

Between the Aisles

A Robertson-Wesley United Church Quarterly

WINTER

Know Yourself
Know Your Own Spirit
Spend Time with Yourself
Try to Walk With Your Own Spirit

-Indigenous Elder Evelyn Day



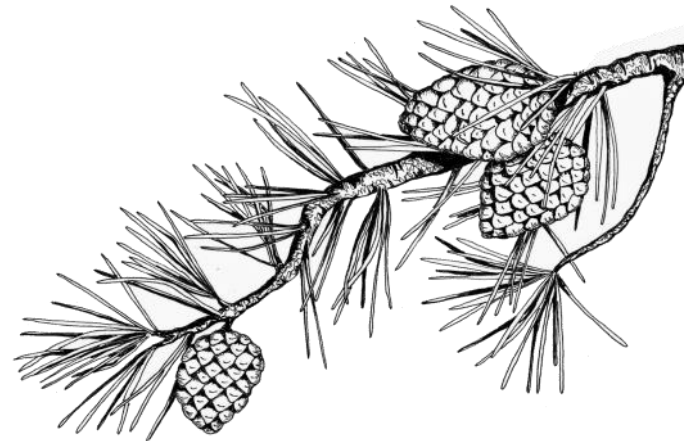
Editor's Welcome

It's winter time. The most wonderful season of the year. Planning and preparations are well underway for the singing, sharing and celebrations of Christmas. I relish the music and rich traditions more each year.

We are so fortunate to worship and practice together at Robertson-Wesley. It is very rare and sacred to me.

Season's greetings and best wishes to all.

Maria Adria



Can I cry in church?

Things I hear – over tea, in the grocery line up, on the bus...

When I get my life sorted out, I will come to church.

When I stop crying every time I hear that hymn, I will come to church.

When I have less questions, I will come to church.

What I wish I heard more often is:

My life is a mess, I will try and come to church!

I can't stop crying; I may as well come to church!

I am wrestling with God, I better come to church!

Yes, it is hard to come to a community event, worship service or Bible study with tears, questions and our hair in curlers...but that is how the disciples showed up! That is how the woman at the well showed up! And it is how Christians throughout our faith story have shown up!

Let us take the story of the first Christmas as our example. Who can come into the stable where the Saviour is crying out for us to join him? Mary – full of tears, sweat and discomfort. Joseph – full of doubt, fear and questions. The Shepherds – full of wonder and awe. The Sages – minds full of prophecies and eyes full of stars. This is not really a happy story, but a story about life in the real world. To come to the Divine with tears, anger, doubts and questions is exactly how we are to approach the Holy Mystery! Why? We are made by God to have all these emotions and thoughts! We also need God's love to comfort and confront us!

We also need God's community in all these times. Sometimes it is so we can remember grief has stages, as we witness someone who is moving through a similar journey. Sometimes it is so we can hear the Psalms' questions to witness others' wrestling. Other times it is so we can confess and bring to God a week or a life, tangled and confused. We do not need to be healthy before we go walking outside. Just the opposite; you go walking to get the energy to become healthier. So please know we do not to be perfectly happy or well before coming to church – or we would never see anyone (including me!)

Reverend Leigh Sinclair

United Church of Canada Decisions and Robertson-Wesley's Relations with the Wider Church

As of January 2019, the United Church of Canada's structure will be three-fold: local, regional and national (we used to be four bodies: local, Presbytery, Conference and National).

Locally, like here at R-W, the first change is that we will now be called a Community of Faith, instead of a pastoral charge. Each Community of Faith will have elected representatives to Northern Spirit Regional Council, which first meets in May 2019. In this new model, the governing body of communities of faith are responsible for some pastoral relations actions and decisions (previously the responsibility of a congregational meeting), such as preparing the community of faith profile (replaces joint needs assessment) and notifying the regional council of any proposed change in covenant.

Our new Regional Council (see the map in R-W's Memorial Hall) is called Northern Spirit. Shannon McCarthy and two current Conference staff people - Earl Raeburn and Kathy Jackson - Will be the new region's full time staff.

Many options were discussed as to how to live into our new model. Most motions stated that we want to give the Regional Councils the power to determine how to work together (for example: how many representatives from UCW, youth etc. will be on decision-making bodies). In the new structure, our priorities will be to covenant with Communities of Faith and encourage two new kinds of connections: clusters and networks. Networks will be groupings connected through shared love, passion, work, ministry – not geography. For example, United Church camps and their allies.

