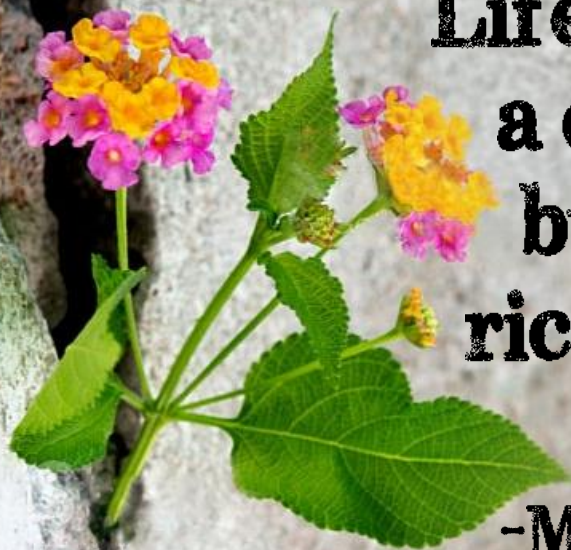


# *Between the Aisles*

*A Robertson-Wesley United Church Quarterly*

**SPRING**



**Life delivered me  
a catastrophe,  
but I found a  
richness of soul**

**-Michael J. Fox**

# Editor's Welcome

Greetings Readers,

Transitions. This word can be a big one or a little one, depending on each person's experiences. Moving to another continent or to another country can be a big transition or a small one. Losing a bodily function such as sight or mobility, is definitely transitional, as is the death of a loved one.

This issue of *Between the Aisles* is all about transitions. No doubt there will be something in each article that will elicit recollections of readers' personal transitions. Last year, 2021, marked the fiftieth anniversary of the amalgamation of Robertson and Wesley churches. What a transition that must have been for members of both congregations. But here we are, in the midst of Covid, and who knows how much more each one of us will face. As children of God, we will carry on!

Nancy Heule, co-editor *Between the Aisles*

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## Affirming Ministry

Affirming Ministry has been a part of the fabric of Robertson-Wesley United Church for many years. As a faith community Robertson-Wesley became affirming officially in 2009. In January 2019, Robertson-Wesley United received a grant from the Edmonton Presbytery New Ministries Development Team which provided money for the Affirming Ministries Coordinator position for three years. The vision of this position was as follows: "The United Church is committed to publically declaring our commitment to inclusion and justice of all people of all sexual orientations and gender identities. Affirming Ministries makes an explicit statement about issues of sexuality and gender identity, our commitment to justice while working toward healing and wholeness of all creation. We believe in supporting and creating safe places for the LGBTQ2S+ persons and communities in the city of Edmonton and the surrounding area."

The Affirming Ministries Coordinator would work to continue the mission of helping congregations become affirming while providing programming, support, resources and pastoral care to LGBTQ2S+ people and allies on their spiritual journey. Mark Chiang and Shylo Rosborough were hired together in the beginning and after the first year, Shylo became the full time Affirming Ministry Coordinator. The funding has now ended, and Shylo is answering the call to become a paramedic. Shylo's work in this position has been exceptional. Shylo has journeyed with many congregations in the Northern Spirit Region of the United Church, and has supported individuals and families. Shylo has also offered many workshops for groups and congregations to learn more about gender identity, sexual orientation, and the importance of pronouns. Shylo led services for the Transgender Day of Remembrance, and helped to create many ways to celebrate during Pride Week. Shylo has also walked with and provided support to many individuals and families as they explore sexual orientation and gender identity. We will miss Shylo greatly and wish him well in his new vocation.

Where does this leave Robertson-Wesley and the Affirming Ministry Position? That is a good question. There is no doubt that this ministry is important to who Robertson-Wesley is. It is also clear that with the restructuring of the wider United Church from Presbyteries into Regions that funding for this position from the region is unlikely. Exploration for new grants has begun to see if funding can be found to continue this ministry. If you are interested in being a part of discerning the direction for this ministry, you are invited to join a conversation to discern the vision of this ministry for Robertson-Wesley over the next 5 to 10 years. Please contact Rev. Karen Bridges if you are interested in being part of this conversation at [Karen.bridges@rwuc.org](mailto:Karen.bridges@rwuc.org).

