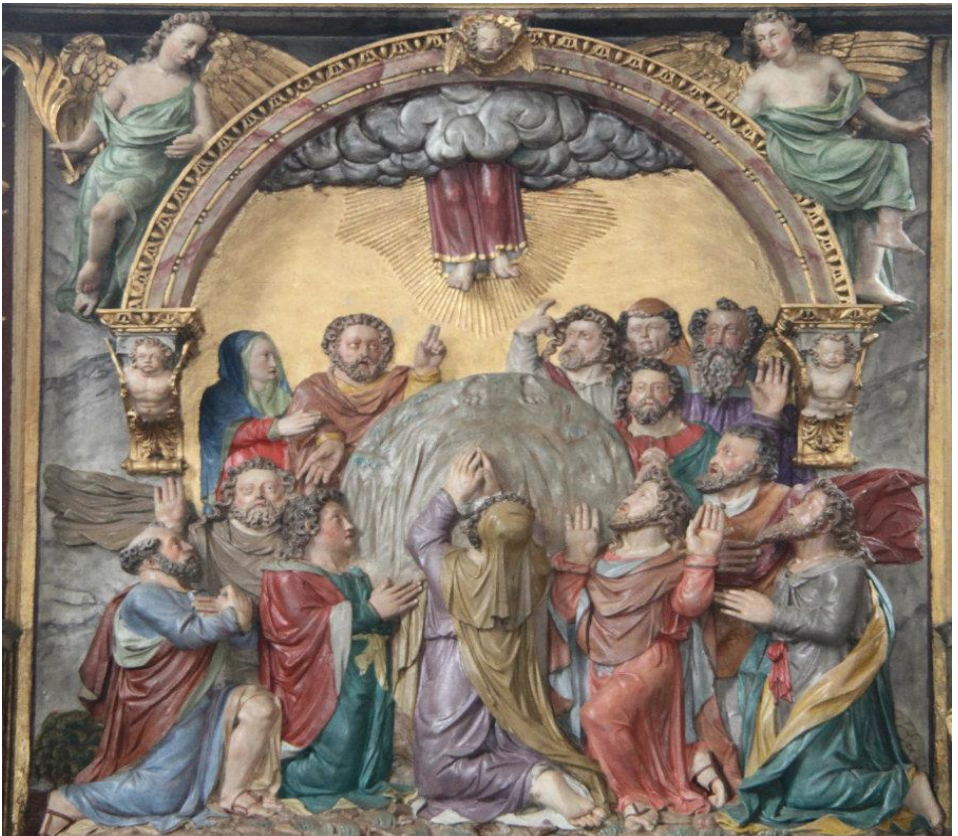




An Affirming Congregation of The United Church of Canada

2023 May 21

Ascension Sunday



Welcome and Inclusion

We open our hearts and our church family to all people in our community regardless of differing abilities, ethnicity, economic circumstances, sexual orientation, age, or gender identity. Many people's lives continue to be devastated by hatred, prejudice, and inequality, therefore we stand with those who are adversely affected by injustice, alienation and oppression.

Welcome to Robertson-Wesley

Please know that in the eyes of God you already belong here and you are welcome to participate in any of the activities of the congregation.

We acknowledge that the land on which we gather is Treaty 6 territory, a traditional meeting ground for Indigenous peoples. We acknowledge the Métis Nation of Alberta, Region 4, who are of mixed Indigenous & European heritage.

ACCESSIBILITY

There is an elevator located inside the building with the glass door entrance.

Access ramps can be found: inside leading from the lobby to the sanctuary and outside at the rear of the building, leading from the parking lot.

There are accessible washrooms located in the lobby near the elevator.

Hearing assistance devices are available from the ushers.

Large print worship bulletins, and hymn books are available from the ushers.

Service animals are welcome, except where food is prepared.

We commit to make R-W a comfortable space for people with cognitive impairment. If you require accommodations related to cognitive functioning please contact the office.

BABY/ CHILDREN'S AMENITIES

People can breastfeed anywhere in the building, should you want more privacy there is designated nursing space in the Millson room, located by the grand piano. Baby changing tables are installed in all washrooms. If you wish to use it, a children's activity centre is set up in the Chapel. There are also activity books available for children. Please ask the usher.

INFORMATION

The ushers located at the entrances are here to help should you have any questions. More information about the church and church activities can be found in the pamphlet racks outside Memorial Hall.

PERSONAL BELONGINGS

Please do not leave valuables unattended anywhere in the church.



