

Between the Aisles

A Robertson-Wesley United Church Quarterly

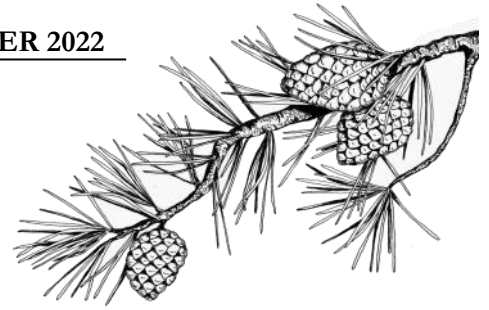
WINTER 2022

I have come as light
into the world, so
that everyone who
believes in me
should not remain
in the darkness.

John 12:46



Editor's Welcome



Welcome to the winter edition of *Between the Aisles*. It's been an interesting few months since our last edition. We have had some major changes (which will be mentioned in a bit) and some sadness. But we are also entering the seasons of Advent and Christmas, which is always a time of joy and renewal.

This edition will have a few memories of past Christmas's from some of our members, looking at special times spent at the church, or with family (even in front of the television). We also have some festive recipes that you can try with your friends and family, from members of the church who have cooked and baked them for years and are fan favorites. There is also a poetic musing to partake in about the onset of Winter, and a look at some past and upcoming events at the church.



Photo by Jim Triscott

Though, as mentioned above, we have had some sad news within the BTA group. The BTA group is sad to share that our long-time co-editor, Janet Clark passed away on October 29, 2022.

Janet was a very active member of our congregation in several areas, but her work with Nancy on two of the four quarterly editions of BTA was exemplary. We will miss her contributions to the newsletter greatly. There will be a celebration of life held for her at R-W on Monday, November 28th 2022 at 12:30 pm.

Another member of our editorial staff has also stepped away from this position. Maria Adria was a very important member of our group, with a lot of great ideas and passion about how we communicated with the Robertson-Wesley community. We want to thank Maria for all her work on the newsletter and wish her all the best for the future.

Which leads to our last note. We, the editors, really appreciate all the lovely comments and submissions we've received from you over the years. We are looking for some people to help out with editing of the newsletter for the upcoming year(s). If you think you might be interested, or even just want to talk to us to see what is involved, please email us at news@rwuc.org.

Have a wonderful and safe holiday season.

Nancy Heule and Marilee J. Stephens (editors)

Christmas memories at my Grandmother's in Germany

My mother at age 5 made me write to my grandmother (maternal) in Germany. I loved my grandmother and that's how I learned to write, read and speak German. The memory I will describe is from when I was 13 years old (1950), when I better understood what it was like to visit my Grandmother in Germany. What an exciting time! I was expecting to see my grandmother again (seeing her only 2 times a year) and this time at Christmas.

The excitement started a few days before we left by train, with my mother making preparations for our visit. This involved making her traditional Christmas bread, with me of course helping her knead the dough. She got the dough ready in a small washtub, adding raisins, currants and mixed fruit, and then placed the dough in a 30-inch baking pan that we borrowed from the baker. Our baker would bake the bread for us at a specific time when he was baking his bread. In those days there were no electric ovens; the ovens were stoked with coal. Mom and I loaded the filled bread pan on my mother's bicycle rack, me holding the bread pan for our one block walk to the baker. When the Christmas bread was baked, we wrapped it in paper and put string around it so we could fasten the bread onto a suitcase for the train ride.

What a joy it was to ride an international speed train. The trip took appr. 3 hours, with a 45-minute stopover for German border security to check our passports and belongings. Remember, this is only 5 years after WWII, so the border crossing was not easy. They tore away some of the wrapping to check the Christmas bread and also looked at the few pounds of coffee beans Mom brought, because they were hard to buy in Germany and very expensive.

Once we were at my grandmother's home, I was in my glory. She had a fenced backyard with geese, ducks, chickens and caged rabbits. She used the geese and duck down feathers to fill pillows and top covers. The day before Christmas eve, my grandmother took us to the well-known German Christmas market, and being an only grandchild, she spoiled me with handmade wooden toys, Christmas tree ornaments, and of course, a Nutcracker doll. The ambience of colored lights, hot cider and wines and the aromas of various ginger baked goods was wonderful.