Pat Stewart and Charl Els

## LOOKING FOR A CHANGE? TRY BUYING NOTHING... FOR A YEAR

*Life is not measured by how much you own.*

- Luke 12:15, NLT

It was the summer of 2013. I had planned to move into a new apartment in Calgary's Sunnyside neighbourhood when my plans were derailed due to an epic flood. A friend kindly offered me a room in his house until I figured out my next steps. In a few short days, I had to downsize from a fully furnished 850 square foot apartment to one small bedroom.

On our first night as unexpected roommates, my friend and I came up with an idea: what if we didn't buy anything for a year? We had enough clothes, electronics, books, and we both rode bikes surely we could make it through the year by just paying for groceries, utilities, and rent. Within two weeks of starting our Buy Nothing Year, our story was published in national media. "I guess we're really doing this," we thought. We were committed.

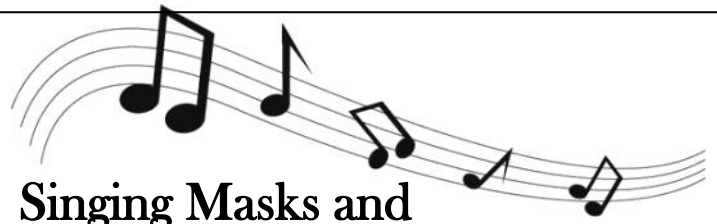
Throughout the year, we bartered, traded, accepted gifts, and gave things away. We cooked, fixed things, gardened, and learned new skills. Our lifestyles, friendships, and interests changed, as we had to opt out from going to restaurants, fitness classes, and any event with a fee. Our styles changed as we denied ourselves new clothes and haircuts. We challenged ourselves to continue thinking about our environmental impact and other areas of our lives we might evolve to better align with our values.

Change, suddenly, didn't seem so scary. We made it through the year with stories of personal resilience, new connections, a deepened bond, and a sense of satisfaction. In the years that have followed, I am surprised by the ways that our year of buying nothing prepared me for other transitions, from adjusting to life after a bad bicycle accident to supporting my mother in the end of her life to now just finding out my partner and I are pregnant with our first child.

Our year-long, deliberate life experiment provided me with an excellent blueprint of change that centered acceptance, grace, humour, connection, and love. It taught me to appreciate what I have and reinforced that, even when it doesn't feel like it, what I have is truly all I need.

Julie Phillips

Mission + Outreach Pod Coordinator



## Singing Masks and Social Distancing

Our choir began to meet again regularly shortly after my arrival as Music Director at the church in October 2021. I don't think I'm exaggerating when I write that the R-W Choir has had a challenging time of it the last couple of years!

When the pandemic began our choir was shut down like all choral groups in the country. At the time there was considerable negative press about the potential dangers of singing and how a few unfortunate super-spreader events had occurred among choirs in the U.S. and in Europe. Little was known about how Covid actually spread so the fear among Canadian choirs was both palpable and understandable.

Here at Robertson-Wesley we began to revive our choral presence with just eight singers. Some of our past members had moved on over the pandemic, and there were others who were uncomfortable returning. By Christmas our numbers had risen to fourteen but my bout with Covid and the rapid transmission of the omicron variant in early January put a temporary damper on our growth.

During all this we have tried to keep our singers safe over the past few months by instituting some things that would have been unthinkable just two years ago! We wear singer's masks which have a little more space around the mouth and stay more firmly in place when we are singing. We stay physically distant as much as is possible, in a fairly compact choir loft too. I've moved our rehearsals for the most part to the rehearsal room where we can spread out a little more.

The property committee has installed a state-of-the-art air purifier in the rehearsal space (thank you!) and we sanitize our hands frequently. I feel confident that we are doing our best to maintain a singing presence at church in these challenging times. As the pandemic drags on, I encourage you to keep our choir in your prayers and to remain grateful for our faithful and dedicated singers who play such an important part in our weekly worship!

Allan Bevan, PH.D.

Director of Music

## New Communication Policies or Practices

We have begun an analysis of our Communication Policies and Practices. **The R-W Communications Plan** presented is an initial catalogue of what is currently in place. The goal is to obtain the wisdom of our Community of Faith on:

What we do?

How are we doing?

What works and why?

What needs to be improved upon and why?

What new ideas could we consider?