Clusters will be groupings based on shared geography which allows for meeting more often for conversation, visioning and caring for one another. For example, church administrators.

The national body will continue to be called the General Council, be facilitated by a Moderator and meet every three years.

One new part of our wider church will be a national, elected Board of Vocation leading a staffed Office for Vocation, which will be responsible for education, discernment and discipline for ministry personnel. A new

funding model was also approved, founded on a nationally equitable formula for assessing communities of faith.

There will be a new, flexible process for becoming a member of the Order of Ministry (ordained or diaconal minister.) The Candidacy Pathway will allow those who feel called to ministry leadership to enter the pathway through the candidacy boards within the Office of Vocation. In the pathway, each candidate will move through phases in ways that suit their own situation. There will also be ongoing conversation about how the pathway may best work for intercultural churches.

Conversations that began at the General Council have been forwarded to all of us to continue discerning How do we address ongoing injustices in our midst and in the world?

Who among our leaders will automatically be authorized to administer the sacraments (baptize and preside at communion)? Are sacraments parts of everyone's call and privileges or only certain orders of ministry?

How will we ensure equity at decision-making tables? Do we need a representative of every creed, colour, gender identity, sexual orientation, ability, age, economic status, etc. and how are these valued perspectives "counted"?

Reverend Leigh Sinclair

Contemplative Practices

Are you seeking an escape from the world, a quiet space, and a time for yourself where you will be inspired? Come and engage in contemplative practices. When you enter the 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. This self-directed program will lead you through spiritual practices, and artistic exploration with instructions at different stations throughout the room. Come for as long as you can. The theme is: Let it Be...Let it Go!

**Dec 5/18 | 7-8:30 PM Jan 7/19 | 7-8:30 AM
Mar 10/19 | 7-8:30 PM Apr 20/19 | 7-8:30 PM**

The Future of Faith is Diversity

Having spent a good portion of a week attending the North American Interfaith Conference (NAIN) this summer, I was both delighted and sad to learn how the future of faith is diversity. I was delighted on the one hand, to learn that churches will have to survive by being ecumenical, cosmopolitan, and multicultural in ways that are responsive to the community, with an increasingly global world that embraces both cultural pluralism and social diversity, sensitively. I was saddened, on the other hand, to learn that young Western populations are no longer attending churches for the most part, and that immigrant populations of faith in Canada might be - overwhelmingly - the only potential source for new members in the future once baby-boomers move past retirement.

While this was never directly a topic at the conference, except for one speaker named Shachi Kurl, a good number of people seemed to talk about this subject one way or another, repetitively. This left me to ask myself how many churches will close their doors in the next 10-20 years, or survive by somehow appealing to wider community needs and other cultures as they grow in new directions? Finally, I was left to ask myself, what does this mean for my faith or sense of community in the not too distant future?

I have heard people say that there are simply too many churches, and that many more will have to close relative to the number of practicing Christians. They also say that Christianity is merely transforming. That people are no longer expected to go the church to be good citizens and that our faith is, today, often much more genuine and inspired by direct community needs, as opposed to past social obligations.

Today, for many Christians and churches to claim their faith as genuine, we often have to deal with issues that Christians of the past have failed to address. This includes everything from reconciliation with First Nations for residential schools, LGBTQ issues, and access for those with differing abilities. When faced with critical issues such as these and knowledge of the scarred history of these groups, it can be difficult to create space that is educated in responding affirmatively. Those at the NAIN Conference seemed to share this burden, although faith communities that obligated attendance like Christians have in the past, were much slower addressing these issues culturally. If anything, I have learned that maybe our faith has to be a genuine choice, and one that flourishes throughout a diverse spectrum of community needs, for it to emerge strong and vibrant into the future. "Our Statement of Welcome & Inclusion" answers this call, should we choose to live by it.

By Melisa Guilbeault

Our 2018 R+W Women's Weekend Anthem

Our 2018 Women's Weekend is a community of tenacious women celebrating life:

the spirit of **peace**
where friendship and love abide;

the spirit of **laughter and joy**
where spontaneity bubbles over;

the spirit of **adventure**
where we travel together on our faith journey;

the spirit of **trust**
where we respect each other with openness and honesty;

the spirit of **meditation**
where we pause to look inward;

the spirit of **creativity**
where ideas, activities and symbols abound;

the spirit of **beauty**
where we appreciate all Creation;

the spirit of **challenge**
where we encourage ourselves and each other to grow;

the spirit of **acceptance**
where we have the freedom to express our individuality;

the spirit of **togetherness**
where we blend our faith flavours.

