

Between the Aisles

A Robertson-Wesley United Church Quarterly

SUMMER



Photo credit: Jim Triscott

Leviticus 26:4 "I will send you rain in its season, and the ground will yield its crops and the trees their fruit."

Welcome

Aaaaahhhh... It's Summer!!! After our (seemingly excessively) long winter, we now have time to take a break, enjoy the warm weather and relax a little bit. Everything seems much more alive here in our "Festival City". There's more colour around, with the flowers, the leaves on the trees, the (hopefully) healthy green grass and the bright blue sky. People are out and about, enjoying the warmer temperatures and the various amenities our city offers. It could be a time to contemplate organizing a vacation or two, for those of us who don't have time to do that during the rest of the year, due to school or work. There are lots of interesting things to do and see in the summer here in Edmonton.

In this edition, we get to look at some aspects of nature we take for granted, as we have articles on both water (due to the upcoming choir performance of the "Celtic Mass of the Sea") and flowers (with a feature on how we hope to incorporate flowers more in the Church community). We also have an article on the importance of rituals of death, and how the church can help with that. We look at an improvement that could be made to our church organ, as well as an introduction to our new Art Therapy student. There are also several notices about what is going on in and around our Church community.

We have an update from our Mission and Outreach Pod, and a welcome write-up about the inspiring messages Casey Edmonds shared at the Stewardship Breakfast. As well, there's an interesting article on the importance of the apology from Prime Minister Trudeau to the LGBTQ community from a member of our own congregation. It is a necessary, important, and long-delayed step to take in the development of our nation.

I really would like to take a moment and thank Kalea Turner-Beckman for doing the lay-out for this issue. She has been a big help with it and I really appreciate the time and effort she has put in. Thank you, Kalea!

So, take a moment and look through the issue. And if you have any questions, concerns or articles for the editorial staff of *Between the Aisles*, please feel free to send us something at rwucnews@gmail.com.

Have a great summer!

Marilee J. Stephens (*editor*)

Correction from our last issue: Our apologies for omitting Rev. Leigh Sinclair as the author of the article "Conversations"

Welcome to our New Art Therapy Student!

Pattie Pryma is a student at St. Stephen's college and currently working as a practicum student at Robertson-Wesley United Church.



'I approach my work as an art therapist with "You", the client at the center of your own journey. I believe everyone has the potential to live their life to the fullest with dignity and self-determination. We are all creative beings in some way and art can be a bridge to discovering the "True Self" along the life journey. Together we can focus on: life problem solving, self-actualization through creative expression and discovering your life goals. My many years of experience as a registered nurse working in the area of mental health gives me a unique ability to work with clients where they are at, and see individuals as unique and in charge of their own life-path. I have experience working with clients of all cultures, ages, and stages of life and look forward to working with you as "You Create" new possibilities on your life journey.'

To set up an appointment, contact Pattie at ppryma@youcreate.ca

Canterbury Friendship Tea

You are warmly invited to the Robertson-Wesley United Church Tea celebrated **Thursday, May 17**, from 2:00 - 3:00 PM. You can come and participate by serving or by receiving...music, tea, sweets and music! All are welcome!

The Federal Government Begins to Apologize for the Treatment of LGBTQ (et al)

Justin Trudeau made a speech in the House of Commons on Nov 18th of 2017, addressing the branding of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ et al) individuals as criminals; while discriminating against them specifically as Federal employees. Those spied upon, entrapped, charged, arrested and fired for being LGBTQ were subject to shaming, investigations, violence, and oppression. Some lost their lives. Supporters of LGBTQ individuals were equally interrogated and forced to turn against those they loved.

As someone transgender, I honestly never thought I'd see the day that a government apologized for such systemic oppression, nor talk about such things as two-spirit, intersex, and transgender identities as openly as Justin Trudeau did in the House of Commons. Having asked for an apology from the Government of Ontario, myself as XY vs Ontario in 2009, seeing all parties clap unanimously throughout this speech shook me to the core!