Please reflect on this outreach. At this point in time you can reach out to me: Cell phone/text number: 780-914-1212, Email: dsollows@dsafit.com

Sincerely,

Douglas Sollows, Chair - Board of Robertson-Wesley

### R-W Communication Plan

#### Forms of communication:

- Weekly e-news
- R-W Report (written announcements each Sunday)
- Quarterly Printed Newsletter
- Verbal Announcements each Sunday
- Website
- Electronic Sign
- Social Media
- Monthly mail-outs to people who do not have access to computers and who do not attend in person
- Display window outside of the hall
- Posters

#### Weekly e-news includes:

- Weekly message from minister(s)
- Each week a different committee or group sends in a message which has included the following groups: Worship, Gratitude, Finance, Nominations, Sign group, Board, Mission and Outreach Pod work (ex: Environmental Stewardship and Truth and Reconciliation) and Spiritual Formation Pod work (ex: family ministries, arts ministry, and spiritual practices)

#### Board Meetings:

- Each month a different committee or group is invited to the meeting to share their work with the board. The group is given 20 minutes to share and then there is a time for questions and open discussion.
- After each annual meeting the board will write their covenant collaboratively each year with the congregation. In this covenant each member of the board will name their call to their position.

#### Round Table Discussions with the congregation:

- Conversations are hosted by the board for members of the congregation who would like to learn more about how the church works, or to share and express concerns

#### Once a year gathering of the board and all groups to share their work, hopes and dreams with each other:

- The hope is that this yearly gathering will be part of the annual assessment that is required by the National Church and the region.
- This conversation will help the board to ensure that the Community of Faith profile is up to date each year.

#### Annual Report:

- Create a template that invites groups to reflect more theologically on their work. It is hoped that this will answer the question of why we do what we do, not just a statistical report.

#### Outcomes:

- Committees and groups are inviting more feedback regularly, and the congregation is hearing more voices.
- We recognize that the information has always been available, but many people aren't reading them. We are now reflecting on these various documents to see if any improvements and changes can be made.
- Some of these documents have already been revised in hopes that they make more sense. Ex: the brochure: "Who does the work of the church?"
- The board will provide more time at the Annual meeting for general discussions, first in small groups and then as a whole in the new business. The hope is to engage in spiritual and faith discussion instead of just the nuts and bolts.

The initiatives that have received the most feedback to date included:

1. the Covenanting Ceremony where members could see the Board. The Board pictures and profiles were appreciated as a meet & greet and a public gesture;

*Extract from Board Minutes;*

*Covenant Document Once all covenant responses are received, they will be assembled/distilled, and at a service in September the board will express the covenants in the service. All board members are to complete a bio for Between the Aisles with the intent that readers can familiarize themselves with board members, re-engage with each other and the congregation, and form relationships.*

2. engaging with committees briefing with the Board. The work seems to be circulating and the comments are positive;
3. as a follow up, we tried to organize a ½ day meeting

on Saturday, December 17 with the Board, and all Committee chairs for a “state of the union” roundtable. That did not happen because of Omicron. This event will be re-scheduled once the 2022/2023 Board and Committees are in place. The Committee Chairs are very enthusiastic about this if nothing more than to share time with other committee chairs.

4. More announcements about important events are being presented by the Chair during the Sunday Service: Key ones recently:
  - i. our new music director;
  - ii. we were selecting a Community of Faith Profile Team; CoFP
  - iii. selection of the CoFP Team Members and activities to date;
  - iv. a request for congregation feedback on the draft communication analysis.

We will continue to evolve our communication plan. The next step will include discussions with the Community of Faith. This was announced at our Sunday Service on January 23.

**Updated staff position descriptions – Particular interest in your updated ministry staff roles and sharing of duties that you are feeding into the Profile process.**

M&P met with the Ministers in the Fall to review their current job descriptions (defined during the last JNAC in 2017). M&P recommended to the Board that the positions stay as is and be coordinated with the Community of Faith Profile Team. (CoFT).

- The CoFPT met with M&P on Monday, January 31, 2022, to discuss a number of questions that they had. This initial discussion is in preparation for interviews with the current ministers.
- The CoFPT is framing the search with a conceptual Ministerial Framework. That framework is derived from the UCC Manual. The Community of Faith have a variety of choices when it comes to Ministers. I have attended three meetings of the Committee. They are open to exploring a range of possibilities and have not fixed on one option.
- The CoFPT is planning to have a draft of their analysis and recommendations for the end of April.

