

Between the Aisles

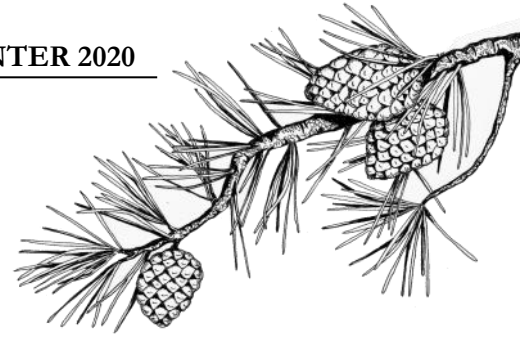
A Robertson-Wesley United Church Quarterly

Hope itself is like a star - not to be seen
in the sunshine of prosperity, and only to
be discovered in the night of adversity.

-C.H. Spurgeon



Editors' Welcome



Welcome everyone! What a wonderful season upon us.

The days are oh so short and sweet!

Bright, clear, sunny days, the snow twinkles and shines like a million diamonds. The kids have been sledding (aka tobogganing) in the river valley. There's the heavenly scent of a backyard wood fire in the neighborhood. Our neighbor's rink must be ready so soon!!

We are so lucky to be celebrating together! It seems like such a treasure to see my friends and choristers together on zoom. No mask required! I've been dancing and singing, worshipping and even praying online. I am so grateful for the technology that helps me stay connected, participating and inspired.

Only about one month until winter solstice. The shortest day of the year! After that, the days start to stretch out. We are headed to the mountains for a pre Christmas family ski trip.

What a FANTASTIC TREAT!! I cannot wait. I have added an extra walk and 4 sets of sit ups to my wellness regime so I can really RIP! down the slopes!

Gratitude via Enjoying!! This is the lesson I am learning, lately. There is no way I can reciprocate the cornucopia of gifts I enjoy, but I can keep practicing joy and gratitude.

Gratitude melts away anger and hurt feelings, leaving me joyous and happy to be alive.

Maria Adria

Write for Between the Aisles

Do you write poetry? Have you read a life-changing book lately? Do you have a faith question you are exploring or a passion you want to share?

Then why not submit something for inclusion in the church's quarterly newsletter *Between the Aisles*? For guidelines and publication requirements, see www.rwuc.org/between-the-aisles.

Between the Aisles is published on Treaty 6 territory, a traditional meeting ground for many Indigenous peoples. We also acknowledge the Métis, who are of mixed Indigenous and European heritage. Edmonton is home to the Métis Nation of Alberta, Region 4.

Robertson-Wesley United Church

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M&P ANNOUNCEMENT

On Nov 8, the Board announced that Robertson-Wesley United Church was hiring a bridging minister – Rev. Sally Boyle. She will join us for a couple of years on a part-time basis. It's been a time of transition, with Leigh leaving at the end of June and the community of faith and ministry reviews that took place over the summer. The Board, Ministry & Personnel Committee and Rev. Karen agreed that R-W could manage with one full-time minister in the summertime. With re-entry and fall programming, we agreed we need more ministry!

We asked Earl Reaburn with Northern Spirit Region for help with two things: the process to appoint a temporary minister, and ideas for candidates. Ministry and Personnel Committee interviewed candidates and made a recommendation to the Board, which the Board approved. The result: we have hired Rev. Sally Boyle as a .5 minister (half-time) for one year, with the option to renew for a year. It is the Board's intention to have her work with our community until June 30, 2022. She will share worship, administration and pastoral care duties with Rev. Karen, and lead adult education activities.



So, now about Rev. Sally, she was ordained 44 years ago and is a Saskatchewan farm girl. You may have met her already, in her conference leadership roles, sharing her passion for pastoral care and counseling, or in congregational ministry, retiring in 2017 in Stony Plain. The little

bit I've gotten to know her, I've learned that Sally's heart is gentle and kind, she thinks deeply and listens with discernment, and she's a lot of fun. The Board and, Ministry and Personnel Committee can't wait to introduce Sally to you in person.

Yours in Christ, Lisa Fairweather, Chair of Ministry and Personnel Committee.

What's next?

The announcement has happened. Sally has arrived. Now what?

Karen and Sally have met a couple of times. Shared worship is being planned. Shared pastoral care is in the planning and shared administration is simply part of ministry. In effect, we hope to share as much of the joy and challenge of ministry as we are able given the time constraints of our particular positions.

We have agreed that we will share Sunday responsibility equally. Karen will take the lead in the administrative work although Sally will show up at many meetings for a while just so we get to know one another's faces. Sally will take the lead in adult education although the Scripture Reflection time each week will be a piece in which we both participate. There are folk with whom Karen has a long standing pastoral relationship and those relationships will remain. Sally will engage in some emerging pastoral care concerns as well as be available to anyone who wishes to speak with her. Sally also has a tendency to be a pastoral presence in meetings and other gatherings.

Karen is Called to ministry at R-W. Sally is Appointed as Retired Supply. This means that ultimately Karen is the Officer of the Court. She carries the mantel of the church, so to speak. Or, it might be said that Karen officially represents The United Church of Canada in our midst. However, we are determined to work as a true team and if Karen is not available for any reason the mantel falls to Sally.