On Christmas eve, we all went to church. My mother's relatives were all Roman Catholic so we went to High Mass Christmas eve service. My eyes were opened and amazed by the pageantry of High Mass. I was not accustomed to priests wearing colorful robes, being of protestant faith.

I will never forget the sound of church bells ringing when leaving the church at midnight. All the churches in the area rang their bells at that midnight hour. To this day, I still remember Christmas eve in Germany when I hear the church bells play as we proceed out of R-W church on Sunday morning.

On Christmas day we all went to my grandmother's brother's family home. My grandmother's sister and her family were also there; my mother's aunts/uncles and cousins. A large meal was served with roast beef, rabbit and ox tongue, with deserts after - so many fruit tortes and assortment of various ginger goodies. Afterwards the spirits came out for the adults and the musical instruments would appear. My mother's family was very musical so there was much musical entertainment with violins, accordion and singing of course.

Christmas in most of Europe is a Christian celebration in church and with families so no gifts are given; that happens on December 6 (St Nicholas day)

Wish you all a Blessed Christmas ,
Tony

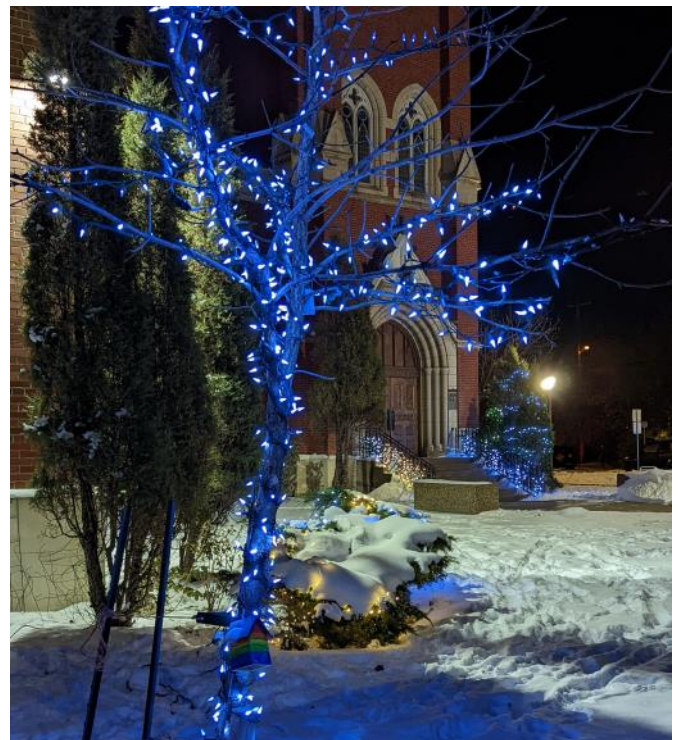


Photo by Brad Campbell

Christmas Day Revisited

After celebrating the Christmas Eve midnight service, in the hushed and glowing atmosphere of candles and music, in a spirit of peace we await the day itself. And then it arrives.

My favorite meal is the Christmas Brunch. Louis and I join our daughter Lorann and family alternating between their house and ours for a traditional shared meal. I bring my "superior" breakfast enchiladas, which I make the day before, and now serve dripping with sour cream and salsa. Lorann contributes baked blueberry pecan French toast with blueberry syrup. I am already salivating.

Over thirty-five years ago, when my parents Belva and Brian Piercy were alive and we lived near the ravine in Lynnwood, when we were taking a break from opening presents, we would all don coats, mitts, and boots.

The really special part was taking our cat Boots. He didn't need a leash and followed son Brian (as he did on his paper route) and the rest of us down the street and through the ravine, listening to bird song and watching snow drift from branches as the sun warmed the sky. Yes, there are many happy Christmas memories but those are the best.

Submitted by Lorna Berlinguette



Photo by Jane Chesebrough

FAVOURITE CHRISTMAS RECIPES

Cocktail Crisps

1 cup butter	250 ml
1-8 oz. package imperial cheese	250 g
Dash of salt	
1/8 to 1/4 tsp cayenne pepper or tabasco	1ml
1/2 tsp worchestershire	1 ml
1 1/2 cups flour	375 ml
1 cups rice krispies	1 L

Soften butter and cheese, and cream together. Add salt, cayenne and worchestershire. Stir in flour and rice krispies. Mix well. Shape into balls and press down with a fork which has been dipped in cold water. You can also form into logs, chill and cut into slices. Bake at 350 F (180 C) for 15 to 20 minutes or until lightly browned.
(this recipe does not double well)

Gladys Hanratty's Lemon Curd

1/2 lb creamed butter
Grated peel and juice of 3 lemons
2 cups white sugar
6 eggs at room temperature

Add to double boiler in above order, ensure the water is boiling before adding ingredients.

