



2019

Robertson-Wesley Annual Report

Budget Information Session
Sunday, February 9, 2020

Annual Congregational Meeting
Sunday, February 23, 2020

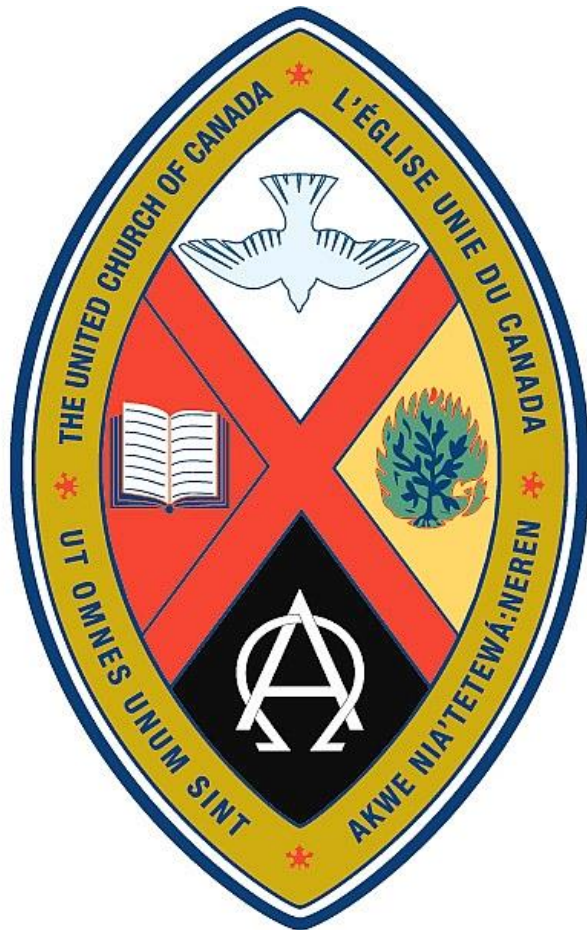


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Trustees of Robertson-Wesley United Church

General Purpose: The Trustees are authorized on behalf of the Congregation to hold in trust all properties of the Congregation.

Membership: There shall be no fewer than 8 Trustees. Vacancies shall be filled by election by the Congregation.

Specific Duties: To erect and repair buildings; to permit use of property for church purposes; to sell, mortgage, exchange or lease the property with the consent of Presbytery. Trustees' activities are restricted and governed by public statute, the UCs "Trust of Model Deed" and lawful directions of the Official Board or Church Board or Church Council and of other courts of the UC having jurisdiction.

Current Trustees:

Vital Ouellette, Sylvia Duffus, Lorne Langman, Allison Seymour, Bud Squair, Karen Hansen, Harry Bridges, Ray McCall

2019 Statistics

Average Sunday Morning Attendance:

January	159	Confirmations	3
February	143	Reaffirmations	4
March	164	Transfers In.....	2
April	215	Transfers Out	2
May	170	Baptisms	10
June	157	Funeral/Memorial Services*	14
July	110	Weddings*	15
August	129	* For services performed both at R-W and offsite.	
September	184		
October	169		
November	145		
December	174		

Minutes: Annual Congregational Meeting February 10, 2019

58 in attendance

AGENDA ITEM	DISCUSSION
1. Call to Order	Colleen Graves welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order 12:03pm
2. Invocation	Rev Leigh Sinclair opened the meeting with a prayer and a call to Holy Manners.
3. Opening Hymn	<i>I am the dream</i> – MV106
4. Act of Remembrance	Rev. Karen Bridges and Rev. Leigh Sinclair read the names of who died in 2018 in an act of remembrance and lead us in prayer.
5. MOTION to allow adherents be allowed to vote:	MOTION: Adherents be allowed to vote at this 2019 Annual Congregational Meeting. Moved: Lea Callebaut Second: Jane Chesebrough Motion Carried.
6. Approval of Agenda	MOTION: Accept the agenda for the 2019 Annual Congregational Meeting be approved as presented. Moved: Gary Pecknold Second: Trisha-Lee Wasmund

	Motion Carried.
7. Approval of the 2018 Meeting Minutes	MOTION: Approve the meeting minutes of the February 11, 2018 Annual Congregational Meeting Moved: Richard Kennedy Second: Ted Blezard Motion Carried.
8. Approval of Annual Report 2018	MOTION: Accept the 2018 annual report as printed. Moved: Richard Kennedy Second: Karen Hansen Motion Carried. Moved: Thanks to people who wrote the report and those that assembled it Moved: Karen Hansen Second: Lynn Maki Motion Carried
9. Stewardship Report	Ian Inglis presented the Stewardship report and the results of the latest Stewardship campaign. (The report can be found in the annual report).
10. Fundraising Report	John Fleming presented the fundraising report. All are invited to attend the annual Fundraising meeting that plans the next year. This meeting will be March 10, 2019.
11. Changes in the Structure of the UCC	Leigh Sinclair gave a brief overview of what has changed in the Church structure. Discussion revolved around funding models and what happens in emergency situation. M&S remains a voluntary donation as opposed to assessment from National. Leigh broke down how RWUC gives to M&S. Oversight now comes from Northern Spirit Regional Council. We connect directly via our 4 representatives. The Office of Vocation will be the governing body to oversee ministry personnel.
12. Motion to accept 2018 financial statements	MOTION: Acceptance of the 2018 financial statements as audited year ending December 31, 2018. Moved: Donna Chmielewski Second: Gary Pecknold Motion Carried.
13. Motion to accept 2019 budget.	MOTION: Approval of the 2019 annual budget as presented. Moved: Donna Chmielewski Second: Richard Kennedy Motion Carried. Discussion revolved around the kitchen renovation and concerns about the budget being faith based. Questions about the addition of BBQs and Spirited Arts Studio being added to the expense budget. Fundraising concerns about the increase to 20K from 14K and how we would achieve the new goal. It is the goal for the fundraising group to see how it can be achieved.
14. Appointment of Auditors	MOTION: Continue using Ellis Group LLP. to audit our 2019 Financial Statements. Moved: Donna Chmielewski Second: Gary Pecknold Motion Carried.
15. Recognition of Retired Official Members	John Fleming recognized the following retiring board members: Gary Pecknold – Presbytery Rep Joan Pecknold – Presbytery Rep Michelle Salomons – Past Chair Sarah Wiens – Spiritual POD Donna Chmielewski – Treasurer
16. Election of 2016 of Official Board Members and Trustees	Ron Soans presented the following nomination slate: Past Chair: Colleen Graves Chair: John Fleming Incoming Chair Doug Sollows

<p>16. Continued</p>	<p>Treasurer: Tory Bachmann Secretary: Paul Verdin M&P: Lisa Fairweather Property: Jack Waters Member-At Large: Open 4 Regional Reps – Felicia Drever, Trisha-Lee Wasmund, Tamara Wright, vacant Rev Karen Bridges Rev. Leigh Sinclair</p> <p>Motion: Ratify John Fleming as Incoming Chair 2018 Moved: Karen Hansen Second: Lisa Fairweather Motion Carried</p> <p>Motion: To approve Doug Sollows as Incoming Chair, Tamara Wright as Regional Rep and Tory Bachman as Treasurer as well as Chris Gowers was nominated from the floor as Member at Large. One Regional Rep remains vacant Moved: Ron Soans Second: Karen Hansen Motion Carried.</p> <p>Motion: Give the Board the power to fill the vacant positions until the next congregational meeting Moved: Ron Soans Second: Ted Blezard Motion Carried.</p> <p>Colleen Graves presented the official Gavel to John Fleming as our new Board Chair.</p>
<p>14. New Business</p>	<p>Lynn Maki spoke to the need of a goal for M&S. Motion: RWUC to set a goal of \$25,500.00 for M&S fundraising for the year of 2019 Moved: Lynn Maki Second: Nancy Heule Motion Carried</p> <p>Discussion revolved around the need of a committee dedicated to achieving the 2019 goal. Motion: Strike a 3 person task force to work with Sylvia Duffus in M&S in achieving this goal Moved: Felicia Drever Second: Richard Kennedy Carried</p>
<p>15. Closing Hymn</p>	<p><i>Go Forth with God - VU418</i></p>
<p>16. Benediction</p>	<p>Karen Bridges offered closing remarks.</p>
<p>17. Adjournment</p>	<p>MOTION: Move to Adjourn the AGM – 13:25 Moved: Sarah Wiens Carried</p>

Colleen Graves, Chair
Robertson Wesley United Church
Official Annual Congregational Meeting

Paul Verdin, Secretary
February 10, 2019

Official Robertson-Wesley Church Board

It has been a pleasure to serve as chair of the Robertson-Wesley Board for the year 2019.

I am thankful to our board members for their hard work and dedication. We are very blessed to have so many kind, caring and capable people willing to serve. I am also very thankful for the hard work of our many volunteers, our pod leaders and committee members. Our wonderful staff—Ministers, Administrator, Facilities Manager, Financial Manager, Music Staff, Events Staff, Arts Staff and Affirming Staff—continue to do the work that helps us grow and thrive as a church.

We are so fortunate to have welcomed so many new faces to our church again this year. As we grow and add new members, we can do more things and share new ideas. It is exciting to see new members come, feel welcome, and want to call our church, Robertson-Wesley United Church, their place of worship.

We also remember those of our congregation who have passed away this year. We continue to feel their presence in our midst as we continue the work they have started.

When we gather and share caring, kindness and friendship, we can feel the Holy Spirit is present. I am grateful for the continued financial support from our members that supports our mission to do the work of Christ.

This year, we said good bye to our long time Music Director, Tammy Jo Mortensen, and thanked her for her sixteen years of service here at Robertson-Wesley. Our Ministry and Personnel Committee is now hard at work to fill this staff vacancy.

As a board, we approved our church's new Rental Policy, developed by our Finance Committee, helping us comply with any CRA requirements when renting space in our building.

We also approved our new Animal Procedure Document which outlines the rules for when animals are on site.

Each year, in March, we have a fundraising planning meeting to schedule the fundraisers for the year. Please plan to attend if you have a fundraising idea you would like to present.

It has been an honour to serve as your chair this year and I look forward to serving as Past Chair in 2020.

Our incoming chair for 2020 is Doug Sollows.

Special thanks to Colleen Graves for serving as chair and past chair. Her guidance and support has been invaluable and is deeply appreciated.

Respectfully Submitted by

John Fleming

Chair, Robertson-Wesley Official Board

2019-2020 Themes that Unite Worship, Programming and Outreach at R-W

The worship, education, spiritual formation and mission and outreach programming are united this year by monthly themes. Even the display window outside Memorial Hall and the sanctuary environment continue to shift month to month.

This program year's themes (September 2019 to June 2020) were first woven together at the year's worship planning meeting (with the ministers and the music director) after a time of prayerful reflection on what we had been hearing all year. The themes were then broadened to include workshops, worships and both adult and children's faith formation programming.

These themes emerged from 3 sources.

1. The DEAP pod suggested six words that describe R-W. These words come in pairs to show the tension and fluidity that is held here at the church:

Traditional/Edgy; Broken/Blessed; Questing/Valued.

2. From there we heard these words reflected in *A Song of Faith*, the most recent United Church creed. It says:
"We are called together by Christ as broken but hopeful believers.

Loving what he loved, living what he taught, striving to be faithful servants of God in our time and space...It requires the Spirit to reorient it, helping it to live an emerging faith while honouring tradition, challenging it to live by grace rather than entitlement for
we are called to be a blessing to the earth."

We feel that we are being called to create a growth mindset as disciples of Jesus. We need to have a fresh start, that begins with an openness to what God is offering us and calling us to be. We will spend the year both creating space and holding space for the Spirit to be at work in our midst and challenging us to answer the call to discipleship, allyship, compassion, inclusion and healing.

3. We will do this by engaging in **spiritual practices**. The spiritual practices that we will focus on this year were informed by Michael W. Foss's book, *Power Surge*. We will explore one spiritual practice each month and we have added a couple more that reflect the United Church ethos. **They are: daily prayer, weekly worship, scripture reading, listening/discerning, service, spiritual friendship, giving, balance & wholeness, and Sabbath.** Our hope is that by engaging in these spiritual practices our faith will be deepened. We will be spiritually nourished and we will learn as a community new techniques and practices that prepare us as disciples to go out into the world and be faithful servants of God in our time and space.