If you are now abundantly confused...welcome to The United Church of Canada. Ultimately, we wish to be a blessing in your midst for whatever time we are privileged to be together.

Blessings,
Sally and Karen



Challenging and Enlightening Reading Suggestions for Everyone

Broadview

United Church publication that replaces The United Church Observer.

Brown

What Being Brown in the World Today Means (to Everyone) Author: Al-Solaylee, Kamal

A look at the social, political, economic and personal implications of being a brown-skinned person today, whether from North Africa, the Middle East, Mexico, the Caribbean, or South and Southeast Asia.

Truth Be Told

My Journey Through Life and the Law

Author: **McLachlin, Beverley**

Former Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Canada, Beverley McLachlin, recounts her remarkable life, from growing up in rural Alberta, to studying law to become a lawyer, to launching her career on the Supreme Court. She's written 3 books since retirement.

The Skin We're in

A Year of Black Resistance and Power

Author: Cole, Desmond

In the tradition of Ta-Nehisi Coates, a bracing, provocative and perspective-shifting book from one of Canada's most celebrated and uncompromising writers, Desmond Cole. *The Skin We're In* will spark a national conversation, influence policy and inspire activists.

The Cross and the Lynching Tree

Author: Cone, James H

"When we see the crucifixion as a first-century lynching, we are confronted by the re-enactment of Christ's suffering in the blood-soaked history of African Americans," writes Cone (systematic theology, Union Theological Seminary; Black Theology & Black Power). With accessible allusions to Jesus, the sufferings of Old Testament figures, the lynchings of at least 5000 African Americans, and reflections of notable 20th-century Christian thinkers, including W.E.B. Du Boise, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Reinhold Niebuhr, and Martin Luther King Jr., Cone points out that while many ordinary Christians, black and white, saw the cross "as the defining heart of the Christian faith," they were oblivious to its parallels in America's lynching tree."

Seven Fallen Feathers

Racism, Death, and Hard Truths in A Northern City

Author: Talaga, Tanya

Presents the story of seven Indigenous high school students who died in Thunder Bay, Ontario from 2010 to 2011. They were sent hundreds of kilometres away from their families because there was no sufficient high school on their reserves. Two more died in the year the book was published.

Born a Crime

Author: Trevor Noah

The humorist TV host Trevor Noah writes about growing up in South Africa during apartheid when it was a crime for a black mother (strongly religious and a lawyer) to marry a white father.

by Lorna Berlinguette

THE GREEN GOOD NEWS

Christ's Path to Sustainable and Joyful Life

Why read this book? T Wilson Dickinson gives us a missing link in our understanding of Jesus. He draws us into the Jesus stories by providing the context of the Roman occupation and the social conditions that resulted. He presents Jesus as fully Jewish, well-versed in the Hebrew Scriptures, and one whose understanding of the Law is much more than purity alone. He also demonstrates Jesus's understanding of the Sabbath and of Jubilee. Perhaps the author's most important contribution is that he offers many "aha" moments as the reader begins to fully appreciate the actions of Jesus.

The Green Good News is more than an opinion piece. Rather, the author cites many well-known scholars of religion, history, and anthropology who have contributed to his knowledge.

In fact, this book has garnered rave reviews from renowned theologian Walter Brueggemann and the founder of 350.org Bill McKibben.

There are many "Jesus" books on the market, but this one is special in offering actions that go far to establish a vision of justice and sustainability that includes the earth and all that is in it. It is not a "Jesus Saves" book. It is a "Jesus Gives" book.

-Nancy Heule

A Message from the DEAP pod

As the DEAP pod, our task is to Discern, Envision, And consider Policies based on what we observe and hear from you, the community of Robertson-Wesley United Church. We consider where the Spirit is moving in our midst and contemplate how we continue to respond to God's call to build a community of love, inclusion, and action. However, for the past eight months, it has been quiet. Some of the voices and ideas that inspire us into action have been distracted as we each re-think how to do many of the things that we have taken for granted.

This is a difficult time for all of us. Our smiles are hidden behind masks and we are unable to comfort each other with a hug or a face to face conversation over tea. For the community of Robertson-Wesley, our number one priority is for people to be safe in whatever they do. That includes taking care of themselves and others while ensuring that everyone experiences that "We are all in this together" and that "We are not alone." A kind word or message of support and solidarity can help us feel less alone, but we are less likely to pass each other on the street. In order to live this out, we need to be more intentional with how we connect.

We have heard many stories that demonstrate what a creative and caring community Robertson-Wesley has continued to be. When programs were halted, it was only a temporary stop while folks figured out how to continue activities in new ways. Recently, our church has been reclaiming more "in person" programming (Sunday Worship, Food Bank, Magic Pantry, Bells, White Gifts, Bake Sales) but other programs cannot return again until we can be sure that everyone can remain safe.

Given that COVID-19 has taken away many of our usual ways of connecting with each other, serving one another, and serving God, the DEAP Pod has been acknowledging and reflecting on the feelings of distress, isolation, and guilt that can arise and how we might respond to this; one approach we considered was the idea of reframing what it means to live out our faith during this time - reframing "action".

As a congregation, we spent September pondering the idea that we are in a liminal time - a threshold time of uncertainty, which allows us opportunity to watch for God and discern our way forward. It may be a time of deep reflection, dialogue with God, and dialogue with each other. Perhaps conversation, reflection, planning, and prayer is one way we define action at this time. We also noticed

the varied ways by which congregants are taking action to care for one another - grocery drop-offs, phone check-ins, and thinking of one another.