There will be a change to the M&P team at the end of this year’s ACM, with three of five members staying on. I have been briefed that one of the remaining members has indicated that they will let their name go forward for the election of M&P Chair at the ACM. The Nomination Committee has secured commitment of two new members to join the committee. We will have a strong and knowledgeable group to coordinate with the CoFPT and the Board and the Community of Faith.

## In Conclusion

The Paradigm shift created with the changes in staffing and COVID over the last three years has allowed for an opportunity to evaluate existing conditions and to evolve new concepts. The process of engaging in change management has allowed the Community of Faith to come together with new and often different perspectives. Robertson-Wesley has positively embraced the changes. The framework of the Manual underpinned by the importance of a healthy and vibrant Community of Faith is being expressed in a fascinating way by very amazing people.

I am grateful for my exposure to this amazing time!  
Douglas Sollows, Chair - Board of Robertson-Wesley

## Community of Faith Profile Committee Update

Your RWUC Community of Faith committee has met five times since December 2021. We have been following The United Church of Canada, Pastoral Relations: Guidelines for a Community of Faith Profile. The Northern Spirit Region has also provided us with a liaison/mentor. We are working on being able to describe our Community of Faith on the website ChurchHub.ca

To do this we have been researching who we are as a faith community. We have been gathering information about the size of our faith community and also what kind of church we are and what kind of church we want to be. To do this we have been reviewing our website, our brochures and pamphlets. Also, we have been reviewing the information in the book, “Church Sizes” by Roy Oswald. We have recognized ourselves in the section called, “Program Church” as we have so many active programs led by highly skilled and committed volunteers.

Another valuable resource has been our previous JNAC report of 2016. We are collecting questions for an upcoming survey to the members and adherents of RWUC. This survey will be sent out via email and will be mailed to those who do not have email. Everyone’s participation in this survey will help us to identify who we are as a faith community, what we would like to be in the future and what our needs are for filling the vacant minister position. Please watch for your copy of the survey which we are hoping to have out by the end of February. We look forward to your input on this important work.

The CoFPT members are Colleen Graves, Chair, Robert Mah, secretary, Carol Anne Inglis, Joanne MacQueen, Charl Els, Pat Stewart. This update is respectfully submitted by Colleen Graves.

# Lent & Easter

## Lent into Holy Week

The season of Lent lasts six weeks starting with Ash Wednesday and ending with Palm Sunday which leads into Holy Week and Easter Sunday. So... what does Lent mean to you? What is this all about? Historically Lent has been seen as a time of "letting go" in preparation to open oneself more fully to "take on Christ". This understanding was intended to deepen us spiritually. However, in COVID times we have been giving up many things and giving up more does not sound like a spiritual practice.

Lent continues to be a time for reflection on the life and ministry of Jesus and what he did that upset the authorities of the day. We are called to walk with him to death. That begs the question "how do we walk with someone as they face death?" In consideration of this question it became apparent that this path calls for vulnerability, trust, honesty, and compassion. This path calls for all of the best in human relationships. So this Lenten season you are invited to embrace something rather than give something up.

Embrace the Holy in one another. Embrace the Jesus you see in your neighbour or friend or colleague. Embrace the Living Christ. Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 3:16 "Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you?" Jesus invites us to "Abide in me as I abide in you!" We are invited to "god one another into being" (Carter Hayward, *Our Passion for Justice*). We are invited to be the very presence of Christ in the lives of those around us. We are encouraged to recognize Jesus in ourselves as well as in others.

As it says in *A Song of Faith*, "By becoming flesh in Jesus, God makes all things new. In Jesus' life, teaching and self-offering, God empowers us to live in love. In Jesus' crucifixion, God bears the sin, grief, and suffering of the world. In Jesus' resurrection, God overcomes death. Nothing separates us from the love of God."

May Lent be a time of deep listening, true presence and steadfast love as we prepare to be a living sanctuary for Jesus.

Worship Team, Rev. Sally Boyle, Rev. Karen Bridges & Allan Bevan

## Honour a loved one with a symbol of the Resurrection!

Order a Hydrangea to display for the Easter Season. You can choose a family member who has passed away or perhaps a best friend who is always there for you!



