

# *Between the Aisles*

*A Robertson-Wesley United Church Quarterly*

**SPRING**

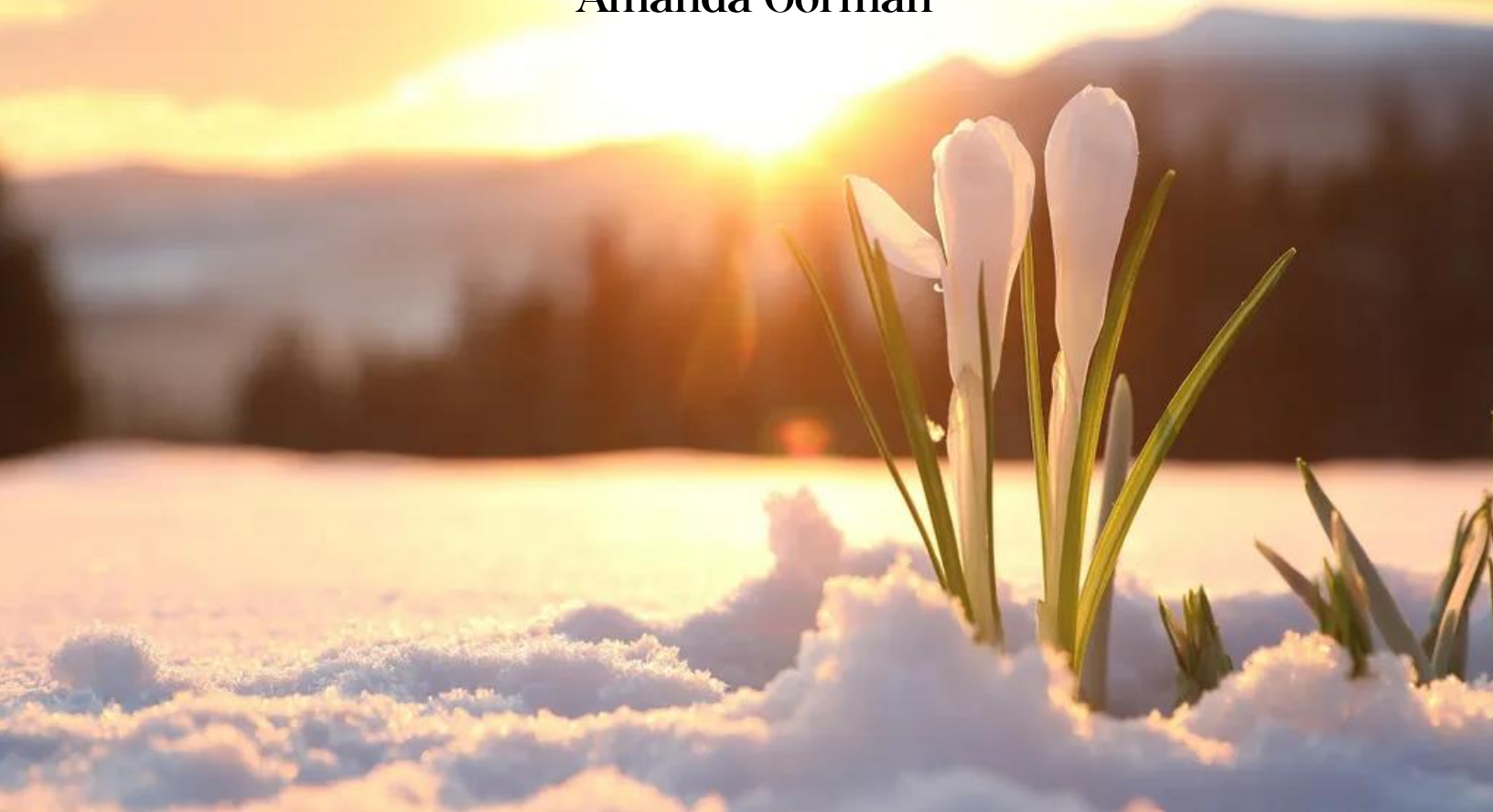
The new dawn blooms as we free it.

