue the work of our ancestors, the work of the saints and apostles: to do justice, love mercy, walking humbly with our neighbours, in whom we meet God.

*Michelle Salomons,
Chair of the Board*

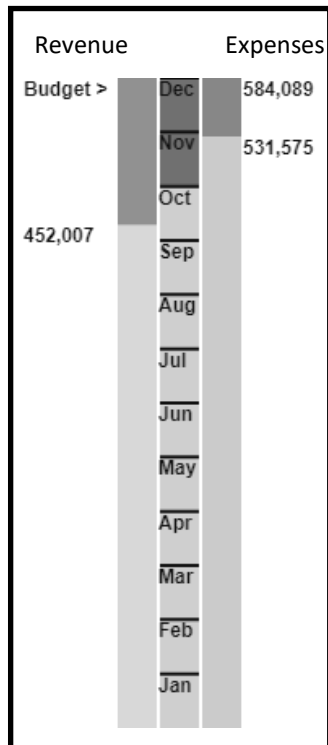
RISE UP! RISE UP! Make Pledging a Habit!

The Stewardship Team met in June to begin planning a year around program designed to inspire, invite and thank supporters of R-W. Service themes for October explored how we can embrace the Spirit. We examined how God provides abundantly, connects us and calls us in many ways. Bread was chosen to symbolize God's abundant gifts to us. During the Coming into God's Presence section of our October services our Committee engaged our younger members to experience the elements of bread through hands-on activities. Many youth had not seen or handled wheat in a sheaf, wheat kernels, canola seed or flour. On October 29th we mixed the elements together {flour, oil, salt and water}. But something was missing. All we had was flat bread. What we needed was action. We needed leaven or yeast to make our bread rise up and make the whole greater than the parts. Members added leaven and the bread rose up! The congregation was invited to respond to God's call and promises by pledging of our talents and treasure.

At R-W every member is an important element.

When we add the SPIRIT to our lives it will add the leaven which inspires us to action. We can begin where we are, use what we have and do what we can. PLEDGING supports a planned response to God's call at R-W. EVERYONE is an important element. BE LIKE LEAVEN! RISE UP! MAKE PLEDGING A HABIT! Pledge forms are available in the display racks at the church or on the website. It's not too late to send in your pledge to the office!

Sylvia, Jill, Pat, Ian, Karen & Leigh



Submission deadline for the 2018
Spring edition: January 14, 2018
Email submissions to: rwucnews@gmail.com



Answering the Call: For God and Country

Eighteen. Just finished high school. A time when a pretty young girl's head is embroidered with visions of sugar plums, thoughts of an endless future, a lacy wedding dress, a fine young husband, and a wee house with a white picket fence. And later, the pitter patter of little feet and delicious gales of laughter in a home filled with joy, with pies on the windowsill and the aroma of fresh baked bread wafting about.

Instead, all she had taken for granted was forfeited. Selflessly forfeited. And she boarded a train for the west coast, watching the apple orchards whizzing by to the rhythm of the metal wheels on the tracks. It was 1944. Food was rationed. Nothing was to be wasted. All must be sacrificed for the war effort. She'd already see many of the boys from school return home, injured, some of the wounds not visible to the naked eye. Where did she find the courage to say goodbye to all she had ever known? To fearlessly step into an uncharted future to fight to preserve the freedom that had always been a given in our nation?

This small town girl was soon in the big city, with many young girls from all over Canada, undergoing the rigors of military training. No more leisurely afternoon teas at the old café on Main Street. No trips to the swimming hole on a lazy hot summer afternoon with sandwiches and lemonade in a sack. No weekend dances at the church hall. She was now one of a troop of young women, marching in perfect cadence, their faces steely with resolve. She would never go back home to the idyllic Okanagan valley, her life leading her in a totally different direction.

She made a difference. This shy and gentle Christian girl, found within herself the mettle to do what had to be done. She forged ahead and never looked back. She went on to accomplish many good things in her life. Her faith in God and her values and ethics served her well all through life to this very day.

More than seventy years later, she is still that shy and gentle soul. When she greets you, the kindness and compassion emanate from within. She instinctively knows when you need some caring words, or a gentle hug. She has always known what needs doing.

Wendy King, Lois King-Fords' daughter and member of R-W

The Stained Glass Narrative Creates Questions

There is a stained glass window in the sanctuary. I have walked past this window thousands of times. It faces West on the main floor. Second from the right. It is clearly didactic and depicts Reverend George MacDougall, above, preaching to, and converting our First Nation Brethren, below.

The Truth and Reconciliation process has transformed my outlook in many ways. I view this stained glass differently than before. We now know how deeply injurious the European notion of superiority was and is to the Indigenous peoples of this nation. I regularly encounter many highly educated individuals who maintain the notion of the colonizers' superiority of religion, morality, work ethic and education. This stained glass panel re-enforces and legitimizes this erroneous, self-serving, invalid and obsolete concept of supremacy.