R-W 2018 Women's Weekend **infused with the Spirit.**



Prelude

Instrumental Music: What's the Point?

Recently, I've been wondering about the role of instrumental music in the worship service.

During my various professional experiences leading music in different denominations and congregations, I've noticed that the variety of expectations people bring to worship extends to how they approach the instrumental music, specifically the prelude and postlude. What does this music mean to them personally? Congregationally? How do they interact with it?

I was invited to play for a Lutheran church in Montreal that really valued all the music in the service, and boy, I don't think I've ever worked so hard! Why? Because the congregation expected a very lengthy prelude (15–20 minutes). Their conversation stopped out in the foyer. When they came into the sanctuary, they expected the prelude to bring them into the realm of the sacred, to allow them to focus and use the music for preparation and meditation. This experience raised some questions: Can the prelude allow us to be still in the midst of our busy lives and block out some of the noise of the week? Can it turn our attention to the important things in our lives, especially our relationship with God and each other? Does it allow us to prepare ourselves for worship?

Other congregations, like a gathering I played for recently, may use and experience instrumental music in a different way. Is the music just for setting the mood? Or is it just for background behind the conversation?

Personally, I think the music, whether congregational, choral, or instrumental, should always enhance worship in some way by reinforcing the message, theme, readings, or season. Most musicians try to make the music relevant to what is happening in the service or in the congregation. As Luther supposedly said, "Music is the handmaiden of theology."

The prelude and postlude play a special role in enhancing worship and theology. In his article "Prelude, Offertory, Postlude," Rev. Frank Hughes Jr. describes the prelude and postlude this way:

"Like musical bookends, they bracket everything that happens in between and are theologically related to the central meaning of worship. If a picture is worth a thousand words, then the prelude and postlude are worth a library."

In an article for *Ministry* published in 1939 but still relevant today, Stanley Ledington speaks of the prelude as "the beginning of the service, not something used to quiet a noisy congregation....The prelude is not for entertainment or for the purpose of displaying technique, but to prepare for the consideration of sacred things." In "What We Do and Why We Do It," Norman Bendroth discusses the other bookend, the postlude. "The postlude captures the grandeur of God's majesty and of the day's worship. Increasingly, many congregations remain seated during the postlude as a fitting time of reflection at the conclusion of worship and out of courtesy to the organist or musicians." Rev. Frank Hughes Jr. states that "the music at the end of the service pulls together feelings and attitudes already expressed in word and song." In *A Sunday Guide to Worship*, the authors suggest that while the postlude is not a formal part of the service, "The congregation could be encouraged in the bulletin or by the choir to remain seated to listen."

When selecting instrumental music that will satisfy its purpose, why not start with these questions, first posed by Stanley Ledington? "Is it good music? Is it suitable for the use to which it is to be put? Will it draw attention to me, or will it tend to induce the proper worshipful, reverent mood?"

Amen!

Tammy-Jo Mortensen,

Music Director



Decembers Theme: *Making Spaces*

As a Christian community we take time to make room in our lives for God to come in and be reborn in hope, peace, joy and love. We will begin by physically emptying our worship space to explore spiritually making room for the Christ. We will let go of our expectations of self and other and identify what is most important in our spiritual lives and practice mutual invitation. What will it take to make space for Jesus this Christmas?

White Gift Sunday

December 16, 10:30 am

White Gift Sunday began in 1904 in Ohio where a Methodist ministers wife and two daughters came up with the idea of giving gifts to people in need. Gifts were wrapped in white so that they would be anonymous.

Here in Edmonton we gather gifts for children, youth and adults which are distributed to people in need through the Bissell Centre. If you choose to wrap the gifts in white, can you please indicate on the gift what it is. For a full list of needed items please see the back cover of this issue.

Blue Christmas Service of Healing

December 16, 7:00 pm

Christmas is a holy time that is not always happy. It brings up so many memories that heighten our feelings of grief or sadness, pain or loneliness. This is a service of quiet reflection, remembrance and peace. We hope that this service will bring a sense of peace in this sacred season with quiet music, scripture, silence and candle light. Everyone is welcome.