Here are the themes of 2019-2020 Program Year and the monthly Spiritual Practice:

Sept: Called to be Disciples: Prayer

Oct: Stop hiding...Let your light shine: Weekly Worship

Nov: We are broken but hopeful believers: Daily Scripture reading

Dec: Find the frame where we are freed: Listening/Discerning

Jan: Time to Follow: Serving

Feb: Time to Lead: Serving

Mar: Time to Quest: Spiritual Friendship

Apr: The wealth of abundant giving: Giving

May: Striving for blessed balance: Balance/Wholeness

June: Simply Be: Sabbath

What's Happening at R-W?

A typical week at Robertson-Wesley

Monday - Friday

Church Facility Hours: 8:30 am – 10:00 pm, Office hours: 8:30 am - 4:30 pm (closed 12:00 pm -1:00 pm for lunch)

Weekly Schedule

Sundays

- Choir/ special music groups come in before Worship to practice
- Sundays before or after Worship are popular for meetings of pods, groups or committees.
- Worship begins at 10:30 am and goes until 11:30 am, usually later
- Kids go to Kids Church and Youth Discussion. 4 -6 times a year we have whole family worship upstairs together
- Fellowship Coffee & Tea is held in Memorial Hall where people visit
- During fellowship Grocery cards are sold, sometimes other items are sold (baked goods, event tickets, etc)

Mondays

- Facilities staff meet in the morning to plan for the week ahead
- Magic Pantry bag lunches are created in the morning
- Magic Pantry bagged lunches are handed out from 12:00 pm - 1:00 pm
- Our tenant Grandin Preschool has morning and afternoon classes
- Our tenant Cantilon Choirs has evening practices
- Spirited Art Studio is Monday nights from 7:00 pm -8:30 pm
- Our tenant Songkraft has evening classes from 3:00 pm until the evening.

Tuesdays

- Yoga class from 10:00 am - 11:00 am, this class runs September - May, but has a break for Christmas
- Our Tenant Grandin Preschool has morning and afternoon classes, sometimes Grandin kids come up for kids Yoga before the regular class
- The Ministers meet on Tuesday mornings.
- The Ministers and Choir Director meet on Tuesday mornings to plan Worship.
- Two external Organists have regular Tuesday practice with the R-W organ
- Scripture Reflections at 12:10 pm, where people come to discuss the upcoming scriptures
- Magic Pantry bagged lunches are handed out from 12:00 pm - 1:00 pm
- Our tenant Cantilon Choirs have evening practices
- Tuesday nights are a popular meeting time for Pods, Groups and Committees.
- Our tenant Songkraft has evening classes from 3:00 pm until the evening.

Wednesdays

- Our Tenant Grandin Preschool has morning and afternoon classes
- A volunteer comes in to perform the Weekly Cheque run, cheques are printed for invoices and cheque requests.
- R-W is a Food Bank depot and the Food Bank trucks deliver hampers here between 1:00 and 2:00 pm, a volunteer crew helps to sort the hampers and assist the customers
- Staff Meeting is held starting at 1:30 pm
- Spirited Art Studio is Wednesday afternoons from 1:30 pm -3:30 pm
- The Choir of R-W practices from 7:30-9:30 pm
- Our tenant Songkraft has evening classes from 3:00 pm until the evening.
- An AA (Alcoholics Anonymous) group meets from 8:00 -9:30 pm

Thursdays

- The Bulletins and RW Reports are printed for the following Sunday
- Cheques are signed
- Our Tenant Grandin Preschool has morning and afternoon classes
- Magic Pantry bagged lunches are handed out from 12:00 pm - 1:00 pm
- Nova Bells & R-W Ringers practice from 5:15 -8:45 pm
- Our tenant Cantilon Choirs has evening practices
- Our tenant Songkraft has evening classes from 3:00 pm until the evening.

- An NA (Narcotics Anonymous) group meets from 8:00 -9:30 pm

Fridays

- A volunteer comes in to assemble the bulletins, and prepare for Sunday Worship, including changing the hymn numbers in the Sanctuary
- Cheques are available to be picked up or mailed out
- Chair Yoga class from 10:00 am - 11:00 am, this class runs September - May, but has a break for Christmas
- Our Tenant Grandin Preschool has morning and afternoon classes, sometimes Grandin kids come up for kids Yoga before the regular class
- Our tenant Songkraft has evening classes from 3:00 pm until the evening.

Saturdays

- Choral Morphosis meets in lower hall, we have a Choral Morphosis Assistant here to assist the members of the choir with building and elevator access.
- Various events, both external and internal
- Weddings usually happen on Saturdays

Monthly - These activities happen once or twice a month, during the program year Sept - June

Sundays

- Soul OUTing (2nd Sunday of the month)
- Koinonia (4th Sunday of the month)
- Contemplative Practices
- Alberta Baroque concerts
- Chapel Communion (4th Sunday of the month)

Mondays

- God on Tap
- M&P meeting

Tuesdays

- UCW (United Church Women) meeting (2nd Tuesday of the month)
- Church Board meeting (3rd Tuesday of the month)
- DEAP Pod meeting (1st Tuesday of the month)

Wednesdays

- Messy Wednesday (2nd Wednesday of the month)
- Extreme Messy Wednesday (4th Wednesday of the month)
- Men's Group meeting (2nd Wednesday of the month)
- Canterbury Worship (1st Wednesday of the month)

Thursdays

- Bible and Discipleship classes

Fridays

- Wedding rehearsals
- Cantilon Master classes
- Grocery drop off for Community Dinner
- Food prep for fundraisers and events the next day

Saturdays

- Youth Group
- Be Group
- Spirited Arts Workshops
- Community Dinner
- Approved Fundraising Events (ex. Italian Dinner, Drag Show, Art Sale)

Minister of Congregation and Community Development

This past year was about digging deeper, moving past our protective layers, and getting into the awkward conversations. Jesus calls us to love one another as we would want to be loved. To do this, we have come to learn that we need to make the intentional choice to be vulnerable, to be open, to listen and to be present when entering and engaging in awkward and challenging conversations.

I personally made the intentional choice last year to have a growth mindset rather than a fixed mindset. According to Dolly Chugh, "If I have a growth mindset about drawing, I believe that I can improve my stick figures with effort, time and feedback...In a growth mindset we still make mistakes and we learn from them, which makes mistakes less likely in the future." A fixed mindset means that we have learned what we need and there is no need to keep working on it, what we have is enough.

Change is difficult, and uncomfortable, but when entered with a growth mindset, we don't hide behind fear, we don't worry as much about what has been lost, because we take what we have learned into the future.

Digging deeper into the social gospel is what we did this past year and it has helped bring us back to the basics of faith. We have discovered that daily prayer connects us to God, and reminds us of what we truly value. Weekly worship keeps us motivated to engage in spiritual practices such as scripture reading, singing, meditating, and reflection and conversing with others, and acting on our faith. We have challenged each other to share our faith stories during a time of Holy Honesty in worship. We have reached out to people in our community and found a way to work together side by side as we meet the needs of others.

There is new energy in our midst, and so many people who are new to faith, who are seeking understanding, connection and belonging. I have witnessed long time members finding new ways to be at the church. For example, some are connecting with children and embracing the role of elder and mentor, some have stepped down from leadership roles and chosen to discern where their passion is now. More and more children and youth have come to see this church as their home, and seek to find ways to participate in it. We have truly lived into our statement of welcome and inclusion and it is making a difference, as the number of people who participate in all aspects of the church continues to increase.

We have been intentional in changing our language to ensure we are being as inclusive as we can. We continue to update our facility and our equipment, our communication and our social media to be more inclusive and welcoming. The ministries that were started in the last 5-6 years (Spirited Arts Movement, Yoga, etc.) and even in the last year (Affirming Ministries) are growing stronger every day and bringing life and vitality to the church.

I am grateful for the support of the staff, leadership, and volunteers and the people of this church and community that help us live out our mission in this world. I am grateful for the willingness of this congregation to take risks and to try new things while engaging topics that are uncomfortable. As we continue to be open and honest with each other, we find healing, we see where the Spirit is at work. The Spirit truly is alive and well in our midst!

Respectfully Submitted by
Rev. Karen Bridges

Minister of Spiritual Formation and Pastoral Care Development

Michael Foss writes: “Christian faith is not an accessory to life. Rather it is a coherent way of life, a way of being in the world. It is the task of the church to teach and support this way of life, this life of the spirit, for the sake of individuals and communities.” It is inspiring to undertake this task, spiritual formation, with the many people who live out faith at Robertson-Wesley. Whether I meet people in the middle of a busy Tuesday, in the quiet of a Bible Study or on Sunday morning – faith abounds here and is growing and maturing!

Here at Robertson-Wesley, Jesus’ ministry and the traditions of Christian church inspire themes, learning and conversations. The marks, or signs, in one’s life that show them following Jesus include prayer, worship, serving and listening. This Fall, a group joined together to intentionally explore these “marks” of discipleship together. You can join in 2020 in what is called *Marks for the Quest!* These “marks” of discipleship also inspired other learning experiences. For example, prayer was explored at an *Extreme Messy Wednesday*, worship was explored in a Spiritual Formation Pod conversation and the Bible was explored at the Men’s group (they had the courage to go through *Judges*), *Food for Thought* and *The Bible Told Me...What?*

Membership classes, always a highlight for me, included ‘new to faith’ Christians and those returning to church life after an absence. In 2019, five amazing adults explored their own faith journeys, learned more about the United Church and R-W and proclaimed their faith in baptisms and formal memberships.

The Pastoral Care and Visiting program at R-W has a dozen folks who formally visit shut ins on our behalf, bringing joy and hope to them as well as church news. We have many people who upon visiting one another, pass on emergent needs to the ministers. Rev. Karen and I visit between 5-10 people a week, focusing on both emergent issues and ongoing care. We are deeply grateful for the wisdom and faith we hear at these visits. Our Pastoral Visiting Coordinator, Tamara Wright, helps us keep track of things confidentially. She also helps our visitors have home communion with their visitees. Thanks Tamara for your organizing and caring work!

The Pastoral Visiting Training retreat had another great year as 20 people came to learn to pray and care for others. We explored spiritual self care before diving deeply into the hard conversation of preparing for our own deaths, and supporting others as they prepare, as well as learning what is needed upon the death of someone we love.

The R-W Library was renewed with new titles (the choir’s amazing CD collection is now kept in the library for all to access) and some new organization (you can now find the Bibles and a major commentary all together). It is always open and is an amazing space to ponder, read and learn. Thanks to Neil Rutherford for all his hard work.

The R-W Archives are kept organized by Albert deVos and we are so grateful for his diligence and care. With the help of summer students, the holding “vault” was thoroughly cleaned and sorted this summer. We sent 5 boxes of history to the United Church Archives, held here in Edmonton, ensuring the vault has some room for today’s history making activities!

The Legacy Task Group hosted the amazing Kathryn Hofley for a time of learning how best one can leave a gift to the future of R-W or the United Church of Canada.

Our staff and the *Committee of Ministry and Personnel*, ensure that I have time apart for rest, leisure, prayer and study. This year, I undertook intentional rest and leisure with family and friends in the Spring and Summer. My study leave was focused on the area of congregational leadership in times of transition and change. It included two face-to-face courses with other clergy and will continue in 2020 here at R-W. I also connected with a fabulous clergy coach who helps guide both my study and leadership goals. I am always grateful for the flexible staff and lay leaders who allow for all of the staff to take time to both learn and rest.

May the mark Jesus makes in our lives allow us to live out the marks of faith together!
May the Way, Jesus, guide us on the Way together!