The staff and volunteers at R-W have worked diligently to ensure that our community continues to carry out our purpose and mission. To you, we offer grateful thanks:

The facilities, COVID safety, and sanitizing team -- Brad, Roderick, and volunteers -- whose hard work has enabled in-person worship services to begin and for outreach programs like Food Bank, Magic Pantry and grocery card sales to continue.

The technology team & worship team—Matthew, Shylo, Tim, Conall, Sophia, Kathryn, Erin and volunteers—who bring online worship services and spirited programs into homes near and far.

The finance team – Garth and volunteers – who keep the lights on by paying utility bills and doing all the other work associated with the stewardship of the church's finances.

Elyse and volunteers who keeps folks connected through emails, Still Spirited, by mailing materials to folks who are offline, and by supporting groups and committees.

Rev. Karen, Laura, Brooke, Shylo, Erin, and volunteers who provide pastoral care, online programs, organize drive-by events like "blessing backpacks", participate in ZOOM meetings and lawn gatherings, and share prayers and worship services (Kids, Sunday, Communion).

For some, action at this time may also mean staying still, quite literally. Some of our congregation, due to work, school, or other life demands, are at a higher risk of carrying or spreading COVID-19 to others. For these members, faith-driven action means protecting our community by streaming online services and programming rather than attending in person. We acknowledge and honour all the ways that our members are taking action during this time.

Do you have a story or idea that you would like the DEAP group to contemplate? We value receiving your input. Contact us at mail@rwuc.org (Attention DEAP). We are also looking to add one or two people to the DEAP pod who love to listen to the ideas that are shared in our community and to discuss and develop those ideas. If you would like more information on DEAP, please contact Reverend Karen Bridges.

Advent & Christmas

ADVENT: Patient Anticipation Peacefully Accepted

How much longer must we wait? How much more can we take? Is it finally time for something new to emerge from our grief, our longing, our dreaming, our aching and our isolation? Though it may feel like life has come to a slow stop, the world continues to move. Mystery surrounds this season of Advent which is the first season of the liturgical year. Advent is a token of the importance of active waiting and preparing for something to be created. Whether it is the thousands of years that the Israelites waited, or the 9 months that Mary waited for Jesus to be born, we too are called to wait, with patience, with anticipation, and with the hope, peace, joy and love that comes from God in the form of a child. This advent we will seek to learn from the birds who fly south, and the importance of sharing the load. You are invited to create a peace dove using the template on back of this publication and cover it with your words of hope, in anticipation of the peace that comes at Christmas.



A SERVICE OF
**Lessons
& Carols**

December 13 at 4:00 pm

Online only on [rwuc.org/live](https://www.rwuc.org/live) or on Facebook

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

This service is a classic tradition, with a series of scripture readings that take us through the whole story of God's promise, Israel's longing and waiting, and the fulfilment of promise in the birth of Christ. The story is accompanied by music from the choir, as well as from other musicians. We will be lighting candles in the R-W sanctuary so you can feel like you are there with us.

Blue Christmas Service of Healing

December 6 at 7:00 pm

In person and Online

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



A Message from the Treasurer

Though 2020 is certainly different than years past, the amazing and important work of our church continues. Whether enjoying Christmas services in person or online, your financial offering is essential to ensure we can continue to adapt and grow as a spirited community. For both enjoying online and in-person, we have ways to donate. Cheques and cash can be mailed or dropped off at the Church. Donations can be made online through PayPal on our website (<https://www.rwuc.org/donate/>). If you are in person, we even have a tap machine for Interac if you need it. Thank you for your support of RWUC this holiday season!



Christmas Eve December 24th

4:00 pm

Online only

Family Celebration

A celebration for all ages

8:00 pm

In person & online

Candlelight Service

Music and songs of joy for the Holy night

11:00 pm **Candlelight Service**

In person & online

Music and songs of joy for the Holy night



CHRISTMAS AT R-W COVID STYLE 2020

Christmas at R-W is going to look a little different this year. Christmas Eve Services will still be at 4:00 pm, 8:00 pm and 11:00 pm, but there are some changes.

The 4:00 pm Family Service will be live-streamed only with no in-person attendance.

The 8:00 pm and 11:00 pm services will be live-streamed AND will have space for 150 attendees per service, you will be required to register for those services. These 2 services will be very similar in nature ending with candlelight and silent night. If both services fill up we will consider adding an earlier service. Please know these services will be recorded and can be watched at another time.

To register for these services please contact the church office by calling 780-482-1587 or emailing the office at mail@rwuc.org. Please indicate which service you would like to attend and number of people attending.

STREAMING NOW ONLINE

At rwuc.org/live or facebook.com/RobertsonWesley

SPIRITED ART STUDIO

Starting this fall the art studio has been meeting on Zoom on Mondays and Wednesdays, if you're interested please contact Laura at spiritedartstudio@rwuc.org

There is no cost to participate in the Spirited Art Studio and any level of previous experience in art-making is welcome, including very little or none. Directions are kept very simple so that projects can be completed easily and in a short amount of time. We are also open to artists and participants who would like to share ideas and work on individual projects and participate just for the conversation.