As people in the LGBTQ community are still oppressed in many ways, to hear society apologize broadly in any form, proclaiming who you are as natural and equal, feels admittedly alien and painfully so! Yet provincial governments and the Government of Canada still have a lot of apologizing to do, not just to former employees but to the citizens who have not received equal access to government services and beyond.

The Federal Government has even gone so far as to ask what other apologies might be needed. In response, I wrote the following to Randy Boissonnault, MP, in Oct of 2017 (paraphrased):

On behalf of all transgender minorities, I request, from as many levels of Government as possible, both provincially and federally, a formal apology for the marginalization and discrimination of transgender minorities in Canada, through the requirement for transsexual surgeries in order to obtain government identifications, passports, and birth certificates. This historical process has made most transgender minorities exist within society as if we were illegal aliens in our country. Our

right to safety, employment, and even our lived genders, has been greatly diminished.

We imagine a world where both children and adults can live, free of surgical requirements, able to explore their lived genders with corresponding human rights, before any important decisions could be made. We know that everyone's quality of life, community, and sense of dignity would be greatly enhanced for generations by building a safe world where transgender people are not just respected and equal participants, but normative. No more shall we narrowly police gender identity and expression. We shall embrace diversity, and all of our lives will be rich for it.

It is my hope that many people will continue to ask provincial and the federal government for more apologies. Hopefully, this is just a start, where people who are LGBTQ can see themselves as legitimate people with healthy collective identities.

Melisa Guilbeault

The Gorge

(Sitting near a childhood river, the Amable du Fond, in Eau Clair, Ontario)

I had a vision
My life could not be added up
Every memory was there
But I could not tell which each stood for
I felt joy and endless time
I felt alone
Almost as if my eternal feelings said all
And my mind could only guess
So I asked myself how should I feel?
But instead I only felt joy
My mind was now an alien
Only a traveler along a river
Again I asked myself how should I feel?
But I only felt joy
So I looked at the river
I could not comprehend its beauty
So I became part of that river with my mind
And I only felt joy.

Melisa Guilbeault. 1995.

The Death of Rituals:

A disturbing trend has emerged in regards to death and how we deal with it -- or not deal with it, as the case may be. Time and time again I find myself faced with a grieving family who proceed to inform me that the deceased did not wish to have a service, in fact specifically told the family to NOT have a service when they die!. I have also encountered many people who have lost someone close to them, but for medical reasons they are not able to attend the memorial service, or perhaps cannot afford to attend if it is out of the city, or the roads are too bad.

In times of grief, people are often not prepared and feel lost in regards to what to do next. Some people reach out to religious communities, but most people now-a-days turn to a funeral home or nothing at all. Funeral homes are much better at advertising than churches are.

I can't help but wonder though... do people actually understand what a faith community can offer them in times of need? How do we, the leaders in faith institutions, address the myth that funeral services are simply to ensure that someone's soul gets to heaven? How do we get the message out that churches are open to working with families and can provide them with a structure to alleviate stress and provide comfort and peace?

Memorial services and death rituals are for the people left behind, just as much if not more so than the people who have passed away. When we lose someone, we need to find a way to move through the grieving process. We need to find a way to address the hole that is left after a loved one dies. We need to find closure, to acknowledge that this person will not exist in the same way in our life anymore. But this still doesn't explain why more and more people have decided not to have a service.

So why are people choosing not to have a service after they die? Here is a list of reasons I have heard over the past 10 years in ministry:

- It is too expensive, not worth the cost.
- No one will come, I've out lived everyone I know.
- I don't want people crying over me or creating a fuss.

- I don't like to be the center of attention.
- Funerals are always so depressing and dreary.
- I want people to remember as I lived not as a dead person.
- It seems like all we do these days is attend funerals. People should just have a party instead.
- I don't want the family to have to plan a whole service and reception...it is too much work and stressful for them.
- I'm worried the family will fight.
- My family is not religious. They wouldn't know what to do or ask for, or know what I would want.

There are others of course, but these are the most common.

So why do we need rituals? Why have a funeral?