Respectfully Submitted by
Rev. Leigh Sinclair

Office Administrator & Communications

As I am now well in to my second year here at R-W, I realize my role of Office Administrator has evolved. If you aren't someone who frequents R-W during the week you won't often see me at work and you may wonder what exactly I do. In that case, here is a list of some of the tasks I am responsible for:

- Serving as the information hub and public facing person of R-W.
- Booking all spaces in the church, people contact me for facilities bookings, including Weddings and Funerals.
- Maintaining contact information and church record keeping (changes to registers, historic roll, memorial book)
- Disseminating all communication from both outside and inside groups and events.
- Creating and maintaining communications and advertising.
- Providing IT assistance including email and drive access. Tasks include creating new email accounts and supporting staff with any issues or needs with google drive, calendar, photos, etc.
- Replenishing and maintaining office supplies and the photocopier (help with use, printer codes, supplies)

Work on the booking procedures continued this year, my role included acting as the point of contact with groups who had previously appreciated reduced rates, and passing along information on the new board policy on renting our space for reduced rates. R-W continues to be a busy and sought-after location for concerts, meetings and corporate parties, and our rental revenue continues to grow and contribute to the church operations.

I have also continued my work on Communications. My role includes print media, social media, website, e-news, Between the Aisles, R-W report, and internal and external signage. Previously we had spent our communications budget on traditional print advertising, however the costs of the small advertisements we were placing in many print publications have risen, and this fact plus recent reports on advertising strategies caused us to reconsider how our advertising budget was being spent. Those recent reports show that on average a newspaper advertisement will cost \$32.00 to reach 1,000 people, while a magazine advertisement will cost \$20.00. In comparison, Facebook ads cost around just 25 cents to reach the same number of people.

Social media advertising also allows us to set a preferred budget, decide the length of a campaign and target specific markets. This means our digital marketing enables us to advertise to a specific audience based on their age, location, interests, and even pages they've liked, allowing us to reach people that can most benefit from our message, where as print audiences greatly range across demographics.

In addition to digital marketing, we also focus on free avenues of advertising such as our website, google listing, eNews, and social media posts (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Youtube). In print media, I work with Rev. Karen Bridges and Rev. Leigh Sinclair on updating of pamphlets, the graphic design and formatting of "Between the Aisles" and create the posters that we use to advertise our events and programs.

I am also responsible for updating our bulletin boards and the messaging on our lawn sign. Our summer student each year works with both ministers to bring their visions for our display window to life, each month's window is pre planned and created for the Reverends to assemble.

We are continually updating our forms of communication, and are working to ensure that we continue to engage the congregation and wider community in the great things that Robertson-Wesley is offering!

Respectfully submitted by
Elyse Munro

Music Ministry

“...sing yourselves into God’s presence.” Psalm 100:2, The Message translation.

2019 was a busy and change-filled year for the music ministry at Robertson-Wesley. Music is a vital part of the life of this congregation, and that is reflected in the many ways that music is present in this church. Thank you to all the musicians in this community, and to all who support the various music ministries with their time, talents, and funds.

Choir of Robertson-Wesley

The choir of Robertson-Wesley is comprised of volunteer singers plus four paid section leads. We rehearse every Wednesday evening at the church for two hours, and arrive at 9:45 each Sunday to prepare for the 10:30 service. Some ability to read music and match pitch is required for participation in the choir, but otherwise this ensemble is open to all.

The choir prepared about 100 pieces of music to sing at about 35 Sunday services over the course of 2019, in addition to preparing hymns and leading congregational singing. Participation fluctuates with the seasons, but at a full complement we number about 35 singers. We learned and performed a wide variety of music from the sacred choral repertoire, from the earliest motets to brand-new pieces written by living composers. Repertoire highlights this year include many pieces by Warren Mack, our colleague and friend from Spirit of Hope United Church; pieces by previous R-W music directors Bruce Wheatcroft and Robin King; and pieces written for us by former section-lead and current interim choir director Erin Craig. Some special services for us this year were the Good Friday service, where we sang a cappella from the balcony; Lessons and Carols, where we sang a mix of traditional and modern Christmas music in a traditional Anglican service; and the 11PM Christmas Eve service, where we shared the joy of Christmas with our congregation and wider community by candlelight.

We continued to foster our musical relationship with Spirit of Hope United Church, and collaborated with them on Vivaldi’s Gloria and Handel’s Zadok the Priest, which we sang in services and concerts at both churches with a small orchestra and soloists. We did an outreach concert in June at Canterbury Court, where we sang many of our recent anthems for the residents. Our section leads Claire Rolheiser, Julie Golosky, Erin Craig, Casper Seely, Matthew McGuigan, and Noah Wright provided musical and professional leadership to the choir throughout the year. The choir members also participated in the non-musical life of the church. The Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper was spearheaded by choir members led by Andy Melson, taking over from Clara Dyck after many years of her leadership. We also celebrated the gift of each other’s company through several social events, hosted by Kathleen & Chris Gowers, Maria Adria & Leah Gramlich, and others.

Handbells

2019 marked 53 years of handbell ringing at Robertson-Wesley. Throughout the year, the congregation enjoyed the music of our two active handbell choirs, the R-W Ringers (established in 1979) and Nova Bells (established in 2010).

2019 was a year of transition for both choirs, as they said goodbye to long-term director Tammy-Jo Mortensen, and hello to interim directors John Hooper and Isabela Ramos. These talented local musicians have led both of our church bell choirs to a level of excellence that is widely recognized within Canada’s handbell community.

R-W Ringers

The R-W Ringers is a five-octave handbell choir composed of 13 experienced bell ringers. They rehearse for two hours each Thursday evening.

In 2019, the R-W Ringers played in numerous Sunday morning worship services, as well as the Maundy Thursday evening service in April. Their repertoire consists of a mix of Canadian and international composers, in styles ranging from baroque to contemporary, classical to jazz, gospel to pop. Many of the pieces they performed this year were inspired by scripture or were special arrangements of popular hymns. They performed a selection of these at their year-end concert on May 23.

The choir is especially blessed to have a composer within its membership. Betty Radford composed several of the pieces the choir performed this year, including Coming Home and A Dance with the Spirit, the latter of which was

awarded the Fred Merrett Award for New Composition by the Alberta Guild of English Handbell Ringers this year. The choir also performed Air and Arabesque, composed by interim director John Hooper. In addition to performing, the Ringers also supported the work of the church by helping with the Shrove Tuesday pancake supper and participating as servers during fellowship time.

Nova Bells

Nova Bells has grown from three to five octaves in the nine years since it was established. They now number 13 ringers. Although some players are now at more of an intermediate level, it is still a bell choir where beginners may join and learn the basics of bell ringing. In the fall of 2019, they welcomed four new ringers to the group. They rehearse for one hour on Thursday evenings.

In 2019, Nova Bells performed during several Sunday morning services at R-W. They also played at Spirit West United Church's spring concert in April, and at Rosedale Estates in June. In November, they performed Fanfare, composed by interim director John Hooper. The group enjoys supporting the work of the church, including the Shrove Tuesday pancake supper and concerts at R-W, including the R-W Ringers' year-end concert in May.

Córtet

The Córtet is a small choral ensemble at Robertson-Wesley made up of singers from the choir who are interested in singing more challenging repertoire. In 2019, the Córtet provided music, prayers, and worship leadership on Christmas Morning. They also provided music for Ash Wednesday and during communion for the Sunday service on June 30th.

This ensemble consists of the following 16 R-W Choir members: Adam Sartore, Andy Melson, Bob Klakowich, Erin Craig, Caroline De Grave, Casper Seely, Claire Rolheiser, Jill Hoogewoonik, Julie Golosky, Kalea Turner-Beckman, Matthew McGuigan, Neal Neigel, Yaroslav Veremenko, Noah Wright, and Shamin Malmas. While the Córtet members include paid section leaders of the R-W Choir, no monetary compensation is provided to any of the members for their time spent in this ensemble.

Summer Musicians and Special Music

We were blessed by having several guest musicians join us this year: Pergolesi Brass (Joel Gray, Frédéric Payant, trumpets; Audrey Ochoa, Sean Bumstead, trombones) on Easter Sunday; Robin Doyon, trumpet, on Remembrance Day; and Matthew McGuigan, flute, on Christmas Eve and other services throughout the year.

The musicians who provided music over the summer were Matthew McGuigan, Mingmei Xu, Jim Findlay, Belinda Chiang, Marilee Stephens, Dessislava Gavrailova, Jill Hoogewoonink, Adam Sartore, Lori Klingbeil, Alana Vyskocil, Brynn Bellingham, Tara Gallant, Katy Luyk, Melisa Guilbeault, Linda Steinbring, and Amber Stefanyk.

Choral Morphosis

Choral Morphosis, our outreach choir, has continued to grow and change this year. Director Rebecca Parson has stepped away from the organization, and has begun her Masters degree in Choral Conducting at Oregon State in Portland. We at the organization wish her the best, and have welcomed our Robertson-Wesley Falkenberg Choral Scholar, Noah Wright as the new conductor. Working with pianist Pamela Graham, they continue to bring laughter, joy, music, and community to the choir and opportunities for music theatre and acting with the smaller Choral Arts group. We could not share the wonderful talents of our choristers without the generous support of the Robertson-Wesley Music Society, and our fabulous donors. Please keep the choir in your prayers as we continue searching for sustainable sources for funding. We have presented a year-end and farewell concert for Rebecca in June, and a Christmas concert in December at St. Timothy's Anglican Church, and provided music at the May 5th service here at Robertson-Wesley alongside the R-W choir.

Respectfully submitted by

Erin Craig, Interim Choir Director

with assistance from Karen Gabert, Margery Wright, Noah Wright, and Shamin Malmas

Affirming Ministries

The Affirming Ministry is completely funded by a grant which covers salary, office space, and all associated costs from the Edmonton Presbytery New Ministries Fund. This position is supervised by the Minister of Congregation and Community Development and serves the greater Edmonton region with the hopes of serving the new Northern Spirit Region of the United Church. In 2019 this was a shared position between Mark Chiang and Shylo Rosborough. Shylo moved into a full time position with Mark stepping down at the end of December.

United Church Ministry

Some of the best connections I have had this year has been with United Churches in Edmonton and the surrounding area. I have been blessed with the chance to meet so many amazing, driven, and hard-working individuals who are doing so much important work with regards to the church and LGBTQ2S+ inclusion. As the Affirming Ministries Coordinator, I provide continual support for congregations who are on the affirming journey. This includes congregations who are just starting the affirming process, but also congregations who have been affirming for years and have been looking for new ideas and supports. I have attended many meetings with their affirming committees to help them plan and envision programs, workshops, and events for their congregations and the wider communities. I have also personally provided workshops and presentations on LGBTQ2S+ topics such as pronouns, allyship, and identities, as well as workshops on the affirming process and what it means to be inclusive. I have connected with many Affirming Churches and other organizations regarding the creation of LGBTQ2S+ inclusive policies, marriage policies, bathroom signs, language changes to documents and much more. I have also spent time connecting with Ministers one on one to help them navigate how to be a better ally to their LGBTQ2S+ members or to help them plan on ways for them to bring up the topic of becoming affirming. These connections sparked the creation of the Affirming Newsletter, which has helped connect all of the United Churches by sharing important LGBTQ2S+ information and resources. It also became a way for churches to share their own affirming/LGBTQ2S+ events & milestones to the wider community and each other.

Programs

SoulOUTing is hosted once a month here at Robertson-Wesley United Church. It is a safe and inclusive space where LGBTQ2S+ folks and allies of all faith traditions and spirituality get together to share conversation and company. This program has a collective leadership and is overseen and coordinated by the Affirming Ministry. Attendance and diverse attendees have been growing every month as there is a huge need for a safe space to discuss and talk about issues relating to LGBTQ2S+ identities and spirituality.

Be Group is an activity group for transgender, non-binary & questioning minorities that meets once a month at Robertson-Wesley United Church (and other local locations). This is a group for transgender individuals to have have fun and engage in the world, who might not otherwise have such opportunities. This is a chance to move beyond isolation, to not have to worry about transitioning and/or gender expression, and to focus on being in the moment, while expressing our authentic personalities. The Be Group is a recent initiative and is still in its early stages of leadership, programming, and advertising but has seen an increase in attendance over the latter part of the fall.

Haven is an inclusive Christian worship service and community for LGBTQ2S+ individuals and allies that meets once a month at McDougall United Church. Over the last year with my new role in leading the program, I have seen the spirit at work in folks who have found Haven as their community. Many LGBTQ2S+ individuals do not have a safe place to worship or be themselves. Haven has then become a “safe-haven” for those escaping prejudice and discrimination in their congregations. It has become a place of spiritual healing and a place to grow into their gender identity or sexuality. There is a large need for this type of program and thus more planning, changes, and leadership changes are being discussed and implemented for the new year.