Similarly to meeting in the art studio in person, people gather together to connect, create art and build community. Now more than ever, we can feel isolated. Particularly those of us who live alone, this provides a great outlet to gather together, have some fun, and feel a sense of belonging. Each evening starts with introductions, then an art idea, then we take time to create, while listening to instrumental music. Finally we end the session with some sharing of what has been created and/or thoughts that emerge from experiences. People are finding this to be a worthwhile way to spend some time and to get away from the stress of the pandemic and all that it has brought with it.

In September we worked with dry media; sketching renderings with graphite and colour pencils, chalk and pastel on a variety of paper. In October we switched to using ink and watercolours. In November we are creating art journals and altered books. We will soon be creating Doves of hope, peace, joy and love as we contemplate Christmas in the Advent season. We would love to see you join us!

Spirited Art Studio will take a Christmas break with the last session being December 16, and will resume on January 4, 2021.

-Laura David Foster

Scripture Reflections

On **Tuesdays** at 12:00 pm, we take time to reflect on the scripture passages for the upcoming Sunday.

We use the practice of Lectio Divina which means we read through the scripture three times. You will be invited into some moments of silence, and if you are willing you are invited to share what the scriptures stirred in you with the group. You don't need to be a Biblical Scholar. God speaks through the scriptures and it is always wonderful to hear the diversity of messages that are received. Come watch with a bible and a journal, or simply yourself! Tune in when you can.

Join by visiting rwuc.org/live, on Facebook, or by requesting the Zoom link to join the discussion by speaking to Rev. Karen Bridges. There will be no Scripture Reflections on Dec 30.

AFFIRMING REFLECTIONS

Monthly on rwuc.org/live or facebook. Join Affirming Coordinator Shylo Rosborough for Affirming Reflections. Shylo discusses different faith topics through a LGBTQIA2+ lense every 3rd Monday of the month at Noon! Affirming Reflections till take a Christmas break starting Dec 14 and will resume in 2021.

STREAMING NOW ONLINE

At rwuc.org/live or facebook.com/RobertsonWesley



Join Erin Craig at noon on **Fridays** for Hymn Sing on rwuc.org/live or on Facebook. Tune in to listen to your favorite hymns and sing along in the comfort of your own home! Hymn sing will take a Christmas break, with the last Hymn Sing being December 18, and resume January 8, 2021.

Affirming Coffee Hour

Affirming Ministries invites you to bring your coffee and join Shylo for his online Affirming Coffee Hour! On Zoom every **Thursday** from 11:00 am - Noon. Affirming Coffee Hour is a chance of connection for LGBTQIA2S+ folks and allies who are wanting to learn more, ask questions, engage in thoughtful discussions, and socialize!

Affirming Coffee Hour will take a Christmas Break, with the last Coffee Hour on December 17, and will resume in the new year. Email: affirming.ministries@rwuc.org for the link!

Live Streamed Communion

On the 1st Sunday of every month at 1:00 pm, we will be holding a special online Communion service. Now that we have people in the sanctuary, we are unable to offer communion in person due to safety reasons. You are invited to grab some bread and some juice or wine and partake from the safety of your home. This service will be approximately half an hour.

Sunday Worship

Sunday Worship continues to be live streamed and in person at 10:30 am every Sunday.

How to join Worship online:

1. On Sunday morning shortly before 10:30 am, Open your internet browser (chrome, firefox, internet explorer, safari or edge)
2. Type the address rwuc.org/live in to your browsers search bar, this will take you to the online service page.



3. Click on the still photo (that looks like the above image) and a new window will open
4. Watch the live service video in that new window

You don't need to have Facebook to stream!! Watch on RWUCs website at www.rwuc.org/live or Live on Youtube at www.youtube.com/user/RWUnitedChurch/live

You can also re-watch any of the live streamed services on Youtube.

Goodbye Stony Plain Road

There is a passage in the Old Testament, Ecclesiastes 3:1-13, which has a theme dealing with one of the constants we experience in life - CHANGE. The first verse sets the fundamental purpose of the passage:

“To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under heaven.”



Where as the conversation deals basically with human psychology, sociology and culture; the physical implications of the human condition can be observed in the physical environment they create. In short the planning of their cities, buildings and monuments. As the activities change over time, and the past and present can be observed in the urban landscape. The old 'main street' of

West Jasper Place is an example of the past, present and impact of the approaching future which stimulates change.

In February of 2020 I visited Stony Plain Road and took photos of the existing conditions at that point in time. The planning of the new surface transit system is



routed along the old 'main street' of Stony Plain Road from 149 street, eventually turning south onto 156 street. The new technology of mass transit will stimulate changes to some extent along its route.