David Chidester, the author of the book "Patterns of Transcendence; Religion, Death and Dying" writes, "Death rituals are rites of passages that symbolize a change from one state of existence to another, from life to death. In this regard, death rituals can be compared to other rites of passage - birth, adulthood, and marriage -- that symbolically mark a change from an old status to a new status in the life cycle... Death rituals bridge that transition period in which the person is not recognized as living, yet not fully incorporated into the world of the dead." p. 33-34.

To put it another way, people need rituals because people need to have a safe place to express their grief and sadness while sharing their loss with others - they need to have a place where they are given permission to express their sadness, a place where someone shows them how to express grief. A funeral or memorial service gives people a structure to follow and meaningful actions which will allow them to honour and remember the person who has died, to tell their stories, and to express how much this person meant to them.

What I find interesting is that North American culture is much better at sharing our grief when someone famous dies, or when there is a major tragedy in the world. People gather on the streets, place objects on the site of the tragedy or the place where the famous person was born. People light candles and hold vigils in times like these. When famous people die we create documentaries, or write books, or make a movie about their life. People want to know more about the

person who died. People who aren't famous are just as interesting! And people who knew them and loved them still want to know more, still discover things about their friends and families that they didn't know.

We see death on TV and in social media all the time, yet we ignore a crucial part of the transition and closure. After the person has died, we simply want to move on, we hide the messiness and awkwardness and sadness that comes with seeing and burying a dead body. What are we so afraid of? Some people have actually told me that they don't want to talk about their funeral plans because it might jinx them, it will give them bad luck. Some people avoid talking about death because they don't want their loved ones to give in.

My question is this: Why do we make it so hard on our loved ones after we die? Why do we render them helpless in their time of need? I find it sad that people are left to their own devices to grieve. Some isolate themselves, not willing and not knowing how to express their sadness. People spend a lot of energy trying to hide their tears, trying to demonstrate that they are strong, and independent. Some of us hesitate to reach out to the grieving family because we don't want to bother them. Some of us who are grieving do not want to burden others with our sadness and depression.

What I have learned is that sharing stories about the person we have lost and talking about them is essential. Witnessing the ritual of burying the remains and gathering together to remember people makes the transition more real. Death rituals help us accept that the person will no longer be there with us, and the rituals help us to incorporate our loved ones and friends into a new reality, the spiritual realm. Rituals give intention to actions, and require that we face the truth.

Rituals in community provide a way for people to reach out to one another and both give and receive support.

Invite everyone to take some time to consider what your wishes are for when you die, and I hope you will all say YES to having a service -- look at it as the celebration of a life that has been lived! It is just as important as the day you were born and every year that your birth was celebrated!

Rev. Karen Bridges



Catering Ministry

In 2017, Donna Krucik stepped down after sixteen years as the United Church Women's catering coordinator. As a congregation, may we give thanks for her deep sense of compassion and for her superb organizational skills!

The legacy of hospitality established by the UCW continues today with the Catering Ministry: a ministry of caring for grieving families who choose to hold a funeral or memorial service at Robertson-Wesley. At such a difficult time, it can be comforting to meet with other family members and friends after the service. The Catering Ministry offers its help by ordering food from an excellent caterer and serving it, along with beverages, to family and guests gathered in Memorial Hall. Volunteers (both men and women) from throughout the congregation come together as needed to provide this service, with proceeds in 2018 and 2019 being donated to the Mission and Service Fund and the Kitchen Renewal Fund.

New volunteers are always welcome! Joining the Catering Ministry is a great way to get involved in the life of our church, without committing to a set schedule. You'll be invited to help out when the need arises, but we don't expect you to be available every time. If you're interested in this ministry, please talk to one of the coordinators (Colleen Ouellette, Sharon Damery or Rosemary Dunbar) or e-mail us through the church office (mail@rwuc.org).

Colleen Ouellette

Don't let this opportunity float past you...come to a choral concert all about water!

Celebrate our beautiful country from coast to coast to coast by attending the service at United on Whyte (7909 82 Avenue) at 10:30 am on June 3, or a concert at Robertson-Wesley on **June 8** at 7:30 pm. The choral work is "Celtic Mass for the Sea", written by Nova Scotia composer Scott Macmillan and Nova Scotia librettist Jennyfer Brickenden. The concert is being held on "World Oceans Day".