10209 123 St, Edmonton T5N 1N3 780-482-1587
mail@rwuc.org www.rwuc.org

Friends in Christ

Prelude: *Vreuchten/Easter Carol*, Trad. Dutch Melody arr. by Alan Bullard

Allan Bevan, organ

Embracing Our Spirit

Introit: *The Risen Christ*, by Sarah Hart arr. Rick Modlin Choir of Robertson-Wesley

Call to Worship:

What do you believe? What do *I* believe? **What do we believe?**

Do you believe in God? Do I believe in the Holy Spirit?

Do we believe in Jesus Christ?

Do we believe with our hearts? Do we believe with our heads?

Do we believe with all we are? How do we believe?

As we gather with one another, as we gather to worship,

do we believe that God is with us? Do we believe the Christ is calling us? Do we believe the Spirit is guiding us?

What do we believe?¹

Hymn: *Behold, Behold, I Make All Things New*

More Voices 115

**Behold, behold, I make all things new,
beginning with you and starting from today.**

**Behold, behold, I make all things new,
my promise is true, for I am Christ the way. (3x)**

Coming into God's Presence

Rev. Dirk Jessen

God's Holy Word

Prayer of Illumination:

Holy One, there are so many stories that I am breathless and wordless in their midst. Help me to receive what you want me to receive and to share what you want me to share. Draw us to you as we find ourselves in your story of faith. May we be open to experience you, Great Storyteller, and may our lives be a joyful part of the story of your Spirit living, breathing and rejoicing in us and with us. Feed us on your words of life as we turn to you our host and our companion, and may our delight in your company be a joy to you. Amen.²

Solo: *I Know That My Redeemer Liveth*, by G. F. Handel Claire Rolheiser, soloist

Scriptures:

Charles Sabu

Acts 1:1-11 • The ascension of Jesus.

In the first book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus did and taught from the beginning until the day when Jesus was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen. After his suffering Jesus presented himself alive to them by many convincing proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God. While staying with them, he ordered them not

¹ Written by Richard Bott, **Gathering**, Lent/Easter 2016, page 48. Used with permission.

² Written by Wendy MacLean, **Gathering**, Lent/Easter, 2022, p. 48. Used with permission.

to leave Jerusalem, but to wait there for the promise of the Creator. "This," he said, "is what you have heard from me; for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now." So when they had come together, they asked him, "Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?" He replied, "It is not for you to know the times or periods that the Creator has set. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." When he had said this, as they were watching, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. While he was going and they were gazing up toward heaven, suddenly two people in white robes stood by them. They said, "People of Galilee, why do you stand looking up toward heaven? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.

Luke 24:44-53 • The ascension of Jesus.

Then Jesus said to them, "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you - that everything written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled." Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, and he said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. And see, I am sending upon you what the Creator promised; so stay here in the city until you have been clothed with power on high." Then Jesus led them out as far as Bethany, and, lifting up his hands, he blessed them and was carried up into heaven. And they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy; and they were continually in the temple blessing God.

May we hear what the Spirit is saying to the church.

Thanks be to God.

Sermon: *Sent*

Rev. Dirk Jessen

Hymn: *Forsaking Chariots of Fire*

Voices United 192

**Forsaking chariots of fire and fan-fared brass,
as strangely silent as he came, the Saviour leaves,
and God, with heaven's caress, the Son receives.**

**He has to go, as from the grave he had to rise:
in order to be everywhere he must depart to live,
not in one place, but in each heart.**

**So, Christ ascends; air cradles him, disciples stare.
Their Easter joy, his seven weeks' stay seem now to end.
But no! The Spirit's sending they portend.**

**Let angel harmonies resound, let trumpets blare,
let heaven's banquet guests applaud the welcomed word,
and earth anticipate her coming Lord.**

Pastoral Prayers

Rev. Karen Bridges

Lord's Prayer:

Voices United p. 921

Our Creator, who art in heaven,

hallowed be thy name.
thy kin-dom come,
thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those that trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil:
For thine is the kin-dom and the power and the glory,
forever and ever. Amen.

Grateful Response

Offering:

Your donations today support R-W Church programs and operations, as well as outreach projects and programs in the city and around the world. You can donate by e-transfer to pay@rwuc.org, cheque, debit/credit at the terminal located at the Grocery Card table in Memorial Hall during fellowship after worship, pre-authorized remittance, or PayPal on the website. Tax receipts are issued at the end of the year for donations over \$20 if your name and address are provided.