In the Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action, numbers 48 and 49, we are called to repudiate the "doctrine of discovery". The doctrine of discovery was rooted in concepts of "terra nullius", which conveniently claimed complete sovereignty over all aboriginal lands. In March of 2012, the United Church committed to urge the dismantling of all legal structures and policies based on the doctrine of discovery. I believe this commitment would extend to dismantling or re-locating "educative" stained glass narrative panels depicting this self-important notion of religious authority. They belong in a museum, archive or gallery to serve in two vitally important ways. These panels could serve both educationally and as an important token of the apology made to Aboriginal peoples on our behalf by the Prime Minister in 2008.

I don't know the answer to my current dilemma of worshiping in a space that pictorially teaches and condones, the fallacious and destructive doctrine of discovery. Yes, they are historically accurate. But similarly accurate Confederate statues in the United States are being summarily removed from their current places of respect. They are being torn down to disestablish any further inspiration of white supremacy.

We are all so passionate about Robertson-Wesley. It is a masterpiece of both architecture and intent. The vast white ceilings, crafted oak woodwork and colored light cradle us in a rare and rapturous spirituality. The Sanctuary is singularly awe inspiring yet utterly peaceful. The building has stood, unchanging through the decades and last century. This church continues to stand as an impressive monument to our struggle for better, more compassionate souls. It has been a proud land mark in the city and province both today and 100 years ago.

Continued on page 12

from Mission and Outreach Pod

Common Ground – Sharing our space at Robertson-Wesley

In September, the third gathering of Common Ground, an initiative of the Inter City Pastoral Ministry (ICPM), was held at R-W. The theme was thanksgiving and a full turkey dinner was shared amongst the seventy guests. Janet Clark and Donna Krucik helped the volunteers in the kitchen, making the gathering welcome. Thank you to them for reconciliation in action.

Discussion was thoughtful as we considered, The Great Binding Law of Kizhay Manito -- The Great Spirit. Attached is information on the Seven Teachings which are: Truth, Humility, Wisdom, Respect, Honesty, Courage, and Love.

The next and last Common Ground gathering will take place around the Winter Solstice. Watch the website for further information.

Educational Opportunities

1. The University of Alberta has a FREE online twelve module Indigenous Canada course that you can audit. I am half way through the modules and have never enjoyed or learned so much from a course as I am doing now.
2. ATPN Community Relations
3. Athabasca University Centre for World Indigenous Knowledge and Research
4. CBC radio programs and Indigenous TV and news items online.

New Book launched at LitFest

Seven Fallen Feathers, "Racism, Death, and Hard Truths in a Northern City", by Tanya Talaga

This book, written by Toronto Star Columnist, Tanya Talaga, explores the ongoing racism and unsolved murders of seven students who had moved to Thunder Bay, Ontario.

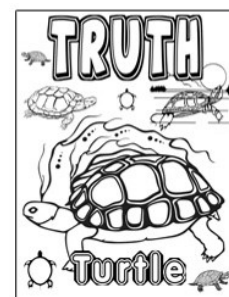
Her investigative journalism resulted in the York police force coming to Thunder Bay to investigate these murders and the replacement of the Thunder Bay Police Commission.

When asked by an audience member what three wishes she would have if there were no restrictions on funding, etc, she replied: good schools and education (K-12) in each Indigenous community; clean drinking water for all; and, a 24/7 community recreation center/safe place for youth to gather. It struck me that these items are all taken for granted in our society, but are still being fought for by lobbyists to implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

THANKS TO:

- **Jane Chesebrough for arranging a Blanket Exercise for the Koinonia October service. I understand that around thirty participants took part in this experience.
- **Lorna Berlinguette for showing *Bridgewalkers* at Koinonia in November.
- **Janet Clark for showing *Bridgewalkers* in February at UCW.
- **Tanya Eckenswiller for showing *Bridgewalkers* at the Tuesday noon Scripture Reflections group.

- Dawn Allan



Visit www.rwuc.org/sam.html for more information and the latest updates about other upcoming workshops.

Contemplative Practices

Are you seeking an escape from the world, an oasis in your crazy life? Are you seeking some quiet? Are you seeking time for yourself or inspiration? Then we invite you to engage in **contemplative practices** at Robertson-Wesley United Church in Memorial Hall. When you enter Memorial Hall you will find pockets of inspiration that will clear your mind, open your heart, and bring your spirit into connection with the sacred and the world. Throughout Memorial Hall there will be different spaces with different contemplative practices that invite you to meditate, pray, while engaging in some artistic exercises. Drop by anytime between the hours of 7-8:30 PM on the designated Sundays. Stay for as long as you would like. This is a self-directed program with instructions throughout the room to give you some guidance on your journey. This coming program year we will have 6 Sunday evenings each with a different theme. Invite your friends, family and neighbours to enter this oasis and emerge inspired, enlightened, grounded and feeling nourished.