Christmas Day Service

December 25, 10:30 am

Christmas Day Service led by Córdet

Service of Lessons and Carols

December 9, 4:00 pm

Words and Music for Christmas. A lovely, gentle candlelight service to celebrate the season.

This service is a classic tradition, with a series of nine scripture readings that take us through the whole story of God's promise, Israel's longing and waiting, and the fulfilment of promise in the birth of Christ.

The story is accompanied by a feast of choral music and carol singing.

Advent Noon Hour Concerts

Thursdays 12:10-12:50

Dec 6 – Joel Gray, trumpet & Tammy-Jo Mortensen, keyboards
A busy trumpet player teams up again with Robertson-Wesley's Music Director for some Advent music.

Dec 13 – Jolaine Kerley, soprano & John Brough, keyboards
One of Edmonton's leading sopranos in collaboration with Holy Trinity Anglican's Music Director.

Dec 20 – Judith Richardson, soprano; Jennifer O'Donnell, soprano & Kim Cousineau, piano
What do two amazing sopranos need for a successful concert – a talented accompanist, of course!

Come find some calm in the middle of your day!

Sponsored by the Robertson-Wesley Music Society.

Freewill donations accepted at the door.



Christmas Eve

December 24th

4:00 pm Family Celebration
An interactive celebration for all ages

8:00 pm Contemporary Service
Christmas Eve for all ages with candlelight

11:00 pm Choral Service
Choral music and songs of joy for the Holy night

*Robertson-Wesley services
are open to all people*



HONOURING OUR ELDERS

As we enter November we pause to remember, to honour and to show our respect in many ways. We take time to remember the sacrifices made by people in the great wars which provided us with a life of relative security, freedom and abundance. And as we move toward winter and watch the leaves fall from the trees we remember loved ones who have passed away. We reflect on what we have learned, where we have been, and how our lives have been changed by the many important people in our lives.

In November we would like to take some time to focus on the theme of Eldership. We invite you to reflect on the role of elders in our faith community.

Faith is a life long journey, not one that stops when you are baptized, or confirmed. It does not stop when you get married, or have children. It does not stop when you hit 65 and retire, and it certainly does not stop when you move into your 80's, 90's, 100's. The faith journey continues into death and beyond. For as it says in Romans 8:38-39, "I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

With this in mind, I have been reflecting on what the role of seniors and elders are in our midst. Have we lost the role of elders in this post-modern era in our faith community? In this fast paced and constantly changing world, have we forgotten to slow down and take the time to name who our elders are and listen to them? In a world where information is at our finger tips, has the role of elders become unnecessary or obsolete? In a country where seniors are grouped together in care facilities, where extended families are spread across the country, have we lost a vital piece of the fabric of who we are? I do not believe these statements to be true.

It saddens me when I hear Elders in our community say:
I have retired from church.

I've done just about every role in the church so I don't have anything more to offer.

There is nothing here for me anymore.

I don't have the energy to do these things anymore.

I will just slow everyone down.

How can we dispel the myth that seniors are no longer vital to the life and purpose of the church? Perhaps we need to find a new way of acknowledging seniors in the faith community while walking with our seniors as they move into this new stage of life. In some cultures, Elders

are story-keepers. In the New Testament of the Bible, elders were responsible for the primary leadership and oversight of the church; they taught, they visited the sick, they prayed, and they cared for the church. Elders have a wealth of experience to draw on and provide others with a unique perspective. So what is the role of elders today?

In reflecting on the role elders have played in my own life, it is clear that what has been offered and shared is invaluable. Listening to the stories of how their faith has sustained them and guided them through life fills me with hope.

If I were to sum up what I have received and learned from my elders so far it would be this:

Patience – the importance of slowing down and being present in the moment.

Perspective – as you go through life, your perspective changes and the things that seemed important now may not be later, the immense fear or sadness will lessen with time.

Priorities – always put your loved ones first, find balance between work and play, and do your best but remain humble.

Promise – we are not alone. God is with us, God is caring for us, sustaining us, strengthening us and loving us for who we are.

In a faith community, elders help us to remember where we have been and what we have learned. They remind us to pause and pray, and to have faith – even when things seem impossible, for nothing is impossible for God. I think that we are here to remind our elders that their time has not passed, that their wisdom is essential in understanding God's call for our community. We need to take time to invite our elders to share their stories and their wisdom with us.