The text, the composition and the musical forces are all enchanting, and this is the 30th anniversary of the composition. The text was compiled by Jennyfer Brickenden. She turns to the early Celtic oral incantations, rituals and prayers, such as the *Carmina Gadelica*, for some inspiration from the ancient lore of the ocean. These ancient texts are blended with another set of ancient texts, the Christian Mass (Kyrie, Gloria etc.).

The musical themes come from or are inspired by traditional Celtic music – rowing songs, funeral chants, sea-rapture songs, pipe-and-fiddle tunes, and labour songs.

These traditional tunes are interwoven with Scott Macmillan's original themes.

As with our spring service and concert every year, this year we again are hiring a chamber orchestra to accompany the choral singing. This year, there's a twist – a string quartet combined with a Celtic band! The band will include many of the Celtic players from around town, like a couple of the McDades – Shannon Johnson on fiddle, and Jeremiah McDade on whistles, flute and uilleann pipes; Celtic harpist Keri Lynn Zwicker; mandolin player Jay Kuchinsky; and our very own congregation member, Jim Findlay, on guitar.

There will be two additional features to the concert – a number of local and provincial water organizations will be on hand to raise awareness about water. In addition, we will display Alberta photographer Peter Holmes "Water portraits" series as well.

As it says in the forward of the score, "More than at any other time in human history we need to learn from this long ago vision (of the Celts)." Our oceans are depleted, our planet in crisis; it is our belief that only through empowerment of the human spirit will we find the collective will to make the sacrifices needed to restore balance and harmony to our global home."

The service on June 3 is by freewill offering, and tickets for the June 8 concert are: \$18 adults, \$10 students/seniors, and \$30 for a family of 2 adults and children. Tickets will be available after service, in the office and on Eventbrite.ca

Tammy-Jo Mortensen, Music Director

Creating Safe Spaces Training

Do you help out or lead activities here at Robertson-Wesley United Church? In all our programs and ministries we endeavour to be an inclusive and welcoming place for all people. Come and receive training on techniques of speaking and interacting with people that reduce our own and others' fear and anxieties and help us continue to be an accepting community.

Two similar workshops will be provided, each person only need attend one:

Thursday, May 17, 10-noon, Memorial Hall

or

Saturday, September 22, 10-noon, Memorial Hall

We will have a time of getting to know each other and a review of our Statement of Inclusion. We will have a keynote speaker help us learn how better to use empathy and active listening to build support systems with others. We also will **tour** the building to see its first aid and safety features!

The Who: All are invited to take part. Please consider attending this event if you are in a leadership role, an usher, fellowship time host, Kids' Church, Food Bank, Magic Pantry, youth leaders and Community Dinner volunteer, pastoral visitor, fundraiser organizer, and anyone else interested in learning!



Some Drops about Water

Genesis 1:2 "And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters" KJV. For the 350 years that the King James Version of the Bible held sway in the English speaking world, the words "face of the waters" helped to enliven the earth for its human inhabitants.

Before each of us was born, our bodies were composed of 99 percent water. At birth, that volume had dropped to 90 percent, and by the time we reached old age, the composition of water in our bodies had shrunk to 70 percent. Should we drop down to 50 percent, we would cease to be alive. Such is the value of water to us.

Water was always important to the ancients. In the city of Milan, a guard stood watch at each well to make sure that no household removed more than five litres per person per day. When indoor plumbing was installed in that city, usage jumped to sixty litres per person per day. And here in Canada we are second only to the US in the amount of water we use; more than 300 litres per person per day.

A group of pioneers from the Ukraine gathered on January 19, 1919, on the banks of the North Saskatchewan River to perform a traditional ritual. Crosses were cut from the ice, and the water was blessed. A photo capturing the event was included in the book *Pioneer Memories; Reminiscences* by Wasyl Zasula, published in 1983.