Add eggs one at a time beating until light in colour with an electric hand mixer.

Cook for 10 minutes, cool and put in a container

Can be used for lemon tarts.

Christmas Pudding Sauce

1/4 cup butter
1/4 cup flour
1 cup white sugar
2 egg yolks
2 egg whites
1/2 cup whipping cream
Flavouring extract of choice (vanilla, rum, maple, etc)

Beat butter, sugar and flour, add beaten egg yolks

Add 3 egg whites, beaten stiff

Add whipping cream, beaten stiff

Add flavouring, serve cold.

Submitted by Clara Dyck

Christmas Cider

4 L Apple juice
2 L Cranberry juice
1 L Pineapple juice
1 Cinnamon stick
1 apple chopped

Combine all ingredients in a crockpot or let simmer for an hour. Tip: if you heat the cider in a crockpot the aroma fills up the house beautifully.

Submitted by Richard Kennedy

Christmas Memories

There are several Christmas memories that I've shared with BTA readers over the past few years, but for this year, I got thinking about some of the Christmas memories that were things that I would look forward to every year... The Classic Christmas TV shows.

There are several that I still look forward to every year, as they take me back to sitting in our family room, with my brothers and sister, waiting to hear Vince Guaraldi's classic jazz score for a "Charlie Brown's Christmas", Boris Karloff's narration on "The Grinch that Stole Christmas", seeing Frosty's magic hat and Rudolph's shiny nose, and watching Santa at the end of the Santa Class parade.

But there are a couple that I really enjoyed that are never shown on the TV anymore. It may be because they were more "religious" based, and Christmas has become a bit more secular (not that the ones I mentioned above don't have very good messages to impart, but they don't do it using an overtly religious message). Or it may be due to the style of animation that was used for them (they both have a very "1960-1970's" feel to them). Luckily, given what you can track down on the Internet nowadays, I can still see them when I really want a bit of nostalgia.

The first one is a stop-motion version of the Christmas song "The Little Drummer Boy", from 1968. It expanded on the song a bit, and gave the Drummer Boy more personality (and a name, Aaron), as well as a couple of animal buddies and a few silly bad guys. It has several songs and a backstory for Aaron, but does end up with him playing the drum for the Baby Jesus at the end of the cartoon. It can be found at:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=LMIW7HR2LOo



The other one that I would look forward to, yet couldn't find for several years, was one based on a story by Oscar Wilde, called "The Selfish Giant", from 1971.

The basic premise is that a giant lived in a great house, with a beautiful garden. One day, he caught some children playing in his garden, and grew angry with them. As a result, he built a wall around his garden... But as a result, spring and summer never came to his garden, and it remained in a winter state. It was eventually resolved, with the presence of a small boy, with a twist that I won't give away... But while it has a lovely message behind the story, it definitely has a religious bent to the end. Still, I remember as a child born in the mid-60's, it was a story that appeared right around the time I could appreciate it and it really appealed to me. It can be found at:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=8jtLTS7T8cc



I have to admit, while neither of these have the fancy animation that appeals to children nowadays, I do miss having the chance to see them on anything but a computer screen. But still, given that I didn't have any chance of seeing them for several years, it has been nice to revisit these cherished memories from my childhood.