I cannot adequately express my respect and desire to be with and listen to the wisdom that my elders hold. Being able to live in a multi-age community is a gift! Let us take time this month to intentionally listen to our elders and hear how faith has lead them to this moment. Where do they see the spirit at work in our world and in our community? Where is God leading us? How has our past led us to this moment and what will we take with us as we move together in to the future?

Let us pause, remember, honour, and show our respect.

Reverend Karen Bridges

Making Space for the Advent of God!

We take time in Advent, the weeks leading up to Christmas, to make room in our lives for God to be reborn in hope, peace, joy and love. This December at RW we will begin by physically emptying our worship space to explore the spirituality of making room for the Christ.

Why does the Holy Spirit need more room to move? Our homes and workspaces, our phones and our desks get filled with so many things - many are sacred and important reminders of our values (pictures of important people, calendars reminding us of our next gathering with friends). Many things only remind us of things we should do (books to read, clothes to make fit again, gifts we should not re-gift/donate).

What if everything in your living space was either a tool you use on a regular basis (calendar, utensils) or an object that brings you joy (a game you play, a picture of great people and memories, clothes that keep you warm)? What if there were blank walls and surfaces to allow for you to daydream instead of dust? What if there were "booked blank spaces" on your calendar (for prayer, a walk, a nap, a stretch)?

For example, do we value our bedrooms as places of sacred prayer, love and rest? The things in your bedroom that brings about worry, anxiety or stress (laundry, electronics) can be stored elsewhere. The family room may need to be voided of all screens to encourage conversations or it may need to have all the screens in it to free the dining room of them! If an office for work or school is in your home, can its door be closed one day a week to prevent splitting off our attention from our other valued activities?

How will you make space for the Spirit in 2019?

Rev Leigh Sinclair

MESSY WEDNESDAYS

Families with children gather to eat a meal together at no cost to the family, there are activities for the children before and after dinner and adults take the opportunity to engage in conversation during the evening. 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! *at 5:45 pm in Memorial Hall*

JAN 9, 23 | FEB 13, 27 | MAR 13, 27

KOINONIA WORSHIP

is nearing its 50th year at Robertson-Wesley United Church!

In a nutshell, it all began around 1968 when Dr. Aubrey Edworthy and Assistant Minister Rev Bob Stobie, along with several long-term members of the congregation, made a decision to form an alternate worship. Services were planned and conducted by small groups with support from the ministers and other resource people (such as Rev. Barry Moore, Chaplain at U of A, Bill Hyrchuk and Al Fielding). Soon Dr. Gordon Oaks from Fort Nelson was invited to join Robertson's team ministry and one of his duties was to be lead resource for the contemporary worship service. At the time little was known in the United Church about "contemporary" lay-led worship, so it was a courageous risk for Robertson Church to make.

The "experiment" seems to have paid off.....the group is still meeting once a month for fellowship around the dinner table and small group-led worship!! The members also plan a progressive dinner in December, pack and deliver White Gifts at Christmas, assist in worship at the Easter Sunrise Service and host a pancake breakfast. There is also an annual retreat in the late spring, and a BBQ and worship planning at the end of August.

Amongst the list of 2018/19 season's themes are: Loving our Neighbours, Gifts of the Spirit, the Discipline of Hospitality, New Vision of the United Church. Each get-together includes lots of singing, readings, discussions and circle prayer.

Newcomers and visitors are warmly welcomed to the monthly potluck dinners and services.....we look forward to welcoming YOU just keep an eye on the R-W Report on Sunday mornings for information on the dates and themes. Hope to see you soon!

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

On the 3rd Wednesday of each month let us dive into a feast of body and mind! We will provide a main course to enjoy along with a potluck of your salads and desserts and as we partake we will learn about one aspect of our Bible and how it relates to our lives today. In Memorial Hall at 6:00 pm.

Can you tell me more about... C-O-M-M-U-N-I-T-Y D-I-N-N-E-R ?

Recently, I was chatting with a long time congregation member, who had heard many times about the infamous 'Community Dinners'. They had great questions: What are they exactly, who attends, who helps, who funds them? This presented an opportunity to share.

Once a month a group of 30-40 volunteers devote time, ranging from an hour to 6 hours, to help put on a supper. A wonderful group of leadership and planners are the backbone of the organizational part of the dinner. Every month we have someone new sign up on the sheets in Memorial Hall to help for the very first time. For some, helping is a call to outreach ministry, for some it's an act of service, for some it's simply fun to be around others who like to help – chop veggies, serve food, vacuum carpets to name a few of the tasks. Kitchen parties are the best kind!