For there is always light if only

we're brave enough to see it,

if only we're brave enough to be it.

-Amanda Gorman



# Editor's Welcome

Welcome to the Spring 2023 edition of *Between the Aisles*. Of course, looking outside, it doesn't quite feel like spring yet, but it is just around the corner (At least, that what we can hope for...).

Though this is the spring edition, we are actually using this issue to look at Winter. As such, throughout the issue you will find some amazing Winter focussed pictures, showing some of the truly unique scenes that our Winter season can bring to us. It might be cold out, but it can still be lovely. We also have a lovely "word image" about the lights and festivals seen in the Winter season.

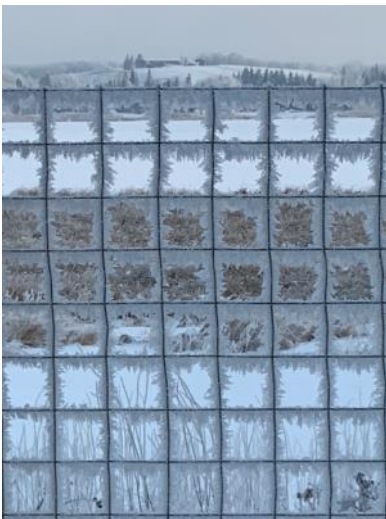
As well, we have an interview with John Helps. John is a past member of the church, who has decided to pursue a larger role in the greater church family via Diaconal Ministry, and will be commissioned this coming May. In the interview, he tells us about how RWUC helped him along his path, and where he will be going in the future.

There are some articles on up-coming events involving the Church and its members. We have an update on the progress made in putting together the Community and Connection 2SLGBTQIA+ Advocacy Conference that will be held here in June. As well, there are advertisements for the upcoming mini-rummage sale, as well as a concert that our Music Director, Dr. Allan Bevan, is involved with.

Nancy has provided an amazing soup recipe that sounds like it would be perfect for some of the cold evenings that we will still face. She also outlines the history of the Oliver District, which has some really interesting trivia about it. We also have a lovely poem that has been submitted about "The Light", found in all of us.

Which leads to our last note. Our next issue, we would like to focus on the many, many volunteers that help to keep the Church running. As such, please feel free to write about your volunteer experiences, or about someone whom you think goes above and beyond in terms of their church activities. And if there are any pictures out there of various church members carrying out those activities, please submit them for our next edition.

Nancy Heule and Marilee Stephens (editors)



Photos by Raydene Koch

## Write or Edit 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](http://www.rwuc.org/between-the-aisles).

BTA is also looking for two volunteers to be one of four editors of this quarterly newsletter. This role includes contributing ideas for articles, occasional writing, editing one newsletter per year, and attending occasional planning meetings. Sign-up in Memorial Hall or for more information please contact the church office.

# Community and Connection 2SLGBTQIA+ Advocacy Conference

**Save The Date**

22-24 June 2023

Robertson-Wesley United Church  
10209 123 st Edmonton, AB



## Community & Connection

2SLGBTQIA+ Advocacy Conference

**THIS CONFERENCE WILL BRING TOGETHER THOSE WHO DO WORK IN THE 2SLGBTQIA+ COMMUNITY TO SHARE THEIR CHALLENGES AND EXPERIENCES WITH EACH OTHER AND THE GREATER COMMUNITY.**



As many of you know we have begun organizing a 2SLGBTQIA+ Advocacy Conference here at RWUC, called *Community and Connection*, which will be held **June 22-24**. This conference will bring together individuals and agencies in the 2SLGBTQIA+ community to share their experiences, challenges and hopes. From this conference we hope to find out what needs are not being met and how, as an affirming ministry, we can help support those needs.