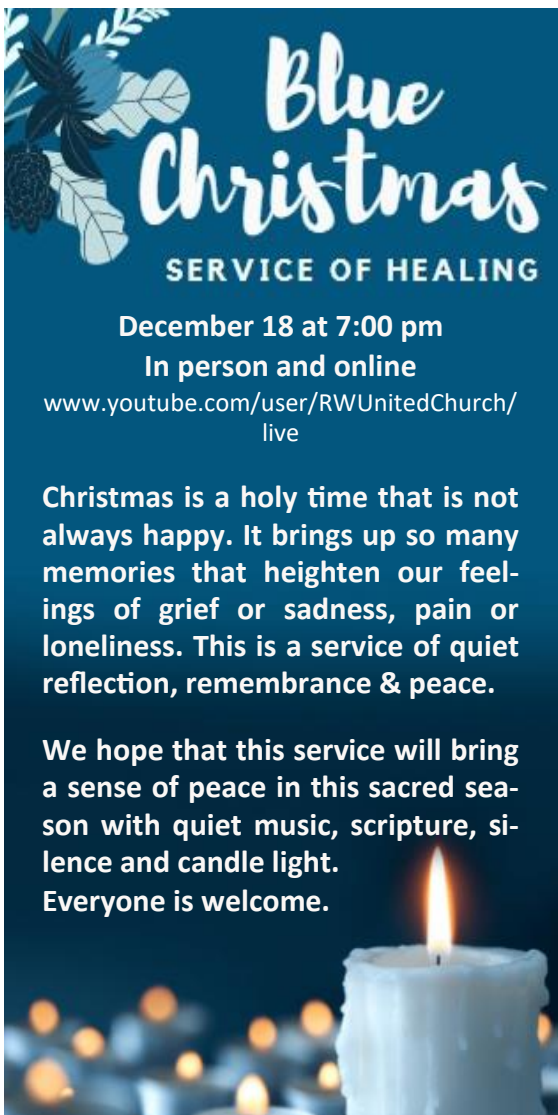
Submitted by Marilee Stephens

Advent & Christmas

The Spirit of Courage Advent to Christmas

The season of Advent is four weeks long leading up to Christmas which is usually 1-2 Sundays after which we move into the season of Epiphany. The word Advent means 'coming', thus this season is one of active waiting and anticipation for Jesus to arrive here on earth. The season comes with preparation, hope, peace, joy and love. Through out Advent we hear stories about key people chosen by God to help introduce God's chosen one the Emmanuel to the world. This is the season where God provides people with courage – courage to do things with inherent risk, that requires people to move beyond fear and to accept life's invitations. As God brings life to the earth in the form of a child, the prince of peace, how will our courage transform fear into determination so that we too can bring peace to the world? make this journey with all my heart.

"Heart, be brave. If you cannot be brave, just go. Love's glory is not a small thing." Jalal-u-din Rumi