Until recently, we humans usually traveled by water. In fact, early visitors to Canada, the explorers and traders, first traveled by water. Cities developed along waterways, either rivers or oceans.

Many children in Edmonton don't know the name of the river that provides us with our drinking water.

Water is a very powerful force. Each Spring it covers places such as the Nile delta, making that area one of the most fertile in the world.

Water is necessary for the germination of food crops and other plants.

Nowadays, mainly because of indoor plumbing, we have less respect for water.

Plastic, in the form of bottles to hold water, is now found in water itself. In twenty brands of bottled water tested by the Story of Stuff community, all but one brand contained plastic micro-beads.

Frederick Olmsted, the creator of New York's Central Park and many other famous parks, included lawns in his landscape plans. The idea took off like crazy.

See Lawn Care Tips on Alberta Agriculture and Forestry's website for information on fertilizers and water use.

Many of the Scots who came to Canada needed clipped grass for lawn-bowling and for golfing. For that reason, they favoured lawns in public parks.

Conserve water by reducing shower time.

Use the same water glass for an entire day, rather than using a clean one every time you drink. Avoid using bottled water if possible.

Check out Masuru Emoto's photos of water crystals on the Internet. Fascinating.

Nancy Heule



Spirited Saturdays: "Saying No to say Yes" May 19th 9:30 to 11:30 am

Come and learn through listening and discussion about how knowing our passions and gifts can help us set boundaries and say both YES and NO! We will gather with coffee/tea/juice and our Bibles to explore how to make our "yes" count by using "no"! We will meet in the Club Room.

Spirited Saturdays, Grand Finale event: Retreat for those seeking to discover more about their faith and this congregation's ministry. Please do join us!

June 2 from 2:00 to 4:00 PM

We will look at three aspects of our Faith...

- our relationship with God (ways we cultivate the spiritual dimension of our everyday lives),
- Christ's call to serve others (how do we live out our mission and "anthem" in this place), and
- the Spirit's gifts of talents and time (discover where you are called to serve in our ministry)

Improving on our Grand Pipe Organ?

We have had a major donation that will kick off a campaign to do a formidable piece of work to our grand Gabriel Kney pipe organ. Since arriving at Robertson-Wesley in the fall of 2003, I have been dreaming about a project to make our organ more accessible to recitalists, more user-friendly to all who practice and play here, and also to make the organ more responsive for use in the liturgy in worship.

This project will involve the installation of a solid state logic piston (memory) system. Currently, organs have these installed and organists have them available for service playing and performances world-wide. What does a memory and piston system do exactly? Well, it assists the organist with making quick registration (colour) changes within the service, within a hymn, within a piece of repertoire. The organist can think in advance about what sounds/colours they want for a specific musical segment, and program that into the computer, so that, at the push of one button, they can have exactly the sounds and volume that they wish. So the organist can go from the quietest stops to full organ – literally “pulling out all the stops” in the blink of an eye (or vice-versa)!

Currently, the R-W organ doesn't have anything to aid the organist with colour changes. So, during hymns for example, all the organist can do is change manuals to change sounds, or to maybe pull out or push in one stop (one sound or colour) in the short breath between verses of a hymn. Or, they need a friend or two on either side to help out with quick changes. Nothing can replace a page-turner though, so those friends will still be needed for that task!

This current organ was installed by the Ontario firm Gabriel Kney in 1979. It was shown off at the Royal Canadian College of Organists national convention that summer to great praise and accolades. The organ was conceived by and received its tonal design by the Music Director of the time, Bruce Wheatcroft. He and the organ committee put in countless hours planning, discussing, raising awareness and funds, researching, and finally overseeing the installation of this incredible instrument. It is a tracker organ, which means that the keyboard notes are directly connected to each pipe by a mechanical system, and because the craftsmanship was so meticulous and the construction is so sound,



this instrument has required very little maintenance over the last almost 40 years. The instrument was designed in the spirit of a German Baroque organ, hence the stop names and manual names are all in German. At the time, combination (piston/memory) systems were not very reliable, and since this was built in the spirit of a copy of a Baroque organ, which definitely had no computers, Bruce decided to leave this element of design out of the organ. Instead, organists must plan ahead, hand register hymns and pieces and use assistants for help when making quick, dramatic changes. Almost 40 years later, the technology is very reliable and available. Interestingly enough, just as Tammy-Jo was pondering this project a few years ago, Bruce sent her a copy of a post he made on a forum, saying, “would I now - today - have it built with a combination action and multiple memory levels? You bet I would!”