Things are moving along and we wanted to share with you how the planning has been going. We have booked the majority of our workshop presenters and hope to have that completed by the end of February. Some of our workshops will be; *Two-Spirit & Indigiqueer Pasts, Presents and Futures* from Where The River Meets which is part of the Fyrefly Institute at the UofA, Outloud St. Albert will be presenting *Recent Challenges Facing Queer Youth* and Michael Phair will be presenting *Living Authentically: Edmonton's Welcoming Residence of Older Queers*. We also have

booked 3 individuals for our panel discussion on Health Care in the Queer Community as well as the moderator for the discussion. The panel will consist of MP Blake Desjarlais, Clinical Social Worker/Therapist Pragya Sharma and Dr. Julia Chronopoulos from the Rainbow Clinic at the Grant MacEwan Health Centre.

We have been advertising with posters in the community as well as on social media. We are excited to announce one of our keynote speakers, Sissy Thiessen Kootenayoo from Wase Saba Experiences. Sissy is an Indigenous and Two-Spirited cultural educator and performance provider. Once all speakers, presenters and artists have been confirmed registration will go up online. We have also received a grant from the Northern Spirit Region, which will help to offset the registration cost for people who are not able to afford it, which we are very grateful for. So far, this organizing experience has been amazing as we have connected with many folks in the community and are discovering some wonderful work that is being done.

Angela Glasel, Director of the Community & Connection Advocacy Conference

## When Winter Comes

When winter comes, the snow falls beautifully on the trees and shrubs.  
And when the trees and shrubs have lights on, they look beautiful with the freshly fallen snow.  
When the winter festivals come, I go out with my beautiful hats and walk around the festivals, showing off my wonderful hats, and I come bringing music for everyone to hear.

And I bring a light show on my hats.  
When winter comes, I also put on colorful makeup, blue and silver depending on if I want to bring more color for everyone to see.  
When the winter snow falls on the trees and shrubs, it makes the trees and shrubs look frosted and winterized and glistening.

Richard Andrew Kennedy



## COLDEST NIGHT OF THE YEAR

The coldest night of the year is a walk to raise fund for people experiencing hurt, hunger and homelessness in all areas of Canada. On Feb 25, people were invited to create teams or raise money as individuals to help agencies that do this important work, like the Bissell Centre and Boyle McCauley.



Across Canada 12.3 Millions dollars were raised. There were 36,813 walkers in 182 locations. Here in Edmonton we raised more the \$184,000.00. The youth of Robertson-Wesley started a team and invited people in the community of faith to both join the team or to donate to the team.

Robertson-Wesley had a team of 13 and to date raised \$6,275.00. If you would like to donate, they are still collecting money until **March 31<sup>st</sup>**. Visit [cnoy.org](http://cnoy.org) and look up Robertson-Wesley United to donate.

Thank you to the team and to everyone who supported this important cause.

Rev. Karen Bridges



## Nancy's Dill Pickle Soup

AN EXCELLENT SOUP FOR A COLD WINTER'S DAY

Ingredients:

1 large onion, diced  
 3 stalks of celery, sliced  
 Enough butter or oil to sauté onion and celery  
 8 cups of chicken or vegetable stock  
 8 large potatoes, peeled and diced  
 8 large dill pickles, chopped  
 1 ½ cup dill pickle juice from pickle jar  
 2 cups sour cream  
 2-4 tablespoons of flour for thickening  
 Salt and pepper as needed  
 Dill or chopped green onions for garnish

Directions:

After browning onion and celery, add stock, potatoes, pickles and pickle juice. Heat to boiling, then simmer, uncovered, until potatoes are tender.

In a bowl blend together sour cream and flour, then whisk a small amount into the soup. Once incorporated, whisk in remaining sour cream and flour mixture. Simmer until thickened a bit more. Puree if desired.

---

## A Peek at the Past

Edmonton's Oliver District is described as the land "west of downtown to 124<sup>th</sup> street, south to the North Saskatchewan River, and north to the Canadian National Railway line". The rail line itself was rerouted many years ago. Nowadays Oliver Square, recently renamed Unity Square, occupies some of the original rail land.

The High Level Bridge at the southeast corner of Oliver was built to link Edmonton, Strathcona, and the provincial Legislature. In 1912 Strathcona and Edmonton were amalgamated into the City of Edmonton.