Community

An important part of Affirming Ministries is to establish relationships and create a partnership with LGBTQ2S+ organizations and faith groups in Edmonton. These partnerships allow for shared resources, networking, and advertising. It has been a crucial goal of mine to make the wider LGBTQ2S+ community know of this ministry and to

have access to our programs and supports. Over the last year, I have met with dozens of people, for a variety of reasons: support, theological help, questions, ideas, planning, and even just to get to know one another. Being a person that they can relate to and talk to has improved their overall well being and has helped them come to terms with their identities and faith journeys. There is also a connection between all of the LGBTQ2S+ Clergy members in the city and we each work together to help each other or help those we are providing care for. Affirming Ministries have also connected with and have been a resource person for multiple GSAs. These relationships consist of presentations, workshops, one on one interactions with students, and supporting and assisting teachers and leaders. Affirming Ministries has also been creating and providing useful resources for churches, organizations, Ministers, friends, family, and even for LGBTQ2S+ individuals.

I am grateful to have the opportunity of a lifetime by being the Affirming Ministries Coordinator. It is definitely a dream come true. I am so blessed that I have a job where I can help people grow, learn, and engage in their own identities, faith and affirming practices. This year has taught me so much and I have seen the power of the Spirit work in amazing ways. I want to thank everyone who has extended a warm welcome to me and to everyone who has helped by making Robertson-Wesley feel like home. I look forward to the continuation of this position and all the amazing things in store for 2020!

Respectfully submitted by
Shylo Rosborough (He/Him)
Affirming Ministries Coordinator

Between the Aisles

Between the Aisles is a varied publication full of stories, poetry, faith, images and of course the "news" of Robertson-Wesley. In 2019, almost 100 issues were needed each edition (four in total) to meet demand!

The purpose of *Between the Aisles* is to share personal stories and to begin interesting conversations on matters of faith. It seeks to highlight: issues and stories at the forefront of the Mission & Outreach and Spiritual Formation Pod conversations, committee or programming circles, as well as the programs from our Spirited Arts Movement, themes from our worship cycle, articles from the writers' area of study, poetry and art reflecting one's spiritual journey as well as upcoming events both here at R-W and in our community. At times we will share news from our wider denomination and other partners. Our contributors include writers, photographers and layout artist, Elyse Munro. Our editors gather, write and proof each edition. As a team we hope you will add your voice to the coming year's editions through art, photos, words and stories. If you need ideas or inspiration, please ask one of us for resources!

February's Lent and Winter edition: Deadline is January 26, 2020.

June's Spring and Summer edition: Deadline is May 18, 2020.

September's Fall and start up edition: Deadline is August 23, 2020.

November's Advent and Christmas edition: Deadline is November 8, 2020.

Respectfully Submitted by
Maria Adria, Janet Clark, Lisa Fairweather, Nancy Heule, Elyse Munro, Leigh Sinclair and Marilee Stephens.

Catering Ministry

The Catering Ministry is 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 caring 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.

Catering ministry volunteers (both women and men) served four memorial luncheons in 2019, and directed the net proceeds of \$1750 to be donated to the Mission & Service Fund of the United Church of Canada.

Respectfully Submitted by
Colleen Ouellette

Discernment, Envisioning, and Policy Pod (DEAP)

You know the adage “Sticks and stones ...?” Those of us in the DEAP Pod have examined and discussed words used in our church during 2019, considering the ideas that they convey and the emotions that they evoke. In June we described Robertson-Wesley as a community where people are *valued and questing*, relationships are *broken and blessed*, and our practices are sometimes *traditional*, sometimes *edgy*. Although these words suggest duality, they demonstrate how God brings us together to complete each other.

We are brought together in a *quest* for deeper meaning and right relationship; at the same time we are *valued* for who we are. For example, we’ve noticed that the majority of people attending Sunday services no longer immediately leave the building following the worship service. Instead they gather in the Memorial Hall for refreshments and conversation. The ambience appears to have shifted to one of smiles and friendship, evidence of the Holy Spirit at work in this congregation.

We live with pain and guilt through deeds that reflect our *broken* selves, although we are *blessed* with so many gifts that we forget we have. As we lift ourselves to God through our work, worship, and play, our hearts are filled with gratitude and we are reminded of all that we have to share. Volunteer work, Sunday worship, and breaking bread with one another awaken the joy that resides in our hearts.

The Spirit moves us at Robertson-Wesley to be both *traditional* and *edgy*. Christmas Eve services embodied both of these elements this year. We had our traditional 11 o’clock service in which we followed a familiar service structure, sang classic Christmas hymns, and enjoyed the predictability of ritual. Earlier in the day we had a boisterous, child-oriented service at 4 p.m., followed by an art, musical and drama-based service at 8 p.m. The latter included active participation of congregants—visitors were surprised and showed trepidation when asked to get out of their pews and come to the front of the sanctuary to contribute to a communal art piece. Yet, conversation and smiles emerged as people made their way forward to participate.

Throughout 2019, our ministry explored words and pondered themes set out to challenge the way we think, act, and engage in our world:

- Acceptance – all are valued – January
- Awkwardness – diversity and privilege – February
- Be Bold – seek justice and question – March/April
- Christ revealed – spirit and faith – May
- Reveling in the Spirit – celebrate and praise – June
- Called to be disciples -- prayer – September
- Let your light shine -- worship – October
- Broken but hopeful -- Bible – November
- Frame where freed -- listening/discerning – December

These themes and your response as a community of faith have guided DEAP discussions this year. In addition, we explored issues and questions that are important for fostering growth, understanding and compassion in the Robertson-Wesley community:

- How can everyone communicate respectfully with one another in order to generate ideas that consider divergent points of view?
- How can we enhance our relationships with each other? Moments of Holy Honesty demonstrate the diversity of gifts, challenges, and beliefs in our midst. Who is in this community? How can we widen our circle to include others who presently feel excluded?
- How should our community address delicate topics, such as stewardship and Robertson-Wesley’s financial requirements, so that people are informed without feeling judged or guilty?
- As is true most years, transitions happen in our community: our brothers and sisters and siblings suffer illness or die; staff move on to new challenges; volunteers step down; and long held programs, customs, and norms cease. How do we navigate the emotions triggered by these changes, individually and as a community?
- How can we be supportive when we or others are feeling depressed, irritable or anxious?

- What is the energy level at Robertson-Wesley? How can our community help volunteers balance self-care with doing work that needs doing?
- Does our current mission statement express where the Spirit is moving this congregation?

The DEAP Pod is comprised of a group of people who meet regularly, listen, and discern where God's spirit is at work among us. Most of our discussions begin with sharing what we are hearing. These discussions, spurred on by theological questions and ideas from our ministers, inspire themes and direction in the life of our church. Periodically the group reflects back to the board and the congregation where they are hearing passion, energy, challenge, and discontent for the ministry and mission of this church.

Currently in the DEAP Pod are Elsie Coon, Charl Els, Carol Anne Inglis, Jill Lambie, Robert Mah, and Joni Soans, along with Ministers Karen Bridges and Leigh Sinclair. If you have visions, issues or questions you'd like the group to consider, please contact one of the current members.

*The word **listen** contains the same letters as the word **silent**.* (Alfred Brendel)

Respectfully Submitted as
A collaborative submission for the 2019 Annual Report

Family Ministry Committee

The Family Ministry Committee works with our ministers to ensure we have engaging Sunday morning programs for our children and youth and fellowship opportunities for the entire church family. Some of our activities from 2019:

Youth Group

Youth group meets downstairs most Sunday mornings, and follows the lectionary by using fun and interactive activities to engage the youth. We join for communion with the whole congregation, as well as attend Whole Family Worship Sunday's. On some weekends we enjoy youth activity nights where we have gone out to various places like Launch Pad, the trampoline park, Laser Quest, and the corn maze. We also do activities together at the church like games nights, paint night, and movie night to get the youth thinking about a faith subject. We also volunteer during the Christmas community dinner providing extra helping hands to serve and clean up after the dinner has finished. The youth have also worked together with the children to create plays and also make meals for the congregation after church during fellowship time.

Kid's Church (Elementary Aged Children)

We are thrilled at the enthusiasm and commitment to Kid's Church this year. We have had a tremendous group of young people who are actively engaged, introspective, inquisitive and insightful, not to mention a whole lot of fun to be around. One of many highlights was the tea the children hosted for Elders in our church. Complete with preparing biscuits a week ahead, setting up, serving and sharing faith stories. And, there was such joy in the room when children and older adults sang their favorite church hymns; it was heartwarming. The kids are looking forward to repeating it in the Spring! We have also enjoyed the many crafts, games, stories, and activities that bring meaning to the curriculum each week. A big thank you to Karen for her dedication to making Kid's Church a fun, inclusive, and welcoming learning space for all of the amazing kids of Robertson Wesley, and to all of the parents and caregivers for your support!

Garden Patch

The Garden Patch is a great place to watch our youngest members grow and learn! Attendance has been steady and we have a large number of young kids at Robertson-Wesley, whether they are visiting for just one Sunday or attending regularly. In the Garden Patch, our children learn the stories of the Bible and the teachings of Jesus through story, song, drama, games, crafts and play. Every week is a different adventure! We also teach the youngest members of our congregation about the community that is our church and help them to discover how they are important members of this community. It is amazing to see how the kids are growing year after year. Thank you to all the volunteers who have helped out!

God on Tap

We have continued to offer God on Tap, which is open to all adults 18 years or older. This gathering has moved around looking for the right place to be. In the beginning of the year we supported a local congregant by meeting at the Nook Café downtown. In the fall we switched to a venue closer to the church called Gamers Lodge. What is so great about this location is that there is no music playing which means we can hear each other. It also has a great variety of beverages to choose from. At this gathering we share some of our faith story with each other while we explore who is God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit and what faith is all about. We have had a wonderful mix of people who attend. Some regular, some come off and on. The topic of discussion has been following the monthly worship themes as well. Everyone is welcome to come out and give it a try. We are hoping to meet monthly. This year we have been meeting on a Monday evening from 7-8:30 pm.

Mom & Dad's Group

This is a drop-in group for parents with babies and toddlers. It is a group that provides support to parents as they navigate parenthood. It is also a starting place for babies and toddlers to begin socialization with one another. Many of the children first met in this group and are now friends and are growing up together in the church. It is also open to the community. This group shifts a lot depending on who is at home with their babies. It continues to welcome in new parents and seasoned parents and their toddlers in some cases. It is a very supportive gathering.

Messy Wednesday

This program continues to support families as we feast over a meal and build community together. Our wonderful chef and menu planner, Lindsey Esau, and our alternate cooks Garth van Herwaarden, and Jason Golinowski our ongoing volunteer host Richard Kennedy continue to support the program. This allows families to simply come and relax after a hard day at work. We average 16-20 people each time we meet, which presently is on the 2nd Wednesday of the month. This program is supported by Helen Mack.

In the fall of 2019 we added a new addition to this program called **EXTREME MESSY WEDNESDAY**. We have opened up this program to all ages because it is wonderful for people to feast and explore faith together in an all age setting. On the 4th Wednesday of the month we gather at 5pm. At 5:30pm we have a 15 minute worshipful experience based on our monthly worship themes. This includes singing, questions, prayer and different group activities. We eat and then after supper people are invited to choose from 3 different activities to go deeper in their exploration. Some are very child orientated, some are very adult orientated and the others work for everyone. We rely on many of the same volunteers for this program including Pan Graham and Laura David Foster as we do for Messy Wednesday. This program is supported by Family Ministries.

Family Games Night

On February 2 we held a Family Games Night event for all ages. This has become an annual event and is always well attended and a ton of fun. The evening starts out with some fun group games organized by Karen Bridges. Everyone is invited to bring their favourite board game and some snacks to share, a great way to spend a cold winter's evening!

Fill A Crib

Between Mother's Day and Father's Day we collect items for parents and babies for the Bissell Centre. We filled the crib three times over this year. The committee then delivers the donations to the Bissell Centre. Thank you all for your generosity.