Sundays, March 27, April 3 and 10th, we will be taking orders for Easter hydrangeas in Memorial Hall following worship. You can also order by calling (780-482-1587) or emailing the office at mail@rwuc.org. Delivery will be available.

The cost is \$25.00. A special Easter Sunday bulletin will include all your honourees names!



# Lent & Easter

All services will be both in person and livestreamed at [rwuc.org/live](http://rwuc.org/live) with the exception of the Easter Sunrise service which will be in person only.

## Ash Wednesday

Wednesday, March 2 7:00 pm  
R-W Choir

## Palm Sunday

Sunday, April 10 10:30 am  
Robin Dohon, trumpet  
R-W Choir & R-W Ringers

## Maundy Thursday

Thursday, April 14 7:00 pm  
R-W Choir

## Good Friday

Friday, April 15 10:30 am  
R-W Ringers & R-W Choir

## Easter Vigil

Saturday, April 16 7:00 pm  
Claire Rolheiser, soloist

## Easter Sunrise

Sunday, April 17 7:30 am  
Outdoors in Paul Kane Park

## Easter Sunday

Sunday, April 17 10:30 am  
Robin Dohon, trumpet  
R-W Choir & Ringers from Nova Bells

10209 123 Street • [www.rwuc.org](http://www.rwuc.org)



# Not a Tulip But a Tony

This is the story of a 15 year old boy's experience of the transition of an immigrant family. Transition, what a big word, at the age of 15 I did not understand or know what it meant given my lack of the English language. In 1953 my parents decided to immigrate to Canada. What a big decision that must have been for them (in their mid 30s). For me at 15 it looked like a dream: 8 days on a ship across the Atlantic ocean and four days and three nights on a train. Well, the voyage was very rough, with high seas and everyone seasick. Dad and I slept in one cabin with four other men, and my mother slept in another cabin with five other women.

We arrived in Halifax to get on the train, and Dad and I went shopping for some food to last for the four days on the train. While shopping we could not get over the many cars that were in certain areas (second hand car lots). And walking back to the train we saw a bowling alley through the basement windows of a store, also a sight we were unfamiliar with.

The two bench seats with a table in between folded down and formed our bed at night. I enjoyed the train rides in Europe when we visited my grandmother once a year in Germany; four days on a dusty Canadian train was no luxury: our hands and faces were washed in the train's toilet room sink.

We arrived in Edmonton on April 1, 1953 and lived in the home of my father's brother and his family for two weeks. My mother had found a job cleaning a home that rented rooms for gentlemen: making the beds, cleaning the rooms, and doing the laundry. It paid her \$80 a month and one room in the basement. I had a closet-sized room that cost \$25 a month. We had a cooking stove in the middle of the basement and shared a shower/bathroom with two other tenants. We lived there for three years. Our very first purchase was a large fridge - what a luxury. Our next purchase was a 1955 Chevrolet Belair from Hood Motors, which was a very big transition since we could only afford a 3rd hand bike in the old country. The next transition was the purchase in 1956 of a newly built home. Oh, what a dream-come-true that was for my parents.

The transition from the Netherlands to Edmonton as far as family/friends was not too bad since we had family here and approximately 10 other families from our home town in the Netherlands. We had a church family of all Dutch immigrants.

Every Sunday's second service was in the Dutch language, and through the church we were able to take English language classes two times a week. I also attended Alberta College for evening English language classes in the summer/ fall of 1953.

Leaving the Netherlands after WWII was a tremendous transition for our family. The freedom and the luxury of purchasing anything we needed was overwhelming and a God given blessing. After all, we left the Netherlands with a crate 4' x 2' x 8' long with some personal possessions; my father had \$150 in his pocket when we arrived in Halifax.

A proud day for my late parents and me was the day (July 7, 1958) in the old Courthouse in downtown Edmonton in front of a judge who handed us a news paper and asked all three of us to read for him ... then he said "Welcome to Canada. You will become a Canadian citizen today." (We had to wait five years to apply since we were not subjects of the British Empire.)

Our Heavenly Father has given my late parents and me a wonderful, blessed and happy existence in Edmonton and Canada with many happy memories for 69 years in a transition that was blessed by our Heavenly Father and family and friends and families of our faith community. I am still an immigrant and always will be in a country that my late parents and I love. A PROUD Canadian with a Dutch heritage.