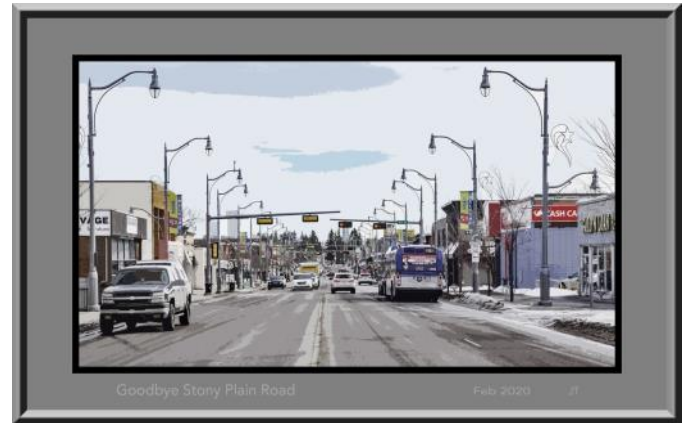
In the pictures much of the history of Stony Plain Road can be seen. The history evolved from the community of a few hundred homesteaders

in 1910, who lived a meagre life raising animals and tending gardens, with a complete lack of infrastructure and amenities. In the 1930's people began moving into the area to escape higher taxes in the City of Edmonton. By the 1940's there were enough people commuting into Edmonton from Jasper Place that an electric trolley line was extended to what is now 149 Street.



After the Second World War when oil was discovered in the Leduc area in 1947, the populations of Jasper Place and Edmonton escalated substantially. By 1948 West Jasper Place was the largest hamlet in Alberta with a population of 4000 people, then rapidly evolved into a village of 8900 people by 1950, and was designated a town by the end of the same year.

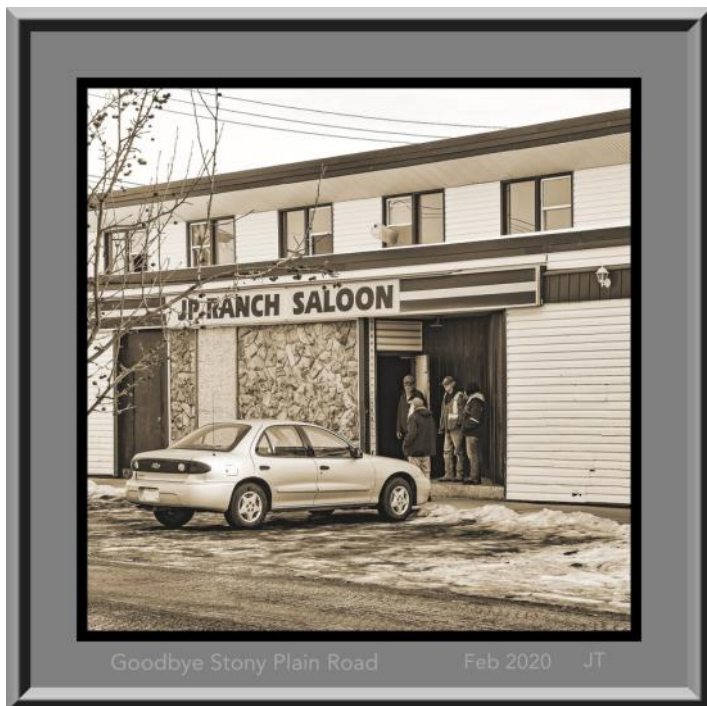
In the 1960's rapid growth continued and in 1964 the Town of Jasper Place, with a population of 37,000 amalgamated with the City of Edmonton. An increase of population of over 900 per cent in twelve years. The growth of the City of Edmonton, beyond Jasper Place is continuing to this day.



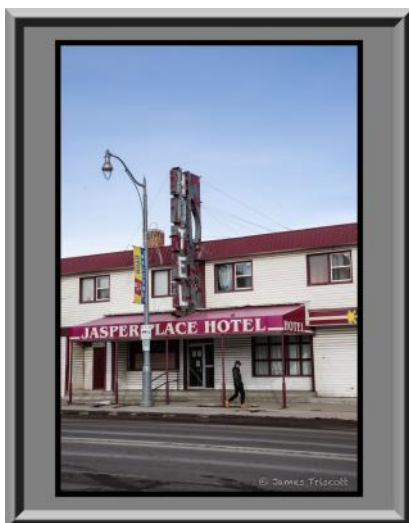
The physical environment of the thirties and forties would have been as a typical small Alberta town, with one and two story buildings lining both sides of the 'main street'. There were fewer automobiles so most of the parking could be accommodated on the main street itself.

As the population increased and the affluence of Alberta escalated to today's numbers, most of the physical spaces, including roadways along Stony Plain Road are still at their requirements of the 1930's and 40's. 'Band-aid' solutions have been applied, but the space situation is

still incompatible with 2020 population numbers. Stony Plain Road is now a major commuter artery accommodating automobiles. The appearance of light rail transit will stimulate future changes to the road, but to what extent is to be seen.



The pictures illustrate the volume automobiles on Stony Plain Road, the lack of larger buildings because of inability for automobiles to park to access the retail spaces, the forest of street signs and lights intended to be read from a moving car. Even the retail store windows are covered with large signs and pictures. There is still evidence of humans there - pictures of youth looking at a paper box, and a wall memorial of Wop May on a masonry wall. All this because of our auto oriented past.



Maybe the arrival of the light rail transit will encourage change and increase in pedestrian foot traffic, new buildings to accommodate pedestrians, shops and residences.

Changes are coming, to what extent we do not know, but change is coming.

-Jim Triscott

Music Minute

Music-making during COVID has certainly been a challenge, to put it lightly. Early on in the pandemic, we saw lots of "virtual choir" and "virtual orchestra" videos being produced, and now, many music leaders have shifted their focus to get more people making music in as safe a manner as possible. Regardless of what we do, there simply isn't a way to sing together the way we did before the pandemic. It's a loss that I feel deeply every day. But, luckily there are many alternatives if you're inclined to try something new!