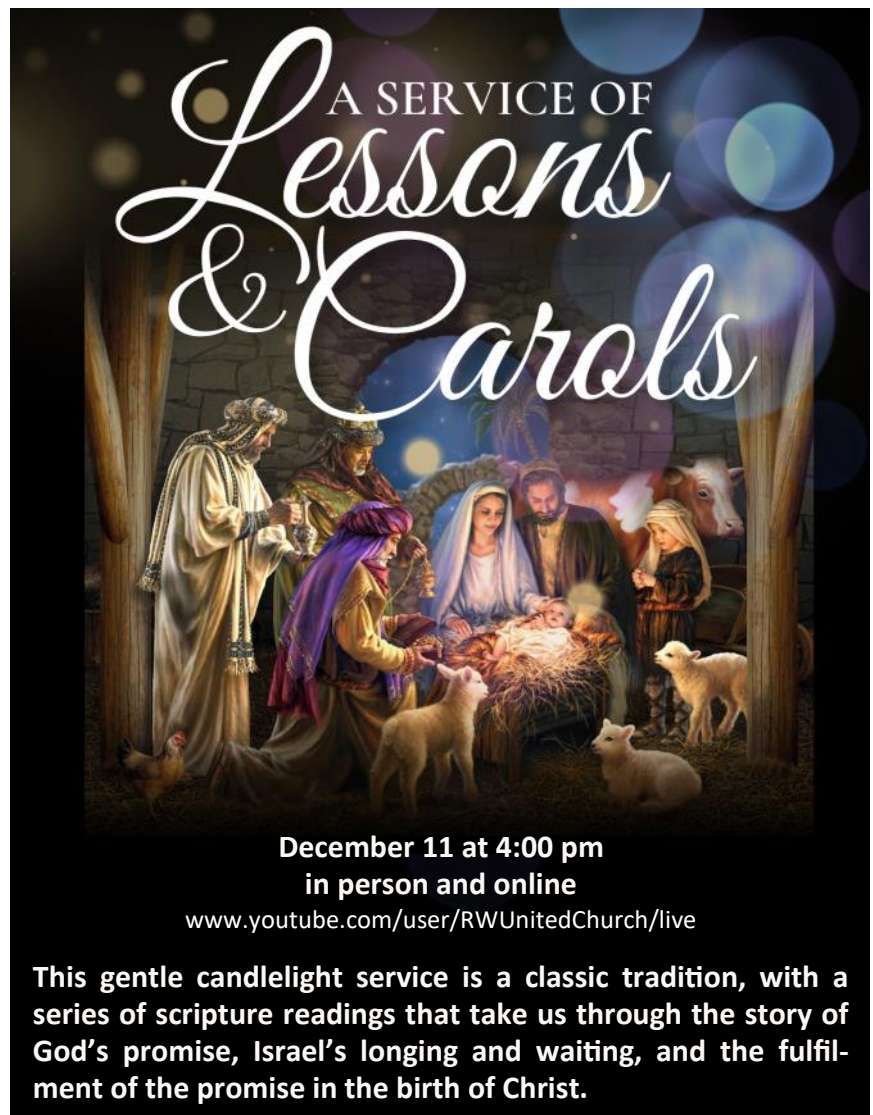


Blue Christmas
SERVICE OF HEALING

December 18 at 7:00 pm
In person and online
www.youtube.com/user/RWUnitedChurch/live

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 & 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 SERVICE OF
Lessons & Carols

December 11 at 4:00 pm
in person and online
www.youtube.com/user/RWUnitedChurch/live