Offertory: *When We Are Living*

Voices United 581 v. 2

**Through all our living, we our fruits must give.
Good works of service are for offering.
When we are giving, or when receiving,
we belong to God, we belong to God.**

Prayer of Gratitude:

Loving God, Creator, and Sustainer, may these gifts, given gratefully, be brought to life through your creative spirit. Multiply and use them to bring the word and touch of Jesus to your people in this place and throughout your world. Amen.³

Benediction Anthem: *The Peace of God*, by John Rutter

Choir of R-W

Hymn: *We Meet You, O Christ*

Voices United 183

**We meet you, O Christ, in many a guise;
your image we see in simple and wise.
You live in a palace, exist in a shack.
We see you, the gardener, a tree on your back.
In millions alive, away and abroad;
involved in our life you live down the road.
Imprisoned in systems you long to be free.
We see you, O Jesus, still bearing your tree.
We hear you, O Christ, in agony cry.
For freedom you march, in riots you die.
Your face in the papers we read and we see.
The tree must be planted by human decree.**

³ Written by Robert Murdock, *Gathering*, Lent/Easter 2022, p. 49. Used with permission.

**You choose to be made at one with the earth;
the dark of the grave prepares for your birth.
Your death is your rising, creative your word:
the tree springs to life and our hope is restored.**

Commissioning:

God the Sender, send us. God the Sent, come with us. God the Strengthener of those who go, empower us, that we may go with you and find those who will call upon you Creator, Christ, and Holy Spirit. Amen.⁴

Postlude: *Declamation on "King's Weston,"* Melody by Ralph Vaughan

Williams arr. by Craig Phillips

Allan Bevan, organ

Questions for Reflection:

When have you understood yourself to be "sent" somewhere? Who did the sending? How were you prepared to be sent? How did this sending unfold?

R-W Report

Next Sunday

Sunday, May 28, 2023

Pentecost Sunday & Gratitude Sunday

Children & Youth: Children begin in the sanctuary, then go to Kids' Church. Youth meet in the youth room at the beginning of the service.

Acts 2:1-21 • The Spirit descends upon the people.

1 Corinthians 12:3b-13 • The gifts of the Spirit.

Sermon: Shared gifts lead to gratitude in abundance

As we celebrate the birth of the church we give thanks for all that we share, all that we are and all that we shall be together. It says in the passage from 1 Corinthians that "To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. What have you received from God and how are you using these precious gifts?"

Music: Dr. Allan Bevan, organist; Robertson-Wesley Choir

WEEK AT A GLANCE

| | | |
|-------------|---|----------|
| Sun May 21 | Sunday Worship - Sanctuary & Online | 10:30 am |
| | Kids' Church - Garden Patch and Air Room | 10:30 am |
| | Youth Discussion - Youth Room | 10:30 am |
| | Fellowship - Memorial Hall | 11:45 am |
| | Story of Stuff Screening - Club Room | 11:45 am |
| | Wild Church - Stark Oak Tree | 1:00 pm |
| Mon May 22 | Church Closed | |
| Tues May 23 | Scripture Reflections - Club Room & Zoom | 12:00 pm |
| Wed May 24 | Spirited Art Studio - Art Studio | 1:30 pm |
| | R-W Choir - Lower Hall & Sanctuary | 7:30 pm |
| Thur May 25 | Nova Bells - Lower Hall | 5:15 pm |
| | R-W Ringers - Lower Hall | 6:45 pm |

⁴ *The Church in Wales*, The Church in Wales Publications, **Celebrate God's Presence**, United Church Publishing House, Copyright 2000, p. 201. Used with permission.

ON THE HORIZON

| | | |
|-------------|---|----------|
| Sun May 28 | Sunday Worship - Sanctuary & Online | 10:30 am |
| | Kids' Church - Garden Patch and Air Room | 10:30 am |
| | Youth Discussion - Youth Room | 10:30 am |
| | Fellowship - Memorial Hall | 11:45 am |
| | Koinonia - Memorial Hall | 5:30 pm |
| Mon May 29 | Spirited Art Studio - Art Studio | 7:00 pm |
| Tues May 30 | Scripture Reflections - Club Room & Zoom | 12:00 pm |
| Wed May 31 | Spirited Art Studio - Art Studio | 1:30 pm |
| Thur June 1 | Nova Bells - Lower Hall | 5:15 pm |
| | R-W Ringers - Lower Hall | 6:45 pm |

R-W News & Notes

VICTORIA DAY

The church will be closed Monday, **May 22** in observance of Victoria Day.