The Friday virtual hymn-sing has become a really cherished part of my week during COVID. I'm pleased, too, to hear that it's become a valued element in the lives of others. Back in March, we started with a simple video broadcast; now, the hymn-sing includes lyrics, sheet music when possible, a hymn-request form, and special guests! And while it's true that there's nothing quite like singing in the same room as someone else, knowing that people are watching and singing along from other places still warms my heart.

The hymn-sing will continue through Advent, with its last occurrence of 2020 happening on December 18th. We'll start again in January after a well-earned break over Christmas. For each of the upcoming Advent season broadcasts, there will be a special guest! Maria from the R-W choir will be back to share her Christmas and Advent favourites; and my mom, Cathy, will join us on one broadcast, where we'll get to talk about the Christmas songs that were meaningful in our family. We will also have guests from other Edmonton United churches to talk about their Christmas and Advent traditions as well as ones that are meaningful to their congregations: Music Directors Susan Farrell from St. Paul's United and Kimberley McMann from McDougall United will be making appearances.

I hope that you'll be able to join us on Fridays at noon during Advent to sing along! If you can't make it to watch live, the broadcasts are always available to watch afterwards on the R-W website.

Best wishes for this Advent season, and I hope to sing with you all soon!

-Erin Craig

Advent Anticipation

It may come as a surprise to some of you, but I love surprises!! Maybe I should qualify this...I like good surprises, ones that bring me joy. I'm not sure how I would have reacted if an Angel suddenly appeared and told me I was pregnant...that is the kind of surprise that would shift the balance of my life drastically, and I have a feeling that at first I would not see the joy of the situation, though in time I think I would. What I love about surprises is knowing that someone took the time to prepare something, to create something because they care about me.

As I walked to work this morning in the dark, I felt peace and excited anticipation, as I wondered what this new liturgical year would bring. What surprises lay ahead for Robertson-Wesley? With every step, I found hope and possibility, and I found myself feeling a great sense of anticipation. The season of Advent is about active waiting, waiting for the WORD made flesh. The moment when humans could touch the divine found in an innocent child, born without fanfare, born in time of great uncertainty, born with the promise of bringing peace, and love to the world. I wonder what the angels will whisper in each of your ears as we walk through this liminal time as a faith community. What seemingly impossible tasks will you be chosen for? And how will you react to these surprising revelations? What people will God send to help you? Which of you will be sent to help others? Who will come to care for you like a shepherd? Which of you will be called to act as a shepherd to others? What wise people will provide you with the tools needed to complete your task? And which of you will provide such wise gifts?

As we walk through the darkness of this season we will find the light of Christ showing us the way out of fear, out of uncertainty into the warmth of God's compassion, into the shelter of God's love. Maybe the call to reduce our usual Christmas activities will finally leave room for Jesus to enter our lives.

Maybe the simplicity of the ritual of lighting of the advent candles will help us find: HOPE for the future; PEACE in our anxiety or grief of what we have lost; JOY in the small surprises like a card in the mail or a homemade cookie; and LOVE in the opportunity to hear the story of the birth of Christ with the light of candles, and the sound of carols we have sung each Christmas.

This Advent season may feel strange and foreign, but

the story remains the same. We await the love of God found in our Emmanuel which means "God with us." Know that even when we are at home and away from our Church family that God connects us through the love of Mary and Joseph who brought Jesus into the world and who willingly shared the love of God with each one of us. May the peace, hope and love of God be with you all.

Rev. Karen

Volunteer Opportunities

Board Secretary

Role:

- To attend all Board and Congregational meetings and record the minutes of all such meetings.
- To distribute the minutes to the board members, and submit the minutes to the office administrator within one week of the meeting for filing, once signed by the Board Secretary and the Board Chair.

Term:

The term of the Board Secretary is two years, with an option to renew for a second term.

Skills:

- Good listening skills
- Ability to record
- Organization
- Familiarity and efficiency with computers

Incoming Board Chair

Role: The role of the Incoming Board Chair is to support the Board Chair as needed, and to develop the experience and knowledge of the church, its mission, and its ministry that are needed for upcoming terms as Board Chair and Past Board Chair.

Duties:

- Assume the duties of Board Chair in their absence or as appointed by the Board Chair.
- Attend (all) Board, Executive and Board of Management meetings.
- Update the Board Manual as needed.
- Become Board Chair at the end of term as Incoming Board Chair.
- Undertake additional duties as requested by the Chair.

Term:

The Incoming Board Chair will be a one year term with a three year commitment. This three year commitment consists of one year term as Incoming Board Chair, one year term as Board Chair, and a one year term as Past

Board Chair.

Skills:

- Demonstrated leadership skills
- Facilitation and diplomacy skills
- Good listener
- Ability to identify skills and resources in the congregation
- Communication skills and basic computer skills
- Basic budget understanding
- Basic understanding of parliamentary procedure

Regional Council Representative

Role:

Robertson-Wesley United Church belongs to the Northern Spirit Region (wider church) of The United Church of Canada. The church is structured in a similar way to the Canadian Government at this time. We have 3 courts of governance. The congregation of Robertson-Wesley sends 4 lay representatives to attend the annual meeting of our region which, in our location is the city wide level of the church.