Welcome Back BBQ

On September 8 we welcomed the start of a new school year with the annual blessing of the backpacks and a BBQ after service. A huge thank you to Brad Campbell and his BBQ team for putting together a feast and all the volunteers who helped to arrange activity stations and a pet blessing.

Deck the Halls

This was a new event for 2019, held on November 24. Memorial Hall was transformed into a Christmas workshop with stations to make festive decor for the hall, karaoke, chili, hot chocolate, cookie decorating, a story corner, and a festive photo booth!

Faithfully submitted by

The Family Ministry Committee:

Tory Bachmann, Rhonda Black, Elizabeth Nash, Andrew Seale, Heather Warkentin, Karen Bridges

Fellowship

Fellowship involves the planning for and presentation of the reception after the church service each Sunday: organizing the food and drinks (buying, making, accepting donations); setting everything out; serving; cleaning up. This fall we have had fun getting used to our new kitchen and making some changes to our routine.

Our Fellowship group is comprised of Sylvia Duffus, Janet Clarke, Karen Hansen, Monica Gerla, Ruth Belford, Felicia Drever and Susan Hutson. We are always grateful to individuals and groups in the congregation who help by donating food, setting up and cleaning up. And then there are those who “step up to the plate (and dishwasher),” such as the Men’s Group when our members are away. Of note is that we have had the help of “first responders” on many occasions.

Always wonderfully supportive is Brad Campbell; and few Sundays go by without the contributions of Mike Wolfer, Richard Kennedy and Melisa Guilbeault.

This year we have appreciated the invaluable contributions of many of the younger members of our congregation: kids’ church members have cooked and cleaned on a number of occasions; Conall MacLellan is always willing to carry anything around for us; Arley Roberie bakes and buys on a regular basis as do Sarah, Julie, and Lauren Wojcik; and Layla and Wini Fox are great at collecting dirty dishes and hauling chairs around.

As noted earlier, we love the donations we receive, in the donation baskets or in the kitchen. You might have noticed that whatever we put out for Fellowship seems to rapidly disappear, especially if it looks homemade or healthy. Help us all out, please!

That said, it makes our hearts happy to witness the buzz of conversation, the laughter, the welcoming of guests, the glee of cheerful children, and all of us involved in one the most important offerings of our church--a vibrant fellowship community.

Respectfully Submitted by
Sylvia Duffus and Janet M Clark, Co-chairs

Finance Committee

Robertson-Wesley is a vibrant community with a great sense of passion and purpose. It is the job of the Finance Committee, and the Treasurer, to make sure the amazing work of the church fits into the budget that is voted on by the congregation. Not always easy to do because we do so many amazing things! But because of the incredibly generous community who donates their time, talents, and treasures to support our church, we find a way! In addition to budgeting and tracking finances, the Finance Committee is also responsible for setting finance-related policies for the congregation. For example, this year, the Committee adopted a refreshed investment policy that re-evaluated our targets for investment performance but also strengthened our statement on ensuring that investments we make as a church are reflective of our values and purpose – that means not investing in gambling, alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, etc. but also considering how we care for the environment through our investment choices.

We also worked to finalize a policy on renting our space for reduced rates as a mechanism for supporting organizations that carry out similar missions to ours and a policy on pre-paid funeral expenses. Both policies were adopted by the Church Board this year. The work of the Finance Committee and especially the work of the Treasurer is made easier with the invaluable support of the Finance Manager at RWUC. Garth, the man with the numbers, keeps us all on track and ensures things are operating smoothly, that our bills get paid and the lights stay on. As we enter 2020, I look forward to continuing our work, which will include strategic financial planning and assessing and clarifying our investment funds.

A huge thank you to all members of the Finance Committee and those who support the financial functions of the Church – from counting, to fundraising, to grocery cards – we couldn’t do it without all of you!

Respectfully Submitted by
Tory Bachmann, Treasurer

Fundraising

This year we have transitioned to the calendar year for our Fundraising events. Events that took place in 2019 include January 2019 Coffee Cantata by the Music Society, February 2019 the Breakfast with Speaker Jesse Lipscombe coordinated by the Stewardship Committee, March 2019 Pancake Supper by the Music Society, St. Patrick's Day dinner coordinated by Pat Stewart and Brenda Sheppard, April 2019 the Rummage Sale coordinated by Victoria Fedorak, (May – August 2019 Kitchen Renovation no Fundraising), September 2019 Gala Concert Organ 40th Anniversary, October 2019 Italian Dinner Coordinated by Pat Stewart and Brenda Sheppard, November 2019 Art and Book Sale coordinated by Pat Stewart and Sheila Carr Stewart, December 2019 Christmas Floral Arranging coordinated by Tony Jansen and Brenda Sheppard.

We also have members who sell baking and preserves and plants and other items. These fundraisers are coordinated by Sylvia Post, Pat Stewart, Donna Krucik and Nancy Heule. Money raised from these sales support the Anniversary Legacy Fund or M&S. \$2,578.75 was raised for the Anniversary Legacy Fund. \$1,012.60 was raised for M&S. \$180.00 went to general revenue.

The Organ Gala raised \$7,034.20 for the organ restoration fund.

Thank you to all of our wonderful hardworking volunteers for coordinating these fundraisers.

We also sell Grocery Cards as a fundraiser. Thank you to Robert Mah for coordinating the grocery cards, and the volunteers who help sell them each Sunday.

Our fundraising goal for 2019 was \$20,000.00 for general revenue.

The total amount raised at fundraisers was 24,471.40.

Amount that went to general revenue was \$13,665.85.

Each year we have successfully increased our fundraising revenue. A fundraising meeting will be held in March and June 2020 to share ideas about Fundraising and make plans for the year 2021. All are welcome to attend the Fundraising planning meetings.

Respectfully Submitted by
Colleen Graves
RWUC Past Board Chair 2019

Koinonia Worship

Koinonia Worship experienced a very good year with a fairly consistent attendance of 25-30 people most services following the potluck suppers. The group meets the 4th Sunday evening monthly, and all are welcome!

The following is a summation of the worship themes carried out during 2019, with planning and leadership by the members, including three services involving Ministerial staff.

- Our service leader led us through a thought-provoking exploration of Acceptance of Self, Others and Community...an apt beginning to the season!
- Another Sunday we learned more about the ongoing changes in the United Church of Canada, and about our Northern Spirit Regional Council, thanks to the excellent Power Point presentation, entitled A Time of Change, given by Rev Leigh, including time for questions, and a Communion celebration.
- Faith Questions Along the Road with Jesus, presented through two creative contemporary playlets (written by a member), portrayed some of the disciples' stories and how they might relate to some of our belief struggles.
- What gives you hope? What have you seen that makes you believe? What are the hidden promises that are revealed through the life, death and resurrection of Christ? These questions made up the Easter message, Vision Restored, shared by Rev Karen at the annual Easter Sunrise Outdoor Service and assisted by members of Koinonia.

- A moving reflection, entitled Journey with our First Nations Brothers and Sisters, by one of the members about her positive and inspiring 2-year teaching experience at Norway House Indian Residential School, a United Church mission in northern Manitoba.
- Welcome Back With Song, a rousing service on a September evening, singing favourite hymns –old and new – along with special readings and Prayer Circle, started the fall with a welcoming get-together!
- Rev Leigh shared in the leadership again for the theme entitled Called Together by Christ as a Community That Worships Together, where, in small groups, we learned how to plan a service with Scripture, Prayer, Hymns; and were taken on a little “tour” of where to find more resources for planning a service!
- For Advent and leading up to Christmas, another musical evening To Prepare our Hearts to Celebrate this Most Festive Time of the Year, where we heard the story behind some of the beloved traditions and sang some favourite carols.
- White Gifts, donated by the congregation were sorted and delivered to Bissell Centre by Koinonia members, who always marvel at the generosity of R-W’ers....on behalf of Bissell, thank you all again for your gifts!

Of course, there were other happy get-togethers in 2019 as well, such as a 4-day Spring Retreat at the Waters’ cabin in June; a BBQ and Worship Planning evening in the Berlinguette’s garden at the end of August; and a Christmas Progressive Dinner party in December, starting with appetizers at the Waters’ condo, followed by the main course and dessert hosted by the Harltons, and concluding with the always popular singing of Christmas carols.

Thanks to those who attend Koinonia for their commitment and hard work, for their generous gifts of food, for setting-up and cleaning-up for the potluck suppers, for offering their homes, gardens, cabins for various functions, for their record-keeping, music leadership, poster-making, gift-packing efforts, driving, organizing Easter pancake breakfast, and photo-taking; and for their creative and prayerful work in planning, and providing leadership for the worship services.

Our gratitude also to all the Staff at Robertson-Wesley, for their unending support, encouragement and assistance in helping to make our monthly times together welcoming, resourceful, uplifting and joyful! We could not meet all the challenges of “putting on a service” without you!

Respectfully Submitted by
Koinonia Worship
Joann Cooke, Group Contact

Men’s Group

The RW Men’s Group is a loosely structured social group that enable the men of Robertson-Wesley United Church to gather together in the morning of every second Wednesday of the month, from September through to June to have general conversation, organize and attend presentations of interest and occasional tours outside of Robertson-Wesley facility. Presentations and tours were open to all attendees of Robertson-Wesley.

The RW Men’s Group is small enough (18 people) to operate on a format of general consensus with the only leadership consisting of the individual who has the most complete and latest email addresses, and thus controls the communications. Special thanks to Louis Berlinguette for his efforts in this regard.

Activities this year included coffee mornings in Memorial Hall, a tour of the Alberta Archives, field trip to the Edmonton Funicular, visits to the Joy Centre and Reynolds Museum in Wetaskiwin; as well as presentations by Rev. Karen Bridges (African Animals), Rev Leigh Sinclair (Stories Behind the Stories) and Tony Jansen (FTD World Cup Flower Show) and concluding with a Christmas Brunch at Alberts Restaurant on 124th Street. Events are usually attended by six to twelve men and women from the Robertson-Wesley Congregation.

Respectfully submitted by
Jim Triscott

Ministry and Personnel

The Ministry and Personnel Committee consisted of six members of Robertson-Wesley United Church in 2019: Karen Gabert, Nancy Heule, Kathryn Rambow, Eric Sauze, Sarah Wiens and Lisa Fairweather.

We are a thriving faith community AND modern organisation, active in our personal spiritual lives and in the world. We have an incredible variety of people who find nourishment at Robertson-Wesley, and we continue to be impressed by the professionalism of the staff and volunteers who light up our church and our community.

Highlights of this year from our Committee's perspective:

- Welcoming the addition of Erin, Belinda, John and Isabela to our team in October as interim musical leaders and valued long-time staff person and team member, Tammy-Jo. Tammy-Jo Mortensen's last day was Sept 31, 2019.
- The gifts of Leigh, Karen, Tammy-Jo, Elyse, Garth, Brad, part-time staff Roderick, Richard and Felicia, and the artist leaders Laura and Brooke. Our facility and our people are lovingly cared for.
- Hiring our wonderful summer students, Riley Ross and Kendra Footz.
- Experimenting with a new type of collaborative performance evaluation tool: a 360 assessment, involving the staff and congregation in annual reviews.
- The usual updating of job descriptions and handling issues as they arose.

The Ministry and Personnel Committee looks after confidential staff matters, and as such, regular meetings are attended only by committee members and sometimes staff members. We are available any time to answer questions or discuss matters - please let any one of us know!

Respectfully submitted by
Lisa Fairweather
Chair of Ministry and Personnel

Mission and Outreach Pod

This past year the Mission and Outreach Pod hosted several workshops that focused on Justice issues that speak to the statement of Welcome and Inclusion. We continued to ask how we are being welcoming and inclusive? Do we need to make some changes? Are we excluding people without knowing it?

In January there was a **Gender and Sexuality 101** workshop offered with facilitators Jessica Blake and Brooke Liefso. In this workshop we learned more about the importance about not making assumptions, being intentional, doing our best, and asking for forgiveness. Many people expressed fear of saying the wrong thing or asking a question that would harm or offend others. We explored the difference between Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation. They are not the same thing. In the past few years more and more people have adopted the practice of naming their preferred pronouns. We learned about binary and non-binary language.