So thus begins a project to hopefully begin this summer and finish next summer, on the organ's 40th birthday! Thank you for your blessing and nudge, Bruce!

Tammy-Jo Mortensen, Music Director

New Summer Market

The 124 Grand Market, that celebrates 124 Street and local vendors on Thursdays during the summer, have a special location for their new Sunday market!

102 Avenue and 123 Street - that is our corner! We are excited about have this amazing all-ages event so close to us for spring and summer.

Please note that parking may be accessed differently than usual (you also can bring blankets and have a picnic and buy some local produce after church).

Five Flowers for Faith

A few people met after church on April 15th to talk about the ministry of sharing flowers. Several ideas were shared about how we can both enhance worship with the beauty of flowers and share flowers in an outreach and pastoral care ministry.

Honour Sundays - All Saints Day, Easter, and the midpoint between Christmas and Easter would be Sundays designated for mass memorial arrangements, such as we just had at Easter. As we have poinsettias for Christmas, perhaps pots of Chrysanthemums for November (All Saints Day) would be appropriate. Easter would remain hydrangeas. A suggestion is needed for the midpoint between Christmas and Easter. There will be a form for people to fill out so they can purchase a plant to go in the display and then take home or gift to others after the service.

Single flowers for Pastoral Visits - Many people visit on behalf of the congregation of R-W. Even a single flower, like a carnation, can be a cheerful reminder that people unable to attend worship are remembered by folks at R-W and that God is with them. Many people visit folks who may never have participated in worship at R-W but who are in need of pastoral care. All are part of God's family. Having a single flower to share is an outreach ministry. Until there is a budget line next fiscal year, this project will be funded by donation. One Sunday each month, single flowers will be available for anyone to take out in their community.

Gleanings from the Garden for a casual vase - Peonies from the R-W gardens travelled around the city last summer. They went home with folks to nursing homes and into apartments with people who had fond memories of the old fashioned flowers. Although they were cut from our garden to welcome folks to the sanctuary, they also moved beyond our property line as a reminder of God's presence in the world.

This year, as you see a broken stem in your garden or that special flower finally put out more than one bloom, you might share in this ministry. Come summer there will be an empty vase in the back of the church where you can drop a flower and say a quiet prayer of thanks or concern.



Seasonal Arrangements - Four seasonal arrangements from legacy funds from the Flower Group have been designed and created by Tony Jansen especially for the sanctuary of Robertson-Wesley. They are a wonderful addition to the beauty of the sanctuary and the worship environment. His fall arrangement, in particular, did much to enhance our appreciation for the introduction of the Season of Creation with its orange liturgical colour. We have seen two of the set of four and look forward to seeing the remaining two.

Single Arrangements - Individual memorial arrangements can be brought to the church by people who wished to place a bouquet in the sanctuary. The flower arrangements would need to be brought to the church Sunday morning between 9:30 to 10:00 by the family or individual who purchased them. They could not be delivered to the church earlier in the week. If the memorial is to be acknowledged in the bulletin, information would be needed to be at the church office by the Wednesday before the service.

Sarah Wiens



Visiting Coordinator

We are currently seeking a Visiting Coordinator. This person works with our two ministers and a team of visitors to help us meet the needs of people in our community. This includes coordinating training and support for visitors, matching visitors with people they can visit and care for (such as seniors and young adults, families and newcomers) and keeping track of who is being visited. This role takes on average 3 hours a week with time spent both in administration and in relationship-building! Please speak to **Rev. Leigh** if you are interested and/or have more questions.