The Regional Council functions in a similar manner to the church board. We elect four lay members to this wider church decision making circle, and they report back to the congregation decision and information that pertain to our mission and ministry of the church.

Duties:

- To attend a weekend gathering each year to decide on vision, policies and practices. (This year the meeting will take place June 11-14, 2020 in Camrose. Robertson-Wesley will pay for the lay reps participation in this meeting.)
- Share information with the congregation on wider church activities and resources (through Between the Aisles, R-W report and the bulletin boards in Memorial Hall)
- Attend 3 board meetings per year (the reps rotate) as a corresponding (non voting) member.

Term:

Two (2) years, renewable.

Skills:

- The Regional Council representatives should have basic knowledge of how The United Church of Canada "works".
- Should have good listening/reporting skills.
- Willing to learn as we live into the new structure.
- Should be a full member of The United Church of Canada.

Treasurer

Role:

The Treasurer is responsible for the tracking and reporting on the financial position of the Church. The

Treasurer works with the Financial Manager to ensure that the Church is in a stable position financially and that there is a budget approved by the Congregation that is being adhered to. The Treasurer chairs the Finance Committee and provides leadership on financial challenges facing the Church. The Treasurer provides open, transparent, and regular communication with the congregation and the Board.

Duties:

- Chair the Finance Committee and represent the Finance Committee at the Board level. Both the Finance Committee and Board meet monthly.
- Work with the Financial Manager to monitor, assess and predict the financial position of the Church on a monthly basis.
- Report on the monthly and year to date financial position of the Church at the Board and to the Congregation.
- Lead the development of the annual budget and present the budget to the Board for approval and to the Congregation for final approval at the Annual Congregational Meeting.
- Liaise with Bank and Fund Managers as required.
- Ensure that an adequate number of cheque signatories is maintained and sign cheques as needed.
- Maintain and develop policies related to financial matters, such as rental policy, investment policy, etc.
- With the Financial Manager, ensure that guidelines related to the CRA and charitable status are met, including filing annual returns.
- Meet annually with the Wesley and Clarke Fund Trustees.
- Liaise with Envelope Stewards and Offering Counters, including establishing Counting Schedule.

Term:

The term of the Treasurer is two years, with an option to renew for a second term.

Skills:

- The Treasurer should have experience in the full accounting cycle and knowledge of financial reporting methods
- Comfort with accountability for a large budget and responsibility for making decisions related to significant expenses
- Computer skill are essential
- Leadership skills including running a meeting, organization, and attention to detail
- Communication skills are an asset

Time Commitment:

The time commitment should be (on average) about 3 hours per week.

A Story of Gratitude

Waiting in line to pay for my groceries I overheard the cashier ask the man in front of me if he wanted to purchase a bag of food for the Food Bank. She said there was a bag for adults and a bag for babies.

“Babies? I never think of babies and the Food Bank. I will have a bag for babies.”

As the cashier handed him his change he told her to give the change to the woman behind him, me, to help pay for my groceries.

I thanked him and said, “Can I tell you what I plan to do with these coins? Since the beginning of COVID-19 I have been placing any coins I have out on a street post, on a ledge, for someone to find. Is it okay that I do that with these coins?”

The man was surprised. “I knew you were the right person to give the change to. I would not have thought to do that. By all means, that is a great idea.”

As I left the grocery store I saw a man recycling bottles and cans. I said, “Thank you for the work you do of recycling.”

The man looked at me and said, “Are you talking to me? No one talks to me.”

“I want to thank you for the work you do of recycling bottles and cans. I have some coins. Would I be able to give them to you?”

“You want to give me money? People don’t give me money.”

“It’s up to you, but if you would like them, they are yours.”

The man put out his hand and I dropped the coins into his hand. “Thank you,” he said. “You made my day. Bless you lady.”

If you have a story of gratitude that you would like to share send it to Elyse in the R-W church office.

If you would like to pledge please visit www.rwuc.org/gratitude/

Brought to you by our Robertson-Wesley Gratitude Team: Fraaz, Ian, Jill, Pat, Sylvia, Rev. Karen.

FINANCIAL UPDATE

2020 continues to be a dynamic (or rather unpredictable) year financially – with continued restrictions because of COVID, some of our regular revenue streams (rentals and weddings) have shifted but we have been lucky to qualify for federal funding.

We are currently at about \$520,000 for revenue, thanks in large part to generous donations from our amazing community. In terms of spending, we are seeing a similar picture – though some expenses have decreased, we have also had some spending we did not plan for, like additional cleaning supplies, live streaming equipment and Zoom fees.

Our expenses are at about \$545,000. If everyone remembers back to our budget, we were predicting to use our investments to cover about \$70,000 and we are currently predicting it will be much less than that – which is fantastic as our investments continue to recover from a challenging year.

The final few months of the year are always critical for us and will be this year. With so much uncertainty around the holiday season, we hope that people continue to generously support the amazing work of RWUC! Thanks everyone for the ongoing support, it has helped us pull through this crazy year. The Finance Team is now turning its attention to budgeting for 2021 and we can only hope

it is a bit steadier than 2020!

Tory Bachmann, Treasurer

*Doves of peace, “together while apart”**

Hello Friends!