In February, Jesse Lipscombe was invited to lead a workshop on **Power and Privilege** which leads to racism. Jesse started the #makeitawkward movement here in Edmonton. We took time to reflect on the various privileges that we individual have or do not have, and how with privilege comes power. We explored ways to have awkward conversation when racism happens. We learned how to acknowledge our privilege and how to be part of a cultural change.

In May people were invited to a workshop on **Ability 101**. How accessible are we at the church? What assumptions do we make in our language and our actions when it comes to accessibility? Brooke Liefso invited several activists in this area of justice to share their stories around accessibility issues faced daily. After the workshop, the church has started to show the icons of accessibility in all of our publications so that people know the accessible at a church. One

great example of learning: Many people claim “I do not need a microphone because I have a loud voice.” However, for the hearing assist devices to work in the church people need to use the mic. This statement often comes up because of a person’s own uncomfortableness with using a microphone. By not using it, people are excluded some people in attendance. What is being communicated is that it is not important for all people to hear what is being said.

Operation Friendship has continued through the support of this pod and a financial grant from the Clarke and Wesley Trust Funds. R-W provides 4 ham and scallop potato meals to the Seniors Drop in Center each year. Volunteers from the church provide desserts and several volunteers go to the centre to serve the meal 4 times a year. This year lunch was served in the months of May, June, Sept and Oct. This program will continue to in 2020.

Yoga classes with Colleen Ouellette have become so popular that a second class was added. Chair yoga is now offered on Friday mornings which is continuing to grow and meet yet another need in our community. Thank you Colleen for your dedication and wonderful gift of time to the mission of this church.

Truth and Reconciliation: Dawn Allan continues to be the R-W representative at events and gathering in regards to Truth and Reconciliation work as the church continues to find ways of responding to the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. In the fall the church began worship and community dinners with a land acknowledgement, which several indigenous people have appreciated. We were then asked to acknowledge the Metis Region as well which we have done. We continue to listen and seek more ways to work towards reconciliation.

We want to thank Dawn Allan for her dedication to the Mission and Outreach of this church over the past few years as she stepped down in the Spring. We are happy to report that Joni Soans has stepped into this role in January. The next conversation will invite the congregation to discern and consider our refugee sponsorship ministry and how we will engage in this work in the coming year. This conversation is scheduled for March 2020.

Respectfully submitted by
Rev. Karen Bridges

Nominations Committee

The nomination committee consists of Ted Blezard, Colleen Graves and Ron Soans with staff support from Rev. Karen Bridges. We are seeking 2 R-W members interested in joining this ad-hoc committee.

The nominations team is mandated to find suitable candidates from our R-W members for elected positions on the board and other leadership positions and to recommend their names to the Annual Congregational Meeting, where the general body officially votes on their appointment to the Board. The Nominations committee relies on the help of the congregation in discerning who would have the skills and gifts for the various elected leadership roles. We need to collectively listen for who the spirit is calling to fill these roles. The committee takes great care in finding the right fit for people and positions. If you are interested in considering one of these positions the committee is open to having a conversation with you in more detail about what it involves.

Last year the committee took time to write up the new job descriptions for the Regional Council Reps. We are seeking 2 people for this position. We are also seeking an incoming chair of the board. If you have a passion for wider church connections consider the Regional Council Representative position.

We trust the Spirit of Christ, in R-W, will move our congregation members to this calling and we look forward to welcoming all who show interest in being part of the Board and wider church.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the Nomination Committee,
Ron Soans

Northern Spirit Regional Council (NSRC)
The new way we connect to our neighbouring United Churches.

Robertson-Wesley United Church (R-W) has four (4) elected delegates to the wider church as our representatives. These four members of R-W have voice and vote on *The Northern Spirit Regional Council (NSRC)*, along with Rev. Karen and Rev. Leigh who are on the NSRC because they minister in this Region. Its first gathering was in Valleyview, AB in May, 2019. Highlights for our delegates, as reported at the Board, were the Indigenous teaching at worship and the conversations with people from churches of all sizes and stages.

The NSRC wrestled with defining its priorities. The council could not even always agree to the definitions for the words used to propose priorities. What does it mean to be an *Intercultural* church, and who decides that? What does it mean to be in right relations with Indigenous siblings in faith, and who decides when that has happened?

At this inaugural meeting, the Council also elected its own executive body as well as a delegate to the national decision making body: the *General Council* (and its executive).

Regional Council's Purpose:

The regional council is responsible for encouraging and engaging in:

- a) joining our collective hearts, voices, and resources to witness to the gospel and vision of Jesus for a compassionate and just society, both in Canada and around the world;
- b) local, regional, national, and global initiatives and partnerships (community, ecumenical, and interfaith) for ministry, mission, and justice work;
- c) ministry with children, youth, and young adults;
- d) honouring and living into intercultural mission and ministry;
- e) living in covenant with Mother Earth and All My Relations in the Earth community

The revenue for this work is partly funded through our General Council assessments (for administration and operation costs) and partly from your *Mission and Service* dollars (for staffing and outreach grants). In the future, NSRC may decide to give churches additional assessments for its work.

The NSRC's offices are in Edmonton including staff people working out of the Kirk Center (formally Kirk United Church). Some regional staff people (including our Executive Minister, who we share with two other *Regional Councils*) will work out of Regina, SK and Winnipeg, MB.

At the end of 2019, NSRC welcomed Julie Graham as a 1/3 staff position to be shared across the three regional Councils of Northern Spirit, Living Skies (Saskatchewan) and Prairie to Pine (Manitoba and some of Ontario). Julie's expertise in justice work and communications will be put to good use as we pursue the mission of the NSRC.

NSRC also approved the Vision for a Youth Council and have begun nominations for a Task Group to begin implementation. Copies of the proposal are available upon request.

There are regular updates that you can sign up for via KJackson@united-church.ca

Respectfully Submitted by
Northern Spirit Regional Council representatives from Robertson-Wesley

Outreach Committee

Membership: Brad Warkentin (chair), Lois Field (secretary), Rhonda Black, Norma Johnston, Bart McCaughey, Garnet Thomas, Rev. Karen Bridges (staff resource)

The Outreach Committee has a long history of involvement in the ministry of Robertson-Wesley United Church (RWUC). The committee provides oversight and/or financial support of several of the programs RWUC is known for both within the church and the broader local community. Many of the outreach programs running out of RWUC – Community Dinners, Magic Pantry, Food Bank Depot, Community BBQs, and Messy Wednesdays – have a connection to food. As also illustrated in Biblical scriptures, these programs reflect food's centrality not only in ensuring physical sustenance and health, but also how the sharing of a meal grows community that provides spiritual nourishment. RWUC Outreach also assists external community organizations/programs such as the Choral Morphosis choir, Edmonton General Hospital (Palliative Care), Inner City Pastoral Ministry (Bissell Centre), and Operation Friendship Seniors Society. Two of our committee members, Garnet and Lois, have passionately spearheaded our involvement in several refugee sponsorships over a timespan of several decades. In 2020, Outreach hopes to help RWUC discern its future mission in such refugee sponsorship and support initiatives.

Highlights from a few of the Outreach committee's activities are highlighted below.

Community Dinners (coordinator: Rhonda Black)

Community Dinner has always been an important part of our Outreach Ministry at RWUC. It continues to feed and more importantly welcome and engage with our broader community. People of all ages come out to join us, families with children, adults of all ages and abilities, people who look forward to meeting up with and sitting with their friends at each dinner, and people finding us for the very first time. We have established a relaxed atmosphere where people are lining up less and sitting and visiting more. Most times, at the end of the night we are vacuuming around the last table or two.

The average cost of the dinners was kept to a conservative \$2.18 per meal, slightly down from the 2018 average of \$2.41. "Homemade and no waste" are principles we take seriously. We are most grateful to ongoing donations from COBS Bread in the Brewery District, The Little Potato Company, as well as the generous discount from Ben's Meats & Deli on Stony Plain Road. These partners help us serve exceptionally fresh, healthy food and keep our costs down. No dinners were held in July and August due to RWUC's commercial kitchen renovation, but we did have a fantastic BBQ in June, which always goes over very well. Thanksgiving and Christmas dinners were highly attended with over 250 joining us each time. For Christmas dinner we set up an extra 48 seats in Room 11, reducing the wait line. We were treated to lovely live music, with Susan K. on piano and Erin Craig and a group of RW choristers who came out and warmed up the rooms with their beautiful voices, making it extra special. Once again this year, the Santa room with warm socks, gloves, hats and Christmas decorations was a big hit, thanks to Victoria and Susan C. Thanks to the art studio with Laura David Foster and helpers right across the hall, guests made beautiful gift tags for some of the items they chose that night.

Overall, attendance for 2019 was an average of 169 guests/month up from 146 in 2018 and 122 in 2017. This seems to align with the economic downturn in our city. Over 40 people and 1000 total volunteer hours made the dinners happen.

As I reflect on this past year I am awed and amazed by how the Spirit of Christ works in us through service. Hard work and a warm meal bring people together in community. I am proud of everyone involved: an amazing planning and leadership group, volunteers who are steadfast, those who are brand new, and those who just appear at the dinner willing to help when we really need someone. In addition, an increasing number of volunteers are from the community at large, who may not attend Sunday services, but truly are a part of our RWUC life. (Report by: Rhonda Black)

Magic Pantry (staff support: Karen Bridges)

This program hands out lunches at the church door every Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday to 39 people on average per week, with approximately 72 sandwiches on average being handed out per week. We have increased the number

of people and sandwiches we served this year. We also moved to offering lunches on Monday rather than Wednesday. This means that we offer food to the community 4 times a week including the food bank. We provide sandwiches in these lunches along with juice, cookies, crackers and pudding. We have a group of volunteers that make sandwiches once a month, and Connie and Jack Waters along with Derek Sutherland pick up supplies. The Minister of Congregation and Community Development coordinates this program, with the help of the Facilities Manager and Office Administrator. We have many volunteers both regular and new who help to hand out the bag lunches each week. This past year, people in our community have also started to donate some money in support of this program because they see what we are providing. (Report by: Karen Bridges)

Food Bank Depot (coordinator: Garnet Thomas)

2019 was a sad year for the Food Bank depot. We lost our friend Nikki Stein, who died too young. She was a depot volunteer for the past twelve years and her compassion, good nature and generosity made her a favorite of our guests. THANK YOU Nikki. We all miss you.

2019 was also a big change year, as our long-serving, much appreciated Wednesday morning “intake” crew ended their service. Clients must now request food directly from the Main Food Bank, at least two weeks prior to pick up. Often people forget, and we are left holding a number of hampers of perishable food. This food is either returned to the Food Bank, or what we can, we give to people who need food but haven’t placed an order that day.

The hampers we distributed each week was variable in early 2019, but since September we consistently have had about 40 orders, and often up to 65 boxes to handle. The need for the Food Bank continues on an upward trend. Memorial Hall is a wonderful asset to us, helping to make the atmosphere more welcoming and relaxing for our guests. The elevator is also a great convenience for people moving shopping buggies of food.

We continue to have excellent support from our church staff. Elyse Munro provides great email liaising with the main Food Bank. Reverend Karen helped organize a volunteer sign up roster for the first three months of 2020, since six of our stalwarts through 2019 left after Christmas on extended holidays. (We wish Connie and Jack Waters, Beth and Dick Hoskins and Colleen and Vital Ouellette great travels). We’ve had a good response to the roster, and should be able to manage until the “veterans” return.

Our 2019 crew consisted of the above-mentioned couples, plus: Derek Sutherland, Garnet Thomas, Kathy Juszko, Mike Ford, Andre Dobrovolsky, Stephen Bingham, and usually two L.D.S. “elders” (who came with their youth and muscles). Thank you to all for an effective depot year in 2019.

(Report by: Garnet Thomas)

Helen Mack Fund

Funding for the various programs of the Outreach Committee is primarily supplied from the Helen Mack Fund, created from a generous bequest specifically designated for outreach projects. (Helen Mack was a long-time, passionate member of the Oliver and RWUC communities). The allocation of Helen Mack funding is discussed and decided by a subcommittee (Brad Warkentin, Pat Stewart, Robert Mah, Lois Field, Rhonda Black) that meets twice yearly (May and November in 2019), or as necessary. Since its inception approximately a decade ago, the fund has been an ongoing blessing to the work of RWUC and the surrounding community. In 2019, a total of \$11,700 was withdrawn from the fund to support the Community Dinner, Magic Pantry, Messy Wednesdays, Community BBQs and Operation Friendship programs.