Stewardship Committee Hosts a Breakfast with Casey Edmunds

On Saturday morning, April 7, friends and neighbours gathered in Memorial Hall at Robertson-Wesley. Sitting in table groups, a buzz of conversation over tasty trays of fruit, breads and cheese soon ensued. Then came the main course of the event, an inspirational and entertaining presentation on volunteerism. Needless to say, Casey also sang and played the piano midway through his presentation



Casey began by reading the welcome and inclusion statement as a way of introducing the importance of knowing oneself when considering why and where to get involved as a volunteer. To do something that you are passionate about, it is important to know what excites you. It's also important to know your personal strengths and weaknesses before getting involved. In the words of Murray Sinclair, "*Who am I? Who or what do I want to be?*"

Sometimes you feel you have an obligation to do something. Are you being asked to volunteer, or are you being *voluntold*? Those making a commitment to volunteer are advised to create a balance that suits them between passion and obligation. There are pitfalls when obligation outweighs passion. Such volunteers may become "negative Nancy's", "sad Susie's", or "tired Tim's".

RuPaul, a person who has inspired Casey, has this to say about making positive choices about why and where to get involved: *What other people think of me is not my business. What I do is what I do. How people see me doesn't change what I decide to do. I don't choose projects so people don't see me as one thing or another. I choose projects that excite me.*

Casey closed the presentation with a description of the impact of today's shifting cultures and grassroots movements on the definition of volunteerism. A book written by Geoff Dembicki addresses this issue: ***Are we screwed? How a new generation is fighting to survive climate change.*** Despite the title, it is actually a message of hope and a call to embrace the world around you. [Note: This book is at the Edmonton Public Library with a short waiting list.]

Carol Anne Inglis

Mission and Outreach Pod Update

Moving Forward with Reconciliation (MFwR):

As part of our Mission in MFwR, seven congregations in Edmonton Presbytery in partnership with Inner City Pastoral Ministry (ICPM) have hired an Oskapewis/Esquao (helper). Evelyn Day, an Indigenous person with roots in Canada's north, brings with her the perspectives of an Elder and the teachings of the grandmothers and grandfathers. She offers her ministry both in the inner city and in the wider faith community. Working with her partner, David Elliot, Evelyn's mandate is to bring the message of reconciliation and healing to the churches of the Edmonton region.

Evelyn is gradually being introduced to the United Church congregations in Edmonton. We look forward to meeting with Evelyn and Dave, and welcoming them at Robertson-Wesley as we continue our journey towards reconciliation and implementation of the calls to action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.



David Elliot and Evelyn Day

Common Ground – “Living the 8th Fire”:

Common Ground is a ministry created by Michelle Nieviadomy, Oskapewis, ICPM. This ministry creates space, opportunity, and gatherings for Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities to meet together. The wider ecumenical community is welcomed to join in this journey of reconciliation, friendship, and continued sharing of knowledge through dialogue and deeper understanding.

“Living the 8th Fire”, is based on CBC’s 8th Fire documentary. ICPM and MFWR are hosting a nine week small group using this discussion-based curriculum.

To register or for more information, contact:

Michelle.iskwew@gmail.com

Session Dates: April 7, May 5, June 2, October 6, November 3, and December 1, 2018 ; February-April, 2019.

Educational Opportunities:

1. The University of Alberta has a FREE online twelve week module Indigenous Canada course for which you can register. To date 20,000 people have completed this course which is a broad survey of Indigenous subjects from art to world view. This online course was voted the most popular and excellent course for 2017 (CBC March 2018)

2. Concordia College “Indigenous People and the Christian Faith: A new way Forward.” May 4-5, 2018. The conference will be loaded with music and art. To register:

www.eventbrite.ca/e/indigenous-people-christian-faith-a-new-way-forward-tickets-43139897595



The University of Alberta Indigenous Canada course

Updates: Magic Pantry and Community Dinner:

Following the legacy of George Ford, Janet Hughes and Gail deVos, these community outreach programs continue to thrive and grow!