This year for advent we will be creating Doves of peace that will be “taking flight” in our sanctuary! Doves can symbolize the Spirit, and hope, peace, joy and love we can find as we are “together while apart” * and continue to wear masks, physically distance, and follow AHS guidelines for public health and safety.

For many flight and soaring of birds has a significant, uplifting meaning. Also, Doves depend on and benefit from each other by flying as a flock, in a formation of correct distance, taking turns carrying the headwind, communicating with each other and creating a sense of safety in numbers. Doves can be as symbol of togetherness and hope as we continue to navigate new social paradigms in the wake of COVID-19 and social distancing this advent season.

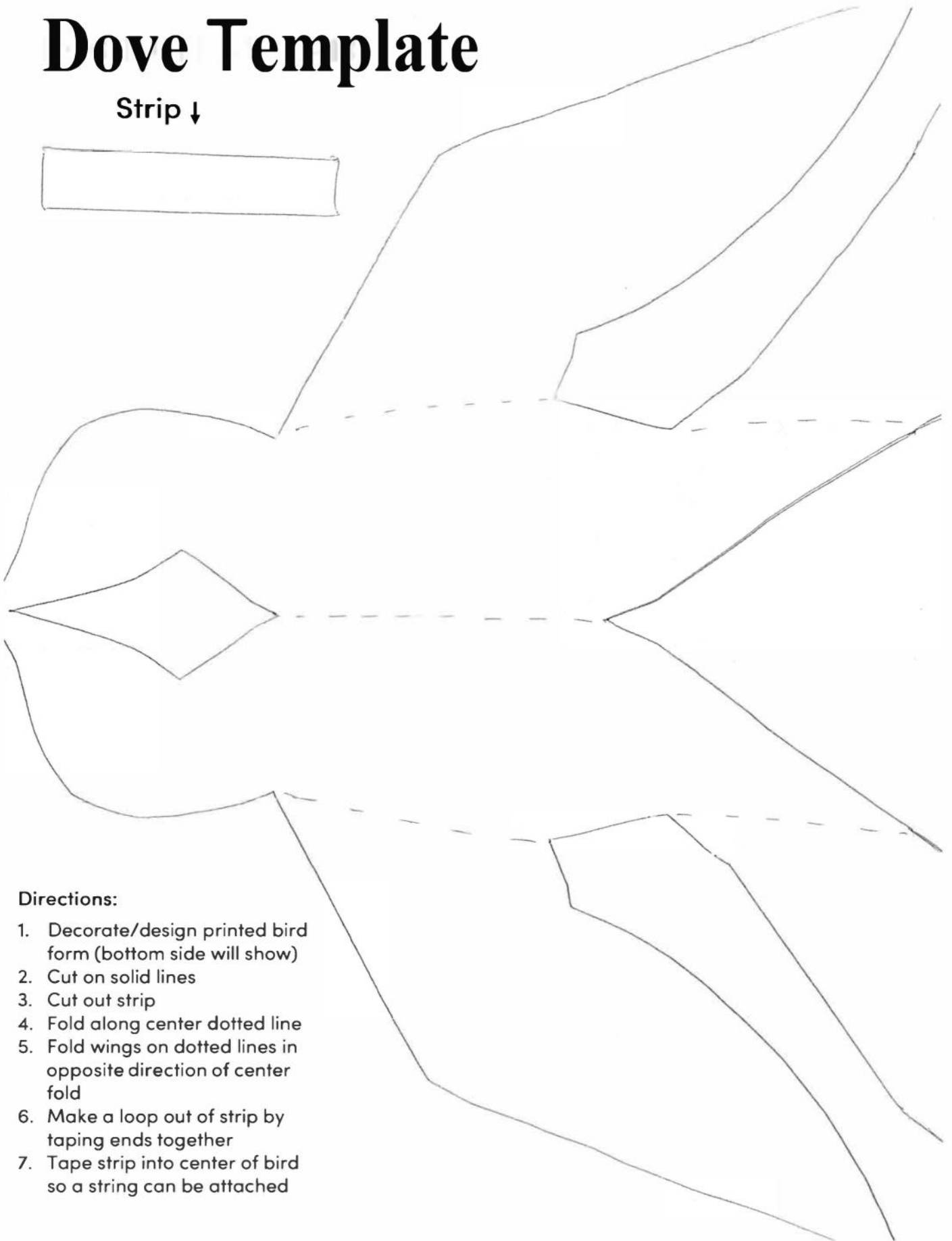
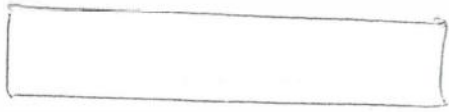
Creating paper Doves could help us visually express a need, a prayer, a hope.

To take part in decorating our sanctuary for this most unusual advent season, please use the paper dove template on the reverse of this page, cut it out, design or decorate with coloured markers, etc. to create a message that could be shared visually or through words. You can bring or mail in to the church to add to our flock!

* Birds “together while apart” is an idea that originated with art therapist Vickie Morgan and has been adapted with permission.

Dove Template

Strip ↓



Directions:

1. Decorate/design printed bird form (bottom side will show)
2. Cut on solid lines
3. Cut out strip
4. Fold along center dotted line
5. Fold wings on dotted lines in opposite direction of center fold
6. Make a loop out of strip by taping ends together
7. Tape strip into center of bird so a string can be attached