Anthonie M (Tony) Jansen





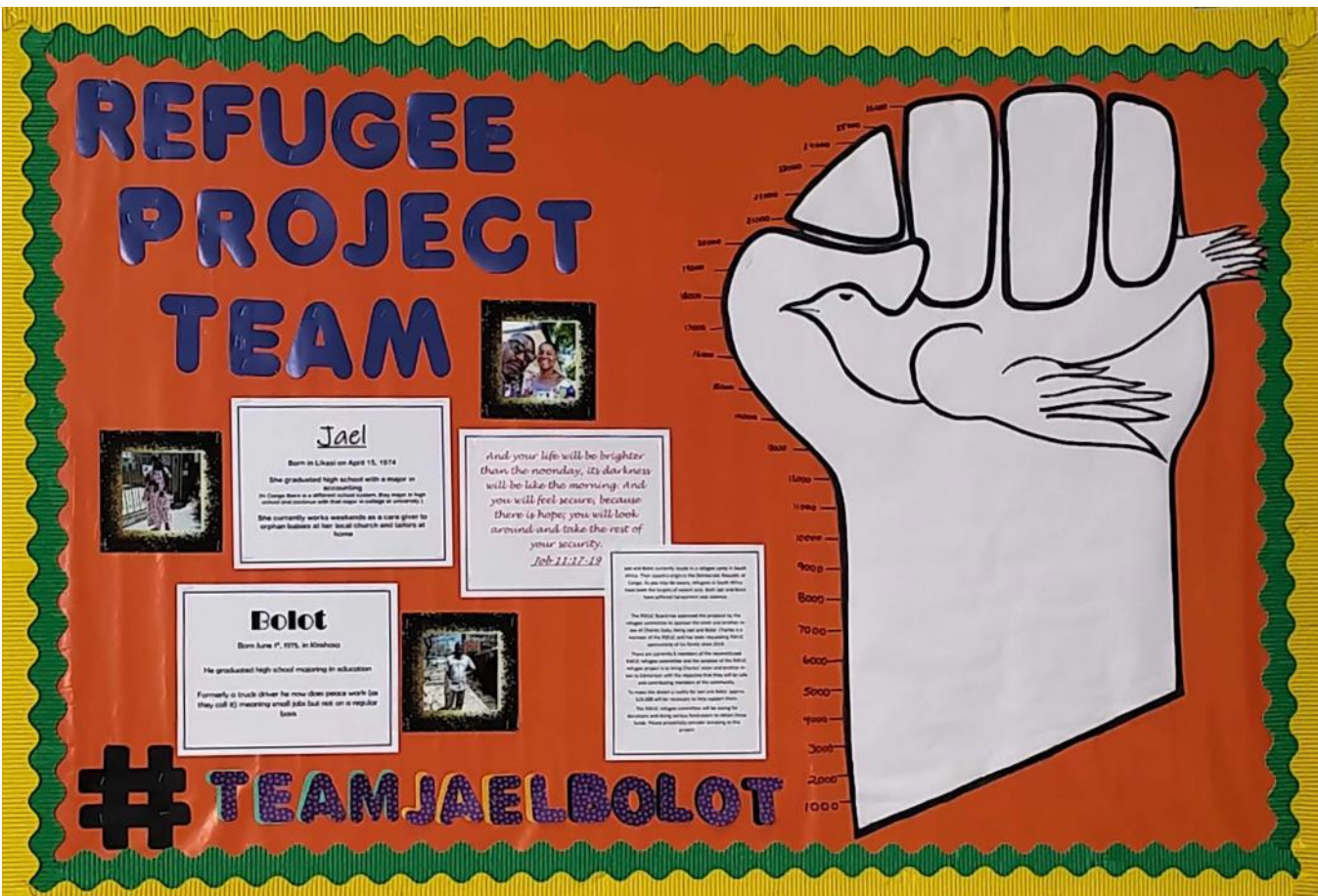
# RWUC Refugee Project

A small group of Robertson-Wesley members has come together on a refugee project.