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|---------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Jan 7, 2018 | Seeking purpose and meaning – a time of discernment |
| Feb 4, 2018 | Broken relationships, broken dreams – a path to healing |
| Mar 18, 2018 | Caring for the caregivers – a night to recharge, to fill up your cup |
| Apr 29, 2018 | Earth Day Healing Creation – caring for the earth and all creation |
| May 6, 2018 | The World Vigil – holding the world in thoughts and prayer |
| June 17, 2018 | Thanksgiving and Gratitude – a night to celebrate and give thanks for our blessings |



Photo by Laura David Foster

Art Studio

Facilitated by Laura David Foster

Mondays, 7:00–8:30 pm

Tuesdays, 1:30-3:00 pm

The studio is a place for people to explore art and connect with each other in an informal creative environment. Each time we have various arts media and processes to explore. People are welcome to drop in any time and try out these different art-making processes. Some people like to work on their own ongoing projects, and this is encouraged as well. The studio's purpose is to bring people together, to enjoy art, and be in community. We are all creative and the studio community nurtures creativity, authenticity, and friendship... and it's just a fun place to hang out!

Regular attendance is not required but registration via email is recommended to stay informed with studio developments. For example, this fall we have expanded our program times, and we're looking at new possibilities like exhibiting our art. Please join us on Monday nights, (except holidays) Tuesday afternoons and after the Robertson-Wesley community dinners. For more information, please contact Laura at spiritedartstudio@rwuc.org

Artful Responses

Artful Responses is a year-long series of one-time, art-based workshops dedicated to community building within our current political climate. We will explore pottery, paint, voice work, and more. Artful Responses will allow people to reflect on current injustices within our society. In these trying times, nourishing our soul is important to continue to be engaged in the world and news feeds. Artful Responses will take place from 7-9 pm.

Dec 15, 2017 - Don't Shop Til You'll drop- Dance.

December is filled with busy times often buying gifts for family and friends. "Don't Shop Til You'll Drop" is a guided experience to get you into your body, dancing, moving and warming up! Guaranteed to be fun and free (in all senses of the word). Full details and registration details are online at www.rwuc.org/sam.html



Continued from page 9

I am deeply appreciative and grateful to be a member of Robertson-Wesley United Church. I have been profoundly blessed beyond my wildest hopes and dreams. I hope and pray to stay.

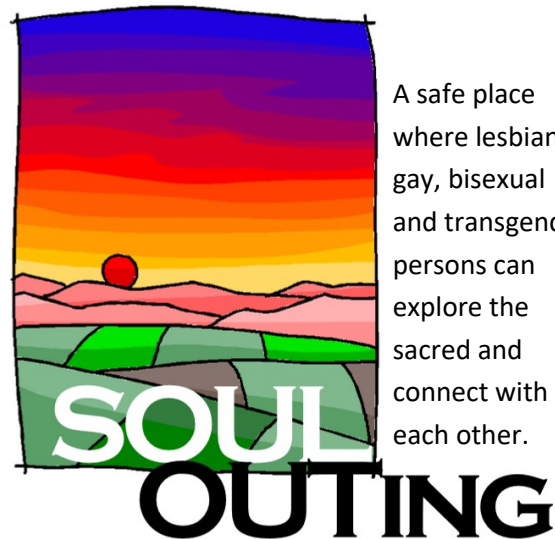
Still; we are a reformed and reforming people. We are creating the future with our existence today.

I must humbly and respectfully question the continued, uncontested, unmitigated message of these stained glass windows in this important Sanctuary of allegiance and worship.

Submitted Anonymously

Editor's Note:

The TRC has made an important proclamation stating: "Education was the primary tool of oppression. Education should lead us through reconciliation and healing." This window could serve as a very important tool of educating ourselves and others about the past. Secondly, the window could be used as a token of apology for the past.



A safe place where lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons can explore the sacred and connect with each other.

The second Sunday of each month at 7:00 PM

Hosted by Robertson-Wesley United church
10209 123 Street

Robertson-Wesley United Church

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Between the Aisles is published on Treaty Six territory in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada.



Photo by Karen Bridges

Messy Wednesdays

In Memorial Hall on the **2nd and 4th Wednesday of the month from 5pm – 7pm**, families with children gather for dinner, activities and discussion. The families gather to eat a meal together at no cost to the family, which is served around 5:45 pm. Don't worry if you can't make it right at 5pm. We have a couple of volunteers who do the cooking for us, so it is a night off for parents! This is part of our outreach ministry and a way to welcome all families to gather together for a time of fellowship. There are activities for the children before and after dinner and adults take the opportunity engage in conversation during the evening. Families invited to help with clean up and children's activities.

Grandparents are welcome to join us! This is a wonderful way to get to know other families in the church and the neighbourhood. It is a messy and fun time for all!

Did you know?

You can donate to the church using PayPal?



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