Who is invited to the dinners? We are, they are, we all are - people who attend our church, those who live in the neighborhood, others hear about the dinner within central Edmonton community outreach communication. Many guests are 'regulars', and many join us for the first time. People come to enjoy a nutritious, homemade meal, join in conversation and be in the company of others. It's warm and friendly, welcoming and inclusive. There are no criteria to be a guest, all who are here are welcome around our table. So, come out sometime and join us. You'll see what it feels like to sit around a table as a guest, or sign up to help out. And, we encourage volunteers to grab a plate and enjoy the meal with company of our guests.

We are fortunate to have the Helen Mack Fund available to support the costs for food and supplies. I have a feeling Helen Mack knew that food and fellowship warms both the belly and the soul.

Honestly, the best way to 'get' what community dinner is all about is to experience it.

Rhonda Black
Community Dinner Coordinator

A Partial Time-Line of Multiculturalism & Human Rights in Canada

by Melisa Guilbeault, selected from a presentation at the North American Interfaith Conference, by Maigan van Der Giessen, on behalf of the John Humphrey Centre for Peace and Human Rights.

1820. The Canadian government removed Indigenous children from their homes. Some, by force of the RCMP. Residential schooling continues for generations.

1867. Women were admitted to as "persons" under the British North American Act.

1872. First homestead legislation: Ukraine, Scandinavian, Danish, Icelanders, Mormons, Dukhobors, where given land. First Nation's criticized this as unfair and a violation of Aboriginal title.

1884. The Indian Act was revised to prohibit and criminalize all Aboriginal religious ceremonies. Any person associated with, or assisting such efforts would be arrested and imprisoned for 2-6 months.

1914. Indian Act requirement that Western Aboriginals seek official permission before appearing in Aboriginal "costume" in any public dance, show, exhibition, stam-pede or pageant.

1916. Women's right to vote gained from Women's suffrage occurred first in Manitoba. Alberta did so the same year. 24 years later, Quebec followed suit.

1930's. During the great depression, Canada took on very few immigrants and less Jewish people than any Western Nation. At the same time, 17,000 Jewish people fought for Canada in the war.

1938. Al Rashid, the first Mosque was built in Canada.

1939. Canada turns away a boat of Jewish refugees fleeing Nazi Germany. This was known as the MS St. Louis. Most resettled in Europe where it is estimated a quarter died in concentration camps.

1960. Canada passes its first federal law to protect a citizen's fundamental freedoms and human rights. Unless you were a homosexual citizen, then you had no rights at all.

1968. Homosexuality was decriminalized in Canada. Prior to this all homosexuals were considered criminals. The RCMP spied upon, arrested, imprisoned and ruined many lives.

1972. Canada becomes the first country in the world to adopt the Multiculturalism Act. This confirmed the

rights of Aboriginal peoples and the legal status of Canada's two official languages.

1977. The Federal Government amends the Canadian Human Rights Act. It addresses discrimination based on sex, religion, race, family status and color. The Human Rights Tribunal and Commission is established to investigate and judge cases of discrimination.

1996. The last Residential School in Canada closes.

2003. Same sex marriage was recognized across Canada, allowing it to become the 4th country in the world to do so.

2008 Prime Minister Harper apologizes to all First Nations people for the horribly prejudiced, devastating, and damaging effects of residential schools.

2012. The vast majority of transgender people in Ontario, could now get government I.D. in their lived gender, after a Human Rights Tribunal hearing in XY vs Ontario.

2016. Bill C-16 was passed in parliament allowing gender identity and gender expression as protected grounds to the Canadian Human Rights Act; and also the Criminal Code provisions.

2017. All Provinces and Territories legally acknowledge transgender existence without the requirement for surgery. This means all people can now get a government issued driver's license.

2018. Prime Minister Justin Trudeau apologizes sincerely for the horrific treatment of homosexual Canadians by their own government.

Indigenous Elder Evelyn

Day shares Wisdom

Some twenty people gathered together to learn from Indigenous Elder Evelyn Day. Elder Evelyn began by welcoming and greeting each one of the attendees in person. She went around the room shaking hands and warmly met each one of us. That was very special in itself.