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

On June 4th at noon in Memorial Hall, an in person congregational meeting will be held to discuss and vote on the Community of Faith Profile. This document shares the story of Robertson-Wesley United, who we are and what we believe God is calling this faith community to do and be in the next 10 - 15 years. Through surveys, interviews and discussions, the Community of Faith Task Group, and with the leadership of Rev. Lynn Maki (in visioning), the Board finalized the report with the proposed new minister job descriptions. The Northern Spirit Region Pastoral Relations Commission of the United Church has approved the updated profile, and the next step is to share it with R-W community of faith. When the congregation has approved this report, Robertson-Wesley can then begin the search for the permanent minister(s). The report can be found on the website rwuc.org/cofp. If you would like a printed copy of the report please contact the church office. As Robertson-Wesley's Bridging Minister, Rev. Dirk Jessen will chair the June 4th meeting.

KOINONIA WORSHIP

Sunday, **May 28**, 5:30 pm - approx. 8:30 pm. Do you enjoy singing (or listening to?) lively music? If so, you are invited to share your voice (or ears!) to the sounds of Ron Klusmeier, Jim and Jean Strathdee, and others in a celebration and praise for some joyful hymns! The evening begins at 5:30 in Memorial Hall with sharing of food, in the form of a POTLUCK prepared by those in attendance. If you are able, a contribution towards the meal will be very welcome. Following lively conversation around the supper tables, we will gather to sing some favourite tunes, using our familiar *Voices United* and *More Voices*, led by Graham Cooke, Marg May and Phyllis Harlton. Scripture readings, other readings and a Circle Prayer will be included. All are invited to a warm and happy musical time together! See you then!

WILD CHURCH

Join Wild Church at 1:00 pm **today!** Meeting at the Stark Oak Tree (found near the eastern wall of the old Royal Alberta Museum building on 102 Ave

and 129 St), we will explore EARTH as the third in the series, “Praying with the Elements”. Bring an empty mug for a hot drink after worship.

SILENT TALENT AUCTION IS HERE!

Auction items are now posted on the walls of Memorial Hall and bidding can begin! Check out the over 30 talents that have been generously submitted by fellow parishioners. Lots of great, fun, interesting and unique bids. Check out all the great items in the Auction Booklet insert in today's bulletin. You can continue to bid all week until 12:45 pm on Sunday **May 28th** when the gong sounds to end the auction. Meet new friends, learn something new, and have fun.

GREEN BITES

Many of us feel alone when we decide to fight Climate Change. How to start, how to keep up the fight, where to go for help and support. Canadians can start with the David Suzuki Foundation (davidsuzuki.org) that offers plenty of information regarding various ways to effect change. Another website is the World Wildlife Fund (worldwildlife.org). The WWF's first suggestion is to make a climate change pledge. Imagine taking climate change as seriously as a sacrament, but why not? - The Environmental Stewardship Group

THE STORY OF STUFF SCREENING

Plastic, plastic everywhere! 175 countries are working on a Treaty to assist the world in getting rid of plastic. **Today** there will be a very short video to view on this topic in the Club Room following the service. Pop in with your coffee and spend a few minutes thinking about the plastic in our lives!

COMMUNITY & CONNECTION 2SLGBTQIA+ ADVOCACY CONFERENCE

The Community & Connection 2SLGBTQIA+ Advocacy Conference is fast approaching. Visit www.communityandconnection.com to register to guarantee you get your first choice of workshops and they don't fill up! Now that we are getting closer to the conference dates, we are looking for volunteers to help out. Roles would include the following; greeters, registration table, beverage servers, and workshop presenter support. If any of these roles interest you, we would love to have you join us! A volunteer sign-up sheet can be found in Memorial hall.

Cover Image

The cover image is of the coloured sandstone altar in the Darmstadt parish church of St.Laurentius. It is one of the first independent works by 16-year-old sculptor Johannes (Hans) Juncker (ca.1582-1624).

Minister of Spiritual and Pastoral Care Development: Vacant
Minister of Congregation and Community Development: Rev. Karen Bridges
Bridging Minister: Rev. Dirk Jessen
Music Director: Dr. Allan Bevan
Office Administrator: Elyse Munro
Facilities Manager: Brad Campbell
Financial Manager: Garth van Herwaarden