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

10209 123 st



Robertson - Wesley
UNITED CHURCH

Spirited

Christmas Eve December 24th

Services will be in person and live-streamed on rwuc.org/live

4:00 pm Family Celebration

An interactive celebration

7:00 pm* Christmas with a Twist

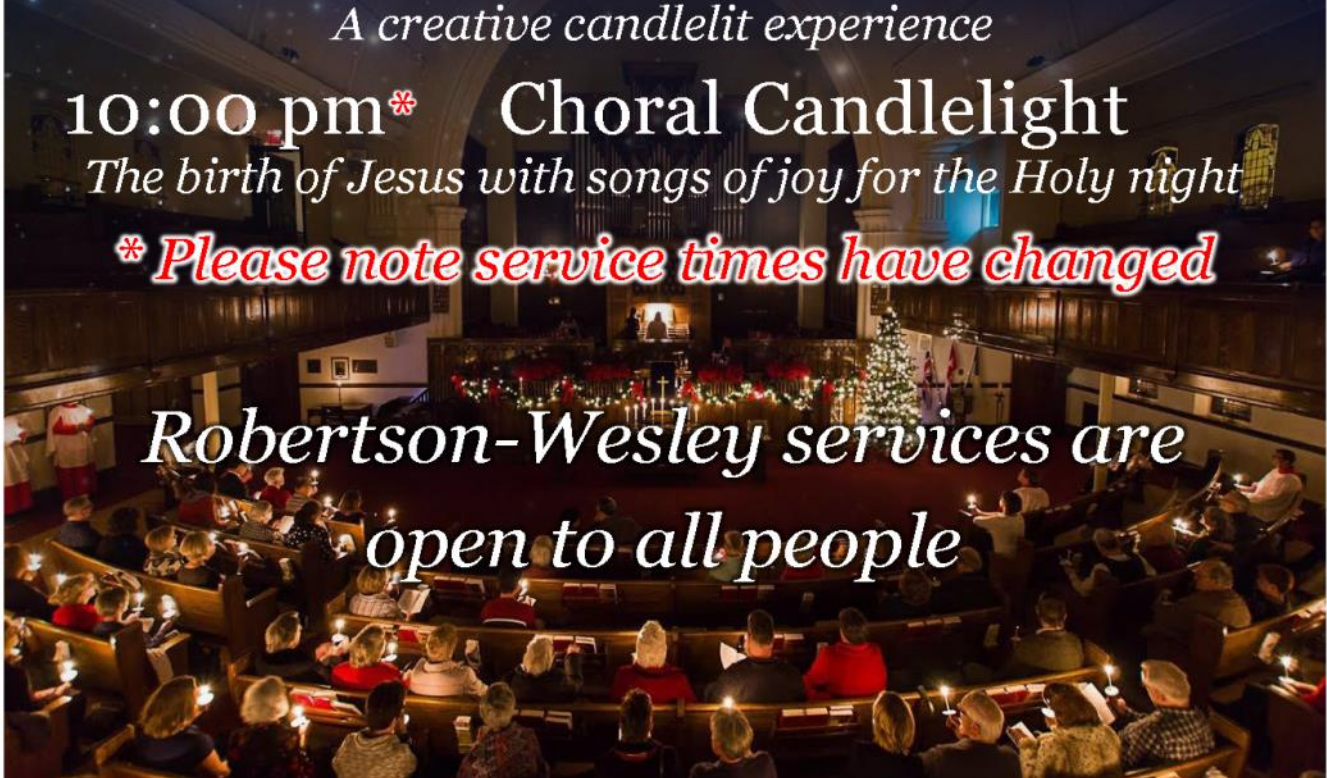
A creative candlelit experience

10:00 pm* Choral Candlelight

The birth of Jesus with songs of joy for the Holy night

*** Please note service times have changed**

*Robertson-Wesley services are
open to all people*



Big Feels on WILDING OUT

“The Wild Church is a congregation that gathers among nature (i.e., in the wild) to appreciate what (god) has revealed through (their) creation.”

My friend in the city is starting a wild church. Though I am still spooked by the idea of organized religious gatherings, I decided I would go. I was curious to meet other crazy/sexy/cool people who also believe god is talking to them through nature, plus I trust this friend within an inch of my life, so there was little to lose and perhaps some to gain.

I arrived late, driving across the city directly after work. My feet were sore, my hip was sore, but I had put together a cute work outfit for the day and felt hot and gay as I parked my car and ran through the hottest and gayest neighbourhood in the city to find my friend and the others making a pilgrimage from city park to city park. We met at a lookout, and after some quiet and hurried hellos, we were instructed to take in the valley and absorb whatever it was that was meant to be revealed.

Late August is about as big and lush and green as everything is able to get before mother nature starts the alchemy of fall. I was struck by the colours. Caught off guard by the hues. I was also caught off guard by a warning flare of an emotion I’d never pinpointed before: a deep-seated mistrust in the divine and their desire for my ultimate good.

I wonder what kind of emotional landscape you have to grow up in to be able to trust the divine. I remember fervent prayers while lying in the top bunk of my shared bedroom, repeating the same request again and again. A sign of the anxious child, sure; but also a sign of someone who has learned that the people in charge can’t be trusted to have a handle on things, to remember the important bits, to follow through on what they said.

There are connections I crave. There is a richness I’m hungry for. And it feels true when my meditation app makes me repeat, “Everything that is meant for me will flow to me,” but that’s not my baseline. The baseline is, “Don’t get excited until you’re sure it won’t get messed up,” and “Absolutely don’t trust anyone else to pull through for you.”

Emotional repression and hyper-independence?
For spring? Groundbreaking.

I had a thought that struck me as funny and revealing while standing at the lookout, bowled over by the maximalist onslaught of a rigorous/weathered/resilient/intricate/abundant landscape, a collection of foliage that I still, despite my mistrust, ascribe to a divine knowing.

The thought: that I am just a part of the same wildness that is currently unfurled before me, and how silly it is to think I have any control over which way the seeds blow.

But the question remains whether the wind blowing the seeds is interested in my ultimate good—or is every good thing simply my own hellbent determination to turn the rocks in my shoe into a bit of fool’s gold. Stupid. Stubborn. Resilient. I wonder if other people’s joy feels so hard won.

The wild church evening ended at a community garden and the small group of us shared some of what we had heard, or felt, or seen. It was good and calm and I only panicked one time for like one second when I thought it was going to get more “church-y” than I had gambled for.

Then my friend-who-I-trust-within-an-inch-of-my-life and I went out for chai and sat in the summer air and talked about what was ultimately good and ultimately bad in our lives; and it was heaven.

Submitted by anonymous



Wild Church

RWUC’s Wild Church worship has launched! A growing number of us are worshipping with Creation on the third Sunday afternoon each month. So far, folks of all ages have gathered at Paul Kane Park and Victoria Park; we have explored themes including gratitude, change, and letting go. In following the example set by many biblical figures, we connect with nature to hear what God is teaching us.

We have experienced laughter, tears, and deep discourse during our gatherings. You can follow us on Instagram (@wildchurchyeg) or check out our website (www.wildchurchyeg.org). If you haven’t yet joined Wild

Church worship, here is your invitation! Nature is calling you into the sacred.

Food for Thought! Victoria Loorz, in her book, *Church of the Wild*, writes, “Luke’s Gospel locates the opening story of Jesus outside the urban culture of humans: in a manger, a feeding trough for animals. While we re-create nativity scenes with thatched houses to resemble the barns and wooden troughs we imagine as the cradle for the baby Jesus, many scholars from as early as the second century understood that mangers were found in caves. Outside the city. Found all over Palestine, these caves were used by herdsman as stalls for their flocks.