The church has been involved in refugee projects in the past, most recently with the co- sponsorship of a Syrian family in 2015-16. Like that time, we are working to bring refugees from an unsafe situation to a welcoming new home in Edmonton. A big difference this time is that we know the refugees we're sponsoring. Jael and Bolot are the sister and brother-in-law of Charles Sabu, a long-time member of RWUC. They are both originally from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) but have been living in South Africa for the past number of years. Civil war caused them to flee DRC and become refugees. Their current situation in South Africa is very difficult given the crime, harassment and xenophobic attacks they suffer.

Of the various types of Canadian refugee sponsorships, this application falls under the Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program. The United Church of Canada has a refugee sponsorship agreement with the Government of Canada, and is allocated a set number of refugee spots each year. As a Sponsorship Agreement Holder, the UCC works with congregations that form a constituent group to sponsor refugees. At the January 18 meeting, the RWUC Board gave their approval for us to proceed with this project. Sponsors are expected to provide financial support for their refugees with one-time start-up costs plus monthly income support for 12 months or until they become financially self-sufficient. We've estimated the budget to be \$26,000, including some in-kind contributions.

Please keep posted for updates on this project and our fundraising initiatives.  
Submitted by Nova Laurin on behalf of the Refugee Project Team



The Refugee Project Team created this bulletin board in Memorial Hall, the fist will act as a thermometer and display the progress on the financial goal of the project.

## Transitioning.

Ah, yes. A word and experience I know quite well. Why? Mainly because I enjoyed change, although transitioning is much more difficult now than it was when I was younger. But here I am transitioning from Oliver community to Strathern, from Ansgar Villa to Montgomery Place. Big differences. And as a daughter-in-law said when I mentioned my situation, “Mom, you’ve re-invented yourself many times over the years. You’ll be just fine.” Now, some transitions are easy to make, others a challenge, and some just do not work out.

An easy one was a move from Edmonton to Mission in the BC Fraser Valley for a twenty year stay. I took some time to adjust to the lower altitude and mild, damp climate. Being very busy with an old house on three acres of fertile land made transitioning part of the day’s work.

A not so easy transition was from Canada to the USA. The work I was doing was pleasant and rewarding, and I made friends quickly so the social aspect was good. The climate was uncomfortably hot and dry, but the difficulty was with some people whose attitude was most uncivil to me regarding medical issues (my field of work), the right to bear arms, having to pay the amount of taxes and America/Americans being the best in the world in everything. In the end it was not a successful transition so after a year I returned to Canada.

An unexpectedly difficult transition was from one United Church to another. I was not prepared for much difference as to me it was still the United Church and some aspects were familiar. What was different and took me by surprise was my not being accepted by the people of this well-established congregation. I had been an active member in my former church so was quite prepared to step into any volunteer work to match my abilities that might be available. After a pleasant “meet and greet” with the minister I decided to make Robertson-Wesley my new church.

Well it took close to three years of being rejected —“No, we have things under control” and “We don’t need that voice here”— before I came to the conclusion that I wasn’t cut out for a big city church. Transition bomb!

But all was not lost. After a few years of trying unsuccessfully to find a church that might be inside my comfort

zone, I decided to attend a service at R-W again. I’m not certain why, maybe a nudge from my Lord? He’d been known to do that. Maybe it was just time to heal the hole in my heart and my wounded pride. So that Sunday morning I was sitting behind a person who took me in hand and I became a welcome addition to the kitchen crew. I was in my element with only a little and lovely transitioning needed.

So yes, I most likely use the word transition frequently because I’m often in that state and have been in many different ways throughout my many years of life, sometimes daily in little ways. Now just think a moment. All of those transitions have a story. Would you like to hear one or two or three ... ?

Ruth Belford

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## PIVOT

**Pivot** *verb* rotate, turn, revolve, spin, swivel, twirl, whirl

Throughout 2021 our Robertson-Wesley faith community, that means all of us, did a lot of pivoting. The year started with full covid restrictions. Then we had to show our Proof of Vaccination, at least 2 doses to qualify. How do we make this easier for our R-W community? Aha! It was decided we were to be given a green card with **our** number on it after we showed our Proof of Vaccination information.