Respectfully Submitted by
Brad Warkentin

Property

It was a busy year this year. All the planning for the kitchen renovation came together and we received both the Grants that we applied for. We commenced construction in June and completed the kitchen by September on time and on budget. Since we received two grants, the renovation was totally funded by grants and UCW at no cost to the church.

Along with kitchen renovation we had the memorial hall painted. It had not been painted since the hall was renovated. It sure brightened up the hall. We plan on painting more often, since the hall is one of our most used rooms.

The gardens and the yard have been maintained again, by Rosemary, Lea, Sarah, Melisa, Richard, Andy & Shamin, Roy & Victoria, Rhonda, Jim, Brad and his crew. We are looking at having the sign either replaced or renovated. The yard is maturing now and we are looking forward to see how it looks this coming year.

Our next project is the replacement of the Flat roof over the office area. Doug Densmore has taken this project under his wing. We will receive a 1/3 grant from City Heritage Fund. After meeting with the city we learned that we qualify for a provincial grant for historic buildings. We are not sure how much funding, but we will be applying for whatever we can get.

The second project is an ongoing one. We have been replacing pot lights in the memorial hall with LED bulbs. This gives us an enormous savings in power. For that reason we are planning to change out the basement fluorescent lights with LED lighting as well. Brad did the changing of the pot lights, so we are going to try and change out the fluorescents with volunteer labor.

We added another memorial Plaque in the Chapel. The original one was filled and now we have room to remember many more people.

Thanks to Brad, the Event Assistants staff, and his volunteers, who keep our church in such good repair. They save our congregation a lot of money.

Finally, thank you to the Property Committee, Rosemary, Louis, Lorne, Karen H., Arnold, Albert, Doug, Morris and Jack. They support and plan how and when these projects get done.

Respectfully Submitted by
Jack Waters, Chair of Property

Spirited Arts Movement

The Spirited Arts Movement continues to thrive and reach out to the community and the congregation of Robertson-Wesley. The Spirited Arts Movement is supported by the Clarke and Wesley Fund, along with some congregational financial support.

The Spirited Arts Movement is committed to bringing people together, and creating space for all ages to be inspired and to have their artistic selves unleashed. We believe that the world can be healed and transformed and that justice can be served through self-expression. We express ourselves through visual arts, drama, writing, movement, voicing, music and digital arts. This is a movement and one that is ever changing and evolving. We believe that it helps to combat isolation in our world, and we firmly believe this movement is about the **process** of creating rather than the created **product**. This program is free to everyone and has continued to increase in participation. This program is led by Healing Arts Director, Laura David Foster and Justice Arts Director, Brooke Leifso, and coordinated by Rev. Karen Bridges.

The Spirited Art Studio

“...but the person who loves those around them will create community.” - D. Bonhoeffer

The “Spirited Art Studio” is a community-based art program that started in the fall of 2015, and continues to run weekly during the school year, and once/month after the community dinner (which continues to be the busiest time). The community is continuing to outgrow our space! In the winter and fall of 2019, both on Monday nights and Wednesday afternoons we regularly move out of the studio and set up in the lower hall to make sure to accommodate everyone who would like to be a part of it. On average there are now 8 -10 people regularly, and up to 15, participating on both on Monday nights and Wednesday afternoons. Some are from the RWUC congregation, and at least as many are continuing to be from the surrounding community of Oliver and greater vicinity of Edmonton. We have found that having both an evening and an afternoon time scheduled accommodates people who have availability and/or preferences for each.

Though most begin because they appreciate that all are welcome in the inclusive space, and that there is no cost or commitment with the drop-in set up, people who attend regularly often give feedback that they have come to enjoy the creative outlet at a consistent time and the sense of belonging. The Art studio has also been a valued addition to RWUC monthly community dinners. After dinner, people are invited to head down to the Art Studio to create with others. On average we see 15-20 people, with many regularly participants who contribute artistic ideas that they would create, and appreciate seeing that their ideas have been heard.

Healing Workshops

In the winter and spring of 2019, three workshops continued with the theme of “The Mindful Art Practices for Self-care” workshops and they also have been growing and have some regular attendees. We have had to continue to cap the number of participants, mostly because of space and costs, but also because of the kind of meditative experiential practices involved would not have the same impact with a larger group/room.

This fall we have changed the theme of the series of workshops to “Art as a Spiritual Discipline” which is the basis of the work of Pat B. Allen’s *Art as a Spiritual Path* (2005) and other related references. In these 3 workshops we are exploring how to activate the imagination through various arts practices with the intention to experience the sacred and to explore meaning both individually and collectively.

Justice Workshops

The justice component of the Spirited Arts Movement had two distinct projects within 2019, the continuance of After Me Too and the beginning of the new series, The Roots of Allyship.

After Me Too featured art-based circles for all genders to process the Me Too Movement. Me Too was a viral social media campaign that saw thousands of women posting #metoo to their social media feeds if they had experienced sexual assault in their life time. Hollywood producer and other men in power have been charged with assault. Justice

Artistic Director, Brooke Leifso, saw a need to create events where people could learn about the underpinning feminist concepts and gender dynamics that normalize sexual assault. Art making in a variety of forms was used to process feelings, thoughts and experiences that people were having about the Me Too Movement. We created a small community that met almost every other week. We used poetry, collage, sculpture and oil pastels to reflect where we currently were in our lives and large concepts such as emotional labour and attachment styles. The final session saw us create a sci-fi map and talk about possible futures. There was a hope for increased community where we can all be safe and thrive!

After a summer break, the Roots of Allyship programming began October 26. The goal for this series of workshops is to use art to create space for people to reflect on the “why” of creating a better world, and how art can help us create nourishing, thoughtful communities to create possibilities for a just world!

Art Therapy at Canterbury Court and Manor

R-W received a grant from the United Church Foundation in 2019 which allowed Laura David Foster to offer free Art Therapy to the residents at Canterbury Court and Manor. This program will be continuing in 2020 with a grant from the Clarke Fund.

This program offers artistic and spiritual exploration to seniors who are not able to participate in programs at the churches they used to attend with no cost to them. The art therapy offered at this long term care home strives to enhance autonomy, self-worth, and dignity through creativity, decision making, and storytelling in reflecting on the artwork they create. It is not just recreational and it is not just crafts. In this program we want to continue to hold space for feelings of grief and loss that may be felt in this stage of life as they are shared within the safety of a therapeutic relationship, with empathy, congruence and unconditional respect. We would like to continue to combat loneliness and isolation. Seniors have enjoyed experiencing something new. Feedback has been that they liked the stimulation of mind and imagination, the reassurance that there's no perfectly right way and no judgement, the freedom of expression, the uniqueness in each other's work, and the company and enjoyment of each other as they make things together. They are hoping that the program continues. The program runs on a weekly basis, for a one and a half hour session.

Art Therapy Student Learning Site

We continue to partner with St. Stephen's College as a learning site for students in the Art Therapy Program. This allows us to offer free Art Therapy to people in the community and the church. This past year we had Fan Zhang join us for about 6 months. We hope to have a new student in early Spring of 2020.

Respectfully submitted by

Laura David Foster, Brooke Leifso, and Rev. Karen Bridges

Spiritual Formation Pod

Spiritual Formation Pod gathers 3-5 times a year **and includes all who come** to its conversations! Our hope is to find out together how best to develop a faith that is resilient and life-long. Ideas developed in Pod conversations of 2019 as well as some other gatherings such as the *Pastoral Visiting Retreat* lead to new programming ideas put into action this past year.

2019 Pod Conversations and Workshops:

What is Worship?

The Worship Committee commissioned a conversation of the Pod to discern where and how worship occurs here at R-W and participants celebrated the many ways, times and peoples who experience worship in this place! The information gathered was given to the Worship Committee.

Writing the Sacred with guest Ray McGinnis

A light supper and an exploration into using words and the Spirit to help one expand their spiritual journey. Participants had a chance to try out journaling, poem-making and Psalm-writing under the gentle facilitation of author Ray McGinnis who set us on a path to creating our own sacred poetry.

Mental Health with facilitator Laura David-Foster

A Sunday afternoon spent in the safety of community exploring mental health's stigmas, gifts and costs as well as how we can care for one another!

2019 and 2020 Programs arising from Pod conversations:

Food for Thought

In the winter of 2019, a small group shared food and explorations of the Bible. Differing translations of the Bible as well as Scriptures understandings of spiritual gifts, gender, race, mental health and eldership been studied.

For the Bible Told Me...What?

This Fall a new series started wherein for three nights we dive deeper into how the Bible was put together and how we can listen to it in many ways. How do the different parts of the Bible speak to one another? How do different translations impact how we read it? How is it more like a library than a single book? Join in 2020!

Marks for the Quest

An experiential quest into the traditions of discipleship. Challenge yourself to a routine of practicing one or more marks of discipleship and allow a small group to help you be supported, accountable and connected. Join in 2020!

Book Buddies

Many of the formation of discipleship happens in small groups that are lay lead conversations. One of these is Book Buddies who met once this Fall for a book study and plan to meet more in 2020! Thanks to Nancy Heule for facilitating these experiences.

The Pod conversation needs your heart and voice! **Join us in 2020 to discern:**

- How can one deepen conversations to talk about how people really are feeling and doing day to day?
- How can one best prepare for death, or the death of loved ones?
- What is your "spiritual type" (the best way you connect with God's love)?

Respectfully submitted by

Ainsley Brown, coordinator, and Rev. Leigh Sinclair

Stewardship Committee

Our purpose is to inspire, invite, educate and thank people attending RW. In 2019 we explored the theme: Stop Hiding, Let your Light Shine. Throughout the fall we explored many different ways to create a loving community. An important approach to support the way suggested by Jesus is pledging our time, talents and treasure to this mission. On October 27th the Committee participated in the service which examined how we are responding to God's Call.

Moses's early life was explored as a reluctant responder who accomplished great tasks for God. A burning bush was created where members could add flames to illustrate ways they were letting their light shine. February 27th we held an educational and inspirational breakfast where Jesse Lipscombe spoke about the racism he experienced as an Albertan of color and how one of his responses was to create the Make It Awkward Movement in Edmonton.

At R-W United we come together to worship God, to share each other's joys and sorrows, to learn and grow in faith, to use God's gifts wisely, and to lead active Christian lives of service among our neighbours here and in the global community (R-W Mission Statement). During the 4 Sundays in October we asked the Robertson-Wesley community to prayerfully consider their involvement in the mission of our church. These 4 Sundays were part of our 2020 Pledge Drive.

The goal of the Pledge Drive is to invite everyone to support the 2020 financial planning process of our church in the way that God calls each of us. It allows our Treasurer, Finance committee, and R-W Board to plan our budget for 2020 as well as the future of R-W and how the ministry and mission of R-W will be lived out in the world with confidence and a clear path. We also honour the time and talent that is given by our many volunteers who support the ministry and mission of our church. Without this our church would not be able to support our many programs, activities and ministries. Thank you for letting your light shine here at Robertson-Wesley United Church, and investing your time, talent and treasure in this community.

The results of the 2020 Pledge Campaign are shown below as well as the 2019 information for comparison.

Year	2020		2019	
	PLEDGES	AMOUNT	PLEDGES	AMOUNT
RWUC Expenses	72	\$197,801	71	\$204,372
Mission & Service	40	\$ 16,466	44	\$ 15,766
PAR Givers	82		77	

The number of pledges and amount pledged did not change substantially from 2019 to 2020. RWUC pledge amount decreased by \$6571 and the number of pledgers increased by one (1). M&S amount increased by \$700 and the number of pledgers increased by four (4). We continue to have many generous givers who have not pledged but continue to give on a regular basis.

The number of people on PAR (Pre-Authorized Remittance) increased by five (5). Please consider enrolling in PAR. It helps the church with cash flow particularly in the summer and the person enrolled doesn't have to think about whether they gave or not in a particular month.

For the 2021 Stewardship investment campaign, people who give through PAR will have that financial commitment considered as their pledge.

Respectfully submitted by
Pat Stewart
Stewardship

Mission and Service

“Mission & Service, the unified annual fund, is the compassionate response by the people of The United Church of Canada to God’s call to mission and healing for the world.”