So imagine instead, Mary going through labour on the cave floor. Her son is born outside the edges of Joseph’s ancestral land, away from their home, in the presence of cows, donkeys, and sheep. It is here where a deeper sense of belonging, beyond religion and family, is presented. The baby is welcomed by animals and outcast shepherders, who dwell in the wilderness, expanding the character of home and belonging.”

Submitted by J.S.



Photo by Jane Chesebrough

NOVEMBER MORNING

It’s a cloudy November morn and I’m still stale,
the sky is gray and the last autumn leaves have departed,
the geese have waved goodbye;
winters white blanket . . . will soon arrive.
It’s a calm and quiet morn before . . .
before the deluge,
of commercial chaos commences,
The world’s fragmentation feels distant and offensive;
my soul now is frigid and my mind has frozen.
But today, I take comfort in pursuing . . . my heart.

Submitted by Jim Triscott

GRATITUDE TEAM REFLECTIONS



The last Gratitude Sunday was November 13th, 2022 BUT the campaign continues and we shall continue to invite people to make their Financial Commitment for 2023. This year our theme is *Beyond Gratitude: how are we leaving our mark?*

We are asking people to think about how so many individuals have left a mark by supporting Robertson-Wesley in the past through worship, music, outreach and maintenance of our beloved facility. From looking how others have left their mark on our community we are asking you to consider how future generations will look back and see how we are leaving our mark in the present.

One way to ensure the Robertson-Wesley community continues to leave its mark is by financially supporting our church. That is what the autumn campaign strives to give you an opportunity to do. Although there are some small sources of revenue (rentals for example) that help the church, it is the donations by individuals that provide the financial resources that enable us to carry out God’s work in the world.

For 2023 the Team is highlighting the impacts of inflation on the church and asking contributors to take this into consideration when making their financial commitment. We recognize that everyone is impacted by inflation and that some cannot afford to contribute let alone increase their contribution. That is fine, everyone’s presence is a blessing for us. And people’s volunteer contributions are also required.

The Gratitude Team emphasizes this in the spring. So please fill in a Financial Commitment card. If you are on PAR, your present deduction will be considered your pledge. If you wish to increase it or change it, please complete a Commitment card.

God bless you for sharing the gifts God has given you and for leaving your mark.

The Gratitude Team

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT R-W

SPIRITED ART STUDIO

The Spirited Art Studio continues to be a place for people to explore art and connect with each other in an informal creative environment. People are welcome to drop in any time and try out different art-making processes. **Mondays** from 7:00-8:30 pm and **Wednesdays** from 1:30-3:00 pm in the Art Studio downstairs. Art Studio will take a Christmas break from Dec 19 - Jan 1.



Robertson-Wesley Ringers: Call For Members

The R-W Ringers have a busy program of concerts and service playing coming up and in light of that is looking to take on two additional ringers beginning in January, 2023!

Ringling experience is preferred, but we are willing to consider interested persons with the ability to read music. Thursday evening rehearsals.

Please contact Dr. Allan Bevan for more info
780-482-1587 ext. 230 or music@rwuc.org

Journey through the Labyrinth

Wednesday nights from 6:30 pm - 8:15 pm
November 30, December 7, 14, & 21.

Move into the anticipation of Advent in the soft light of an evening walk through the Labyrinth. The Labyrinth will be open each Wednesday evening through Advent in Memorial Hall.



Wednesday **December 7**, 7:00 - 9:00 pm, Club Room

This Spirited Arts Writing Workshop will use simple hand gestures as our starting point to explore past and present together and to create written conversations, stories, poems, or other language pieces.