Built between 1910 and 1913, the bridge cost 2 million dollars. Its construction also took the lives of three workers. Rail traffic is carried on its upper level, and until 1980, vehicles travelled both south and north on the bridge. 1980 was also the year when equipment was installed on the bridge so that a huge waterfall could be used to celebrate special occasions such as Canada Day.

Nancy Heule

# Lent & Easter

Worship theme:

## Wisdom

Wisdom is the guardian of our choices. It helps us to discern the right path at the right moment. It gives clarity of thought and deeper understanding. We use our best judgement, resisting the pull of impulse and desire. Wisdom gives us the maturity and patience to make sustainable decisions. We seek knowledge, enter reflection and open ourselves to inspiration. We consider carefully, then act confidently. Wisdom takes us beyond thought and to deeper knowing. Wisdom grounds us in grace.

## Easter Hydrangeas

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! A special Easter Sunday bulletin will include all your honourees names.

You can order on Sundays, **March 19, 26** and **April 2** in Memorial Hall following worship, by calling (780-482-1587) or emailing the office at [mail@rwuc.org](mailto:mail@rwuc.org). Delivery will be available.

# 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.

**Palm Sunday**  
Sunday, April 2 10:30 am

**Maundy Thursday**  
Thursday, April 6 7:00 pm

**Good Friday**  
Friday, April 7 10:30 am

**Easter Vigil**  
Saturday, April 8 7:00 pm

**Easter Sunrise**  
Sunday, April 9 7:30 am  
Outdoors in Paul Kane Park

**Easter Sunday**  
Sunday, April 9 10:30 am

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





## An Interview with John Helps

John Helps, a past member here at the church and a person that RWUC is sponsoring as a ministry candidate in Diaconal Ministry, will be commissioned in May this year. The editors of BTA thought a short interview with him would give us some knowledge as to how he set upon this path.

### **John, please tell me a bit about yourself – where you grew up, your early education, your occupation, etc.**

I grew up in and around Edmonton. I came from a working class family and worked in a factory out of high school. In my mid-twenties, I went to college and studied criminal justice, which led me to a job as a private investigator, which eventually turned into a twenty-year career in child and youth care.

In my mid-thirties, I became increasingly interested in exploring spirituality and the connection of God to the social services work I had been employed in going on two decades. All of this led me to Robertson-Wesley United Church, where I sat up in the balcony right behind Norma and Tom for a year, listening to Rev. Jim Allan and eventually Rev. Karen Bridges and beginning my education in the church.

Eventually I met George Ford, who introduced me to the bagged lunch program and the monthly community dinners. For the next couple of years, I would come by once or twice a week to make and hand out bagged lunches and every month I would come serve, greet or do whatever was needed of me. It was around that time Donna Krucik told me about this thing called Diaconal Ministry.

### **When were you at Robertson-Wesley as a congregant?**

I was baptized by Jim Allan at Robertson-Wesley United Church somewhere around 2010 and attended for the next 4 years (give or take), until I began to study Diaconal Ministry and began to spend my Sundays in ministry practicums, the first one being Inner-City Pastoral Ministry.

### **Where did you study to become a diaconal minister?**

I studied primarily at the Centre for Christian Studies, a school for United Church of Canada Diaconal Ministers and Anglican Deacons. Part of those studies meant attending courses and learning circles at St Stephen's College in Edmonton, St Andrews College in Saskatoon and the Sandy-Saulteaux Spiritual Centre in Manitoba.

### **What is your mission in life as you approach your commissioning?**

My mission is to be the hands and feet of Christ, ministering on the margins.

### **Can you recall a moment when you felt a call to enter the ministry?**

I can. I was visiting a non-denominational faith community in Edmonton. As I listened to the Minister speak, I suddenly felt called to ministry. It was a bit odd since I had never been baptized or been a part of a faith community, but there it was. I didn't tell anyone for years.