Rhonda Black, coordinator, Allie Romano, chef, and a team of committed, compassionate volunteers have been fulfilling the mission of providing nutritious, delicious, economical meals to our greater community the second Saturday of each month. About 140 people attend each month, and are giving rave reviews! The companionship, friendship, and spirit of hospitality experienced by the people who attend and volunteers are awesome.

Another delightful experience connected to this dinner, the Spirited Arts studio, is open. After dinner, an opportunity to create is provided. Many people choose to attend and take away beautiful treasures that they craft, such as cards or painted rocks.

Magic Pantry provides bag lunches at noon each Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday.

Kristen Balfour-Safinuk, coordinator, and another team of committed, compassionate volunteers prepare and provide bag lunches for people from our surrounding neighbourhoods. A big change over the past few months is that sandwiches have been a part of the lunch. These sandwiches are greatly appreciated for the tasty nutrition that they provide. Some days up to twenty sandwiches or more can be distributed. Since this change, the number of people presenting for bag lunches has increased.

Future Directions:

In April, a Pod discussion was held to discuss the needs that may be unmet in our congregation and the wider community. The following categories from our anthem and creed were discussed:

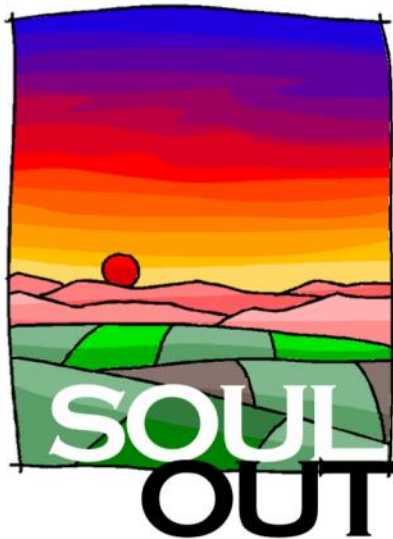
1. Community Engagement and Partnerships: How are we being called to live out our mission in the world? (Where are the energy and the passion right now?)
2. Affirming: How are we welcoming and inclusive of all people, abilities, needs etc. (LGBTQ+, Indigenous etc)?
3. Diversity: How are we standing, supporting, or advocating for people who have been alienated, oppressed, or faced with injustice?
4. Creation and Environment: How are we caring for the earth and all creation, i.e. to live with respect in creation?

These questions require more discernment. Any comments or suggestions would be most welcome.

As Casey Edmunds said at the 2018 Stewardship breakfast:

“Embrace the world around you!”

Dawn Allen



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

Deadline for the Summer edition submissions:
August 5, 2018
Distribution: **August 26, 2018**

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Help Robertson-Wesley “FILL-A-CRIB!”

Between Mother’s Day (May 13) and Father’s Day (June 17), we will be collecting supplies for the Bissell Centre to distribute to families with young babies.

Gifts can be brought in at any time during this period and placed in the portable crib that will be in the sanctuary.

Good news for the knitters in our congregation: The Bissell Centre is happy to accept handmade baby clothes and any new mother would be overjoyed to receive such a gift. Why not host a knitting party and have some fun creating some warm hats, or maybe even an entire layette?

If anyone is unsure of what to contribute, there are lots of families with young children in our congregation who would be happy to point you in the right direction.

Thank you for your generosity, and let’s fill that crib!
BISSELL CENTRE “FILL THE CRIB” WISH LIST

- DIAPERS –Sizes 4,5,6
- FORMULA: Enfamil A+, Good Start, Enfamil
- BOTTLES
- SIPPY CUPS
- NEW INFANT CLOTHING
- INFANT TOYS: teething rings, rattles for newborn babies
- BABY LOTION: Johnsons Baby Lotion, Moisturizing Baby Bath, Bedtime Lotion
- DIAPER CREAM
- SHAMPOO: Johnsons Head-to-Toe Body Wash, Bedtime Bath, Baby Bubble Bath & Wash
- RECEIVING BLANKETS
- TOWELS
- FACE CLOTHS
- BABY TUBS
- BIBS
- SOCKS
- PACIFIERS
- CAR SEATS (not expired ones)
- BABY WIPES
- FEMININE HYGIENE PRODUCTS