Robertson-Wesley Music: Advent-Christmas



Sunday, November 27 - Advent 1, 10:30 am
Robertson-Wesley Choir and Robertson-Wesley Ringers

Sunday, December 4 – Advent 2, 10:30 am
Featuring a special presentation of John Rutter's "Brother Heinrich's Christmas"
With The Choir of Robertson-Wesley; Beth Levia, oboe;
Susanne Thompson, bassoon; and Timothy Anderson, narrator

Sunday, December 11 – Advent 3, 10:30 am
Cantilon Belle Canto Chorus, guest choir, Nova Bells, Allan Bevan, organ

Sunday, December 11 – Festival of Lessons and Carols, 4:00 pm
The Choir of Robertson-Wesley, the R-W Ringers, bring you Christmas music by Bevan, Gjielo, Saint-Saens and others, plus some of your favourite carols

Sunday, December 18 – Advent 4, 10:30 am
Leonardo Leo's Magnificat with the Robertson-Wesley Choir, soloists, and string ensemble

Sunday, December 18 – Blue Christmas, 7:00 pm
With Raydene Koch, soloist and Allan Bevan piano/organ

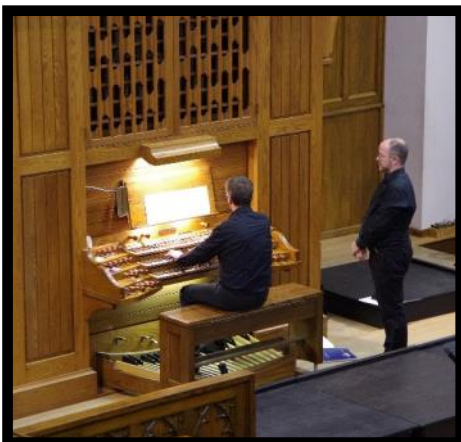
Saturday, Dec. 24 – Christmas with a Twist, 7:00 pm
Featuring Melissa Guilbeault, and Raydene Koch, soloists and complete with festive music for brass quartet and organ

Saturday, Dec. 24 – Choral Candlelight Service, 10:00 pm
Featuring the Robertson-Wesley Choir and Nova Bells



An Evening at R-W - Kammerchor Capella Quirina Neuss

On October 11, we were thrilled to host a concert by Kammerchor Capella Quirina Neuss, of Germany. The audience thoroughly appreciated their professionalism and beautiful singing and we were all treated to a wonderful reception and fellowship time afterwards. Thanks to the Robertson-Wesley Music Society for making this inspiring concert.

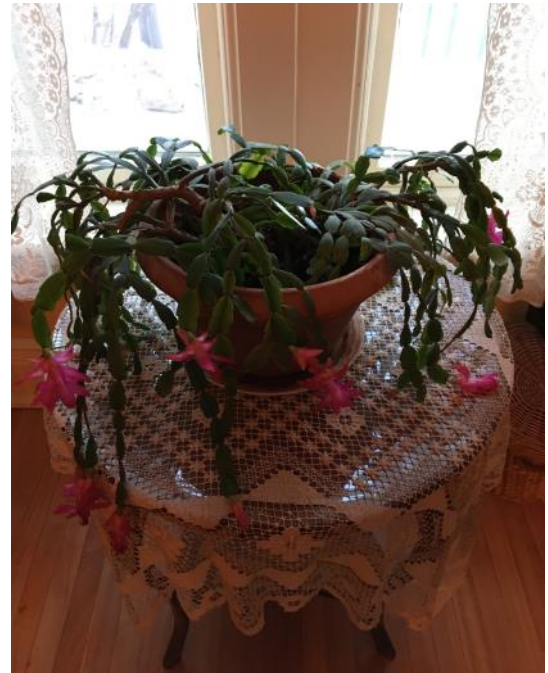


A Peek at the Past

Alexander Cameron Rutherford, Alberta's first Premier, (1905 to 1910), built a home for his family in the City of Strathcona, close to the University of Alberta. His home, known as Rutherford House, was saved from demolition in the early 1970's and became a place of note for tours and special events.

There were no trees surrounding Rutherford's home, which may have been why he chose not to have a Christmas tree as part of the living room's décor. Instead, the room featured a table that had a Christmas cactus on it. It was there that the family's presents were deposited. The current Christmas cactus in Rutherford House was grown from a cutting from the original cactus in 1922.

Submitted by Nancy Heule



Write for Between the Aisles

Volunteer: doing something one wants to do, and without recompense. Many of us in the church have volunteered for numerous activities and committees. And many of us have fond memories of volunteers who have touched our lives. The next issue of *Between the Aisles* will focus on church volunteers who have made a difference in our lives.

Did someone welcome you and make you comfortable the first time you attended a church service in this building? Did a stranger offer to hold your baby while you got yourself a cup of coffee? If you have a special memory about a special volunteer, please consider writing an article for the next newsletter.

Submissions can be sent to news@rwuc.org and are due February 12, 2023.



Photo composition by Richard Kennedy

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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