Monies raised by our congregation are submitted to the United Church of Canada to support the church and its mission locally and throughout Canada as well as partnering with humanitarian organizations throughout the world. At our Annual Congregational Meeting last February, we set our M&S 2019 goal at \$25,000. We are pleased to report that we have surpassed this goal. Our total for 2019 was \$31,845 including \$1,600 from the UCW and \$1,715 from our Catering Ministry. Heart felt thanks are offered to all who gave to M&S this year whether by your regular givings, special offerings on Communion Sundays or quarterly M&S Bucket celebration days, and selling of baked goods.

We continue to raise awareness about the importance of Mission and Service this year with readings from Minutes for Mission on Communion Sundays. These stories illustrate how our M&S is touching the lives of so many people. This publication is made available in both print or online through the United Church Website. The M&S Bucket Sundays encourage us to share the joy of our special celebrations with our donations.

Respectfully Submitted by
Sylvia Duffus
Mission and Service Coordinator

UCW & Friends

Robertson-Wesley has had United Church Women (UCW) units ever since the beginning of UCW – which was in 1962. There are UCWs in United Churches across Canada. Currently, we have one UCW unit, which meets on the second Tuesday of every month except July and August.

The purpose of UCW is “To unite women of the congregation for the total mission of the church and to provide a means through which we may express our loyalty and devotion to Jesus Christ in Christian witness, study, fellowship, and service.”

If you came to a UCW meeting at Robertson-Wesley, you would usually find about 12 to 20 people there, sometimes a few more if we had invited members of the congregation to hear a guest speaker. You would be welcomed by the chair of the meeting, and we would read together an acknowledgement that we are on Treaty 6 territory. We would sing “Happy Birthday” to members having a birthday that month. Melisa Guilbeault would likely share her gift of music by singing a solo as part of our devotional time, and a member would share a short reading and prayer. We would enjoy coffee, tea and goodies brought by members, or, in January and June, a catered lunch. We would light the Christ candle, and members would have the option of lighting tea lights for particular intentions.

The program for the day could include a guest speaker, study and discussion, or a business meeting when required. Highlights of our 2019 programs include:

January: Catered lunch; the president and treasurer presented the annual reports. Devotion led by Richard Kennedy.

February: Rev. Rob Hankinson spoke to us about his involvement in interfaith work, including work with the Edmonton Interfaith Centre for Education and Action (EICEA), the North American Interfaith Network (NAIN), and the Parliament of the World’s Religions (POWR).

March: Margery Wright led Session 1 of Betty Turcott’s study on the UCW Purpose, “Witness”. In 2019 we voted to contribute money (raised through members’ contributions and small fundraisers) to Mission and Service, the kitchen fund, and our UCW Network.

April: Our guest speaker Ian Wheeliker from the Alberta Council of Women’s Shelters gave us an interesting talk about women’s shelters in Alberta. Members who had attended the UCW Network gathering at Star of the North earlier in the month reported on that event.

May: Margery Wright led Session 2 of Betty Turcott’s study on the UCW Purpose, “Study”.

June: We enjoyed a catered lunch in Room 11. Rev. Leigh Sinclair reported on the catering ministry. Victoria Fedorak resigned as our President and was thanked for her work. Jane Chesebrough was elected President.

August: The Executive held a meeting to plan program for the 2019-2020 year.

September: We thanked Tammy-Jo Mortensen for her leadership in church music. Jack Waters gave us a tour of the new kitchen. Margery Wright led Session 3 of the Betty Turcott study, "Fellowship". There was discussion about how we can let others know about UCW and welcome them to our group.

October: Guest speaker Jason Hall, from the Alberta Motor Association, spoke to us on driving for mature drivers.

November: We watched the video "Treaty Talk: Sharing the River of Life."

December: A Christmas meeting, with a program led by Donna Krucik, and time to socialize.

UCW Prayer

And now, go with us, God,
Into the days ahead.
Strengthen us for peace,
Give us wisdom,
Keep us humble,
And may we live and work together
And so striving
Build a new and better world for tomorrow.

Respectfully Submitted by
Margery Wright
UCW secretary

The Wesley and Clarke Funds

The Wesley Fund

The Wesley fund was established in 1971 when the Wesley United Church (originally, Wesley Methodist Church) building was sold. Proceeds of the sale were designated to be invested, with the proceeds donated for social development in the Edmonton area.

The E. I. Clarke Memorial Fund

The Clarke Fund was established in 1968 by a member of the Robertson United Church congregation, the late Edwin Irwin Clarke (d. 2009). This fund is designated to be invested, with proceeds donated to outreach projects. The Clarke family, presently of Victoria, have made additional contributions to the fund in recent years.

Wesley & Clarke

The Wesley & Clarke Trustees meet annually, usually in late November, to consider requests for funding in relation to the amount available for disbursement that year. The current trustees are Rev. Karen Bridges (Chairperson, *ex officio*), Tory Bachmann (Treasurer, *ex officio*), Dr. David Buchanan, Robert Mah, and Marg May.

2019 Allocations	Wesley	Clarke	Total
Bissell Centre	9,750	2,250	12,000
George Spady Centre	5,500		5,500
R-W Refugee Ongoing support	3,500		3,500
Inner City Pastoral Ministry		2,500	2,500
Voices of Albertans with Disabilities	1,000		1,000
No Room in the Inn (SAGE)	3,400		3,400
R-W Benevolent Fund		3,000	3,000
Art Therapy at Canterbury		6,000	6,000
R-W Spirited Arts Movement	5,000	8,000	13,000
Total Allocations	28,150	21,750	49,900

Total Allocations in Recent Years			
	Wesley	Clarke	Total
2018	25,500	19,500	45,000
2017	25,500	19,500	45,000
2016	23,000	18,000	41,000
2015	22,000	18,000	40,000
2014	22,500	17,000	39,500

Commitment

Robertson-Wesley continues its commitment to the management and allocation of these Funds according to their originally specified purposes. Along with these disbursements go our prayers for the thousands of people whose lives are supported and enhanced by these contributions.

It was decided at the recent meeting that if deemed necessary we would use the principle of the Wesley Fund up to \$20,000 for the recruitment of the music position at R-W.

Respectfully submitted by
Rev. Karen Bridges
Chairperson of the Wesley & Clarke Trustees

Worship Committee

Our community of faith at Robertson-Wesley takes on a number of forms. We meet Sunday mornings, and for many also at other times during the week, for fellowship, learning, leading, creating, music making and many other fulfilling pursuits. The focal point of our congregational life, however, is and always will be the worship experience. In 2019, our ministers, as well as others among us, have led worship services of different kinds—all with a comfortable blend of innovation and respect for our United Church tradition. We can experience alternate styles of worship, such as Koinonia and Soul OUTing to name two, as well as our usual Sunday morning gathering.

The Worship Committee works with ministry to facilitate worship of the highest possible quality. One of our several functions is to provide a communication link between staff and congregation. We regularly receive valuable feedback on issues of theology, liturgy, music and other aspects of worship, and we reflect on these with our ministers. Indeed, we invite thoughtful comments from anyone to help us fashion worship experiences that are meaningful to this faith community. Keep them coming!

This past year has seen both a continuation and some new involvement of lay participation in Sunday worship. The call board for scripture readers seems to fill up very quickly every season, as does that for communion servers. A new feature very favourably received this year has been the moment of “Holy Honesty.” Most weeks, someone is asked to take a few minutes to reflect on their uniqueness. They tell us of their personal and religious background, their spiritual journey so far, and why they feel called to serve at Robertson-Wesley. They then lead a Litany of Response reaffirming the distinctive gifts they bring. In 2019, 35 people shared their honesty moment with us. Many of these stories have been most engaging, adding powerful and meaningful insight to our worship. Late this year, we also initiated further lay participation with the leading of prayers. More and more in the future, we will hear the Prayers of the People by the People, lending a further personal touch to worship. Indeed, in a true faith community we are all “ministers” in a way, and it feels right to encourage this.

In September of this year, our Board regretfully accepted the resignation of Tammy-Jo Mortensen as Director of Music, after 16 years of dedicated service. Under her musical leadership, Robertson-Wesley has been in the forefront of church music in Edmonton, not only in worship but in the myriad of musical activity that takes place within these walls. Her high standard of musicianship, as well as her gracious presence, will be sadly missed on the Worship Committee as well as by all involved in music here. We wish “T-J” (as we like to call her) many blessings in her new career in arts administration.

Thanks to the legacy of the Flower Group, the Flower Ministry continued at Robertson-Wesley this past year. On the first Sunday of every month, flowers were provided for anyone to take to neighbours, strangers and friends. Dozens of large poinsettia and hydrangea bouquets were shared on Honour Sundays in November and at Easter. Anyone can bring flowers on any Sunday to mark such special occasions, or in memory of a loved one.

Life passages such as baptisms, confirmations, re-affirmations, transfers, as well as farewells continued to form an important part of worship throughout the year. Chapel Communion was offered at 9 am on the last Sunday of every month, and our usual special services at Lent (Ash Wednesday, Holy Week), Easter (sunrise service) and Advent/Christmas (Lessons and Carols, White Gift, Blue Christmas, the Christmas Eve services) were all well attended. Special thanks to Caroline de Grave and the Córtes (*a cappella* choir) for leading the Christmas morning service. And again, the alternate-style worship services (e.g. Koinonia, Soul OUTing) are always much appreciated.

The Cantillon Choral Society a tenant of Robertson-Wesley, under the direction of Heather Johnson continues to have their choirs provided music at eight of our worship services each year. This helps to fill the sanctuary with beautiful music and joyous energy during those Sundays.

Thanks also to the members of the Worship Committee, Jill Lambie, Susan Hutson, Pat Stewart, Brenda Sheppard, Laura David Foster, and the Revs. Karen Bridges and Leigh Sinclair for all the work they do to enhance worship. And a BIG SHOUT to all volunteers at Robertson-Wesley who give their time and energy to make us the wonderful community that we are!

Respectfully submitted by
Bob Klakowich, Chair
Worship Committee

Ushers & Greeters

WE NEED YOUR HELP... PLEASE

Do you remember when you first visited Robertson-Wesley United Church by coming to a Sunday service? And do you remember there was a person there to welcome you and hand you a bulletin AND also answer any questions you may have had? Well, that person was a Greeter and is part of a "Team of Greeters" along with the Head Usher who has that job once a month of organizing a team of Greeters. We have been very fortunate the last few years since we started this Model of greeting people as they come into our Church and the people who have signed up to be Head Ushers or Greeters have done an absolutely amazing job. But... we would like to give the "regulars" the ones who would always say YES when asked to take on the job of Head Usher or Greeter, a break. That's where many of you come into play. It is NOT a hard job. You receive a sheet of very clear instructions about what to do before the service starts and you are also given a list of people who love to Greet and either myself or Pat Stewart will "shadow" you the first time to help you and to answer any questions you may have.

There are many people in our congregation who only a year or two ago, were "Newcomers" to Robertson -Wesley and were made to feel welcome the first time they came to R-W...now we would like YOU to help us out and become a Head Usher or a Greeter welcoming all those people who come to our Church for the first time to feel welcome and experience all that Robertson-Wesley has to offer, just like someone did to you when you first stepped into this wonderful Church. If you would like to give it a try, please come and speak to one of us and we will help you.

Respectfully submitted by
Brenda Sheppard and Pat Stewart

Staff

Dr. Belinda Chiang	Interim Music Team, organist
Brad Campbell	Facilities Manager
Brooke Leifso	Justice Artistic Director, Spirited Arts Movement
Elyse Munro	Office Administrator
Erin Craig	Interim Music Team, Choir Director
Felicia Drever	Event Assistant
Garth van Herwaarden	Financial Manager
Isabela Ramos	Interim Music Team, Bell Choir Director
Rev. Karen Bridges	Minister of Congregation and Community Development
Laura David Foster	Healing Artistic Director, Spirited Arts Movement
Rev. Leigh Sinclair	Minister of Spiritual and Pastoral Care Development
Richard Kennedy	Event Assistant
Riley Ross	Choral Morphosis Assistant
Roderick Mamita	Event Assistant
Shylo Rosborough	Affirming Ministry Coordinator



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