### **The church today is changing and shrinking. Do you have any thoughts as to why, and whether or not we can continue to be a voice of love and justice in our communities?**

I believe that the church is changing and shrinking right now because it is losing its place of power and privilege in the world. I'm not sure that's a bad thing. We don't need power and privilege to be a voice of love and justice.

In many ways I think we are becoming more like the early pre-Constantine church. Our church has an opportunity now to be closer than ever to the faith communities that Jesus would recognize.

The church may be shrinking, but God isn't.

### **Please tell us a bit about yourself, such as hobbies, perhaps you have a favourite author, where you spend your vacation time, etc.**

I used to enjoy reading, but it has been so long that I have read recreationally I'm not sure I can remember any authors I enjoyed.

I enjoy board games with friends and hiking around central Vancouver Island where I am currently. School and the global pandemic have curtailed any travelling I might have done over the past decade, but I always enjoy a staycation filled with popcorn and Netflix.

I'm also thinking of getting myself a Russian Blue kitten, so if you know of any...

### **As Canadians, we often find ourselves surrounded by the beauty of nature. Is there a place that especially calls to you?**

I found my way out to the West coast where I am employed with a recognized community ministry at Island Crisis Care Society, and minister part-time to Cedar Unit-

ed Church out here. When I wake up in the morning, I hear birds chirping outside of my window. Every day when I leave my home I am surrounded by mountains and trees. I am at the age where I am beginning to consider retirement and when I think about where I might want to end up it is hard for me to think of anywhere better than here.

**Anything else you would like to say to the readers of Between the Aisles?**

I completed my final suitability interview with the Office of Vocations at the end of January, and that means I will be commissioned in a couple of months and my church membership will transfer to the Pacific Mountain Region.

Robertson-Wesley United Church and the community there is always going to be a special place for me. I didn't spend decades there like many people do, but the time I spent had an impact. The Spirit was there and I felt moved.

People like Norma, Tom, Robert, Gail, Donna, Rev. Jim, Rev. Karen and so many more were so wonderful to share community with. I won't soon forget any of you.

The one person I will always remember and whose name I'd like to hold up is George Ford. I hope that what I am doing is a fraction as inspirational to someone as he was to me. He was a special person and RWUC was a special place for me.

Photographer: Hal Thiesse



Frosty Morning January 1, 2023

## This Light

I am grateful for this Light  
That shines within me and ahead of me  
That encourages me to move forward  
That is connected to my Soul  
A gift from the Creator

I hold this Light  
With courage  
With empathy  
With compassion  
A gift from the Creator

I share this Light  
With humankind  
With nature  
With our world  
A gift from the Creator

I carry this Light  
With enthusiasm  
With joy  
With optimism  
A gift from the Creator

I see this Light  
Shining all around us  
And when refracted  
A rainbow of colours is revealed  
A gift from the Creator

I know this Light is in everyone  
Always glowing  
And, I know if my light begins to blur  
All I need is a quiet place to say a silent prayer  
A gift from the Creator

Devika Short



## From Trash to Treasure

Robertson-Wesley announces its first mini-rummage sale of the year! The sale will feature kitchen items only, such as gadgets, small appliances, tea towels, cookbooks, sets of carving knives, baking sheets etc. Donations will be accepted at the church beginning on Sunday, April 30, 2023.

Volunteers will set up sale items on Saturday, May 5, 2023, in preparation for the sale the next day, Saturday, **May 6**, 2023. A Sign-up sheet for volunteers is in Memorial Hall.



Photo by Jim Triscott

# Bevan and the Bards ...

*choral masterworks inspired by great poets*

**Sunday · 19 March 2023 · 3 pm**

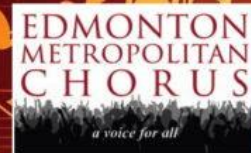
*First Presbyterian Church · Edmonton*

**Edmonton Metropolitan Chorus**

Allan Bevan · *Composer/Conductor*

Remi Do · *piano*

Timothy J. Anderson · *Actor*



**Robertson-Wesley United Church**

10209-123 Street, Edmonton AB T5N 1N3

780-482-1587

mail@rwuc.org www.rwuc.org