Elder Evelyn started off by inviting questions. And so the afternoon began. The session was scheduled for two hours. We listened, spellbound, for three and a half hours. We learned about the striking differences between "settler culture" and Indigenous culture.

Decisions are made based on what's best not just for

the individuals concerned but what's best for the next seven generations of all peoples and all lands and all animals.

Consensus is built gradually, in successive meetings. Elders guide the others until the others learn to guide and lead in their own time.

We were given a very tiny glimpse of the spirit and culture destroying milieu of residential schools.

Elder Evelyn spoke of the power of the Great Spirit. That power is always with her. She does not use it against people and never will. But it is there. And it works to bring justice.

We heard about the Animal Spirits which have guided her. The Eagle (her mother's Spirit Animal) which wraps its great wings around her, encompassing her in love and protection. The Grizzly Bear which she felt breathing on her back. Now she understands where her great anger emanates from. And the howling Wolf who facilitated the crying out of her Grief.

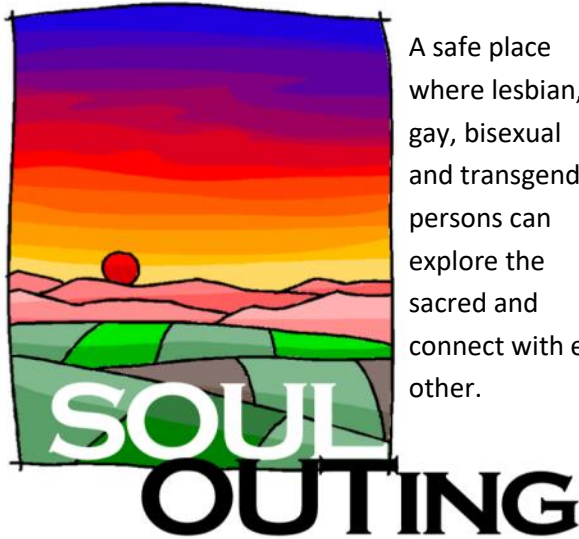
It was beautiful to observe Evelyn's white male partner who accompanied and assisted her. I could see the powerful pride, glowing respect and enviable love he had for her and every word she said.

What a captivating afternoon it was. An attendee asked if it was suitable to clap to show our appreciation and gratitude. Elder Evelyn said, "no, that will disrupt the Spirit that is circulating around the room". Best to remain mostly silent and quietly murmur our assent.

I am so grateful to Dawn Allen who facilitated this enriching event. She provided sustenance for the hungry parishioners. I noticed she had a special snack just for Elder Evelyn Day who was visibly delighted by the humble but personalized token of respect, caring and love.

I remember this afternoon and am flooded with feelings. Elder Evelyn Day emanates gracious humility, overt love and simmering strength. She is wise beyond words. Her kindness infuses each word and lesson. Since that afternoon, I am changed. I am more whole, and more quiet. I am listening for the animals, whispering around me.

Maria Adria



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 Spring (Lent) Edition submissions:
Feb. 10th, 2019.
Release date: **March 3, 2019.**

Did you know?
You can donate to the church using PayPal?



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White Christmas Wish List

Infant (0-2): Clothes, Rattles, Plush Toys, Musical Toys

Children (3-11): Coloring Books, Puzzles, Lego, Cars & Trucks, Barbies, Dolls, Sesame Street Toys, Toothbrushes, Toothpaste, Bubble Bath

Teens (12+): Gift Cards, Remote Control Vehicles, Craft or Science Sets, Hand Held Electronic Games, Sporting Goods (Soccer/Footballs).
Cosmetics (Nail Polish, Hair Accessories, Makeup), Hoodies

Men's Stockings

- Deck of Cards
- Travel Mug
- Bus Tickets
- Gift Cards
- Hand Warmers
- Thermal/ Wool Socks
- Small Sweets/ Chocolates/ Gum
- NEW Underwear
- Gloves/Toques/Scarves
- Body Wash/Shampoo
- Razor/ Shaving Cream

Women's Stockings

- Cosmetics (Mascara, Lip Balm, Eye Shadow)
- Travel Mug
- Bus Tickets
- Gift Cards
- Hand Warmers
- Thermal/ Wool Socks
- Small Sweets/ Chocolates/ Gum
- NEW underwear
- Gloves/Toques/Scarves
- Shampoo/ Shower Gel
- Lotions / Razors