Our Provincial Government let us know that *Places of Worship* are “an essential service”. We knew that all along as many of us have friends, family, community, welcome, spiritual growth, support, our faith, and so much more at Robertson-Wesley. It is our home, our family. Some gatherings continued on Zoom. Some met face to face following the restrictions. There were take-out Community Dinners, Food Bank Depot, Magic Pantry. Somewhere in all of this we were able to have Fellowship after worship on Sunday, if we had our Proof of Vaccination card. The joy, chatter, enthusiasm, enjoyment of homemade treats, and seeing people unmasked. WooHoo!!

Through all of this time there were the people who continued their pastoral care, their grocery runs, their phone calls, their coffee in the park, their walks. Let us not forget all of the **pivoting** done by our amazing staff and R-W Board members. These are the folks who interpreted the

Alberta Government regulations. Who carried them out and informed all of us what we needed to do to continue to keep on keeping on. A huge **THANK YOU** to our staff who were there with us and supporting us and answering our many questions and concerns.

**Pivot** *noun* the centre point, pin, shaft on which a mechanism turns or oscillates.

During this Covid time we have been doing a lot of pivoting. During all of this action, what, who is our **centre point**? How have we continued to move forward with our life both physically and mentally and spiritually? As people of Faith, we all have a **centre point**. It may not be exactly the same for all of us. Many of us may say our **centre point** is God. It is our God, and other aspects of our Faith, that help us to slow down, believe, trust, pray, take in and release a BIG breath.

Through Covid our Sunday worship has been a constant. The doors are open, the computer, sound system, cameras, are turned on, the Prelude is played, and, our Ministers begin by reminding us that we are gathered on Traditional Territories, and that we are All welcome. Our bodies, minds and souls are nourished and we are reminded that WE are Not Alone. For a time, we are able to be still and to be surrounded by the love of friends, family and the Love of God.

Submitted by Jill Lambie

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## THE LABYRINTH AS A SPIRITUAL TOOL

People from our congregation and community chose to mark their Advent journey this year by walking the parachute labyrinth we have here at Robertson-Wesley. It was a time of sacred blessing for all who experienced the labyrinth walk. Several of those who came said they wanted to learn more.

For thousands of years human beings have created paths known as labyrinths for reasons ranging from protection and blessings, to pilgrimage and healing. Today the interest in the labyrinth as a spiritual tool has surged around the world.

Labyrinths are being used as tools for walking meditation, for insight, pilgrimage and healing. The labyrinths used today are unicursal which means there is only one

path in to the centre of the labyrinth and the walker returns to the outer edge of the labyrinth on the same path. So the labyrinth is not a puzzle to be solved but a path on which we are led. The foundational value of the labyrinth is grace.



The labyrinth we have at Robertson-Wesley is made in the Chartres medieval style after the labyrinth built into the floor of the Chartres Cathedral in France. The labyrinth in Chartres is an 11 circuit labyrinth. Ours is a seven circuit labyrinth - so smaller than the Chartres labyrinth in France. Some labyrinths can be as small as three circuits and finger labyrinths have become popular labyrinth tools for those who do not have access to a walking labyrinth. There are several research projects being conducted around the globe - looking into the effects of the labyrinth on individual spiritual health and on societal change.

If you would like to learn more about labyrinths and how they can benefit your spiritual journey, please join me on Saturday, March 26 from 10am-1pm in Memorial Hall. We will explore the history of the labyrinth, types of labyrinths and their use and purpose today. You will learn how to walk a labyrinth and will have an opportunity to walk the labyrinth during the workshop time.

Blessings, Lynn Maki

# Write for BTA

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](http://www.rwuc.org/between-the-aisles).

Deadline for the Summer Edition submissions: May 15

Published: May 29

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.

## MEMBERSHIP CLASS

Adult Membership Classes will begin on **Feb 28** at 7:00 pm on Zoom. We will meet for 5 weeks to look at the history, polity and faith practice of the United Church of Canada. This is an opportunity for you to consider whether or not you wish to become a member in this dynamic faith organization. If you wish to join the group please contact Elyse in the office at [mail@rwuc.org](mailto:mail@rwuc.org) to register.

## SCRIPTURE REFLECTIONS

Join Rev. Karen Bridges by visiting [rwuc.org/live](http://rwuc.org/live) or on Facebook. Tuesdays at 12:00 pm, to reflect on the scripture passages for the upcoming Sunday. We are using 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 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. Contact the office [mail@rwuc.org](mailto:mail@rwuc.org) for the zoom link if you would like to participate with the voices you hear on the live stream.

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