

Between the Aisles

A Robertson-Wesley United Church Quarterly

SUMMER

*To plant a garden is to
believe in tomorrow.*

-Audrey Hepburn



Editor's Greeting

Hello, my name is Lisa Lane. I was recently confirmed and became a member of The United Church of Canada. I also just became one of the two new editors of *Between The Aisles*. I am looking forward to helping edit this wonderful quarterly. However, for the next issue there will be some changes made.

All articles will be edited for grammar and sentence structure, at the sole discretion of the editorial staff. In addition, we will be introducing some new and interesting features. I hope that you will continue to add your content to this esteemed publication and I look forward to getting to know each and every one of you, in a much better capacity.

Yours truly, Lisa Lane
Co-editor of *Between the Aisles*

How can you get involved?

This issue features stories from and about R-W volunteers! R-W is always looking for volunteers for a variety of programs and activities. For the latest volunteer opportunities, check out the signup sheets in Memorial Hall, the e-news and the R-W report.



A PEEK AT THE PAST ABOUT THE HOUSE NEXT DOOR

Most of the R-W folk are familiar with our parking lot north of the church. (it doesn't qualify as a real parking lot because there is only one way in and out, but it works for many of us who park there!)

Until almost forty years ago, the church's manse stood where the parking lot is today. Once the building was no longer used for a residence for a minister, it became a halfway house. Known as *The House Next Door*, and it was operated by a volunteer board consisting of church members. *The House Next Door* was for women only. The residents were often between jobs and unable to find housing. Some of them had been discharged from hospital and had nowhere else to go.

The housemother, Mrs. Loveless, was anything but loveless to the girls. For some of the residents, she was the first person in their lives to give them unconditional love.

Sometime during the 1980's the House Next Door was closed and before long the building was demolished. The yard became the current parking lot. It is not known what happened to the girls who lived there. No doubt some of them have very special memories of *The House Next Door*.

PS. The House Next Door continues to exist. In fact there are five houses in Edmonton and serve residents with varied mental health concerns such as drug addiction or eating disorders. The houses are funded by Alberta Health Services, and managed by a Board of Directors. The initial establishment of the first House Next Door that began as an outreach project by Robertson-Wesley United Church lives on!

Submitted by Nancy Huele

What or who is the church?

Many people will be familiar with the children's hymn that says: "The church is not a building, a church is not a steeple, the church is not a resting place, the church is the people. I am the church! You are the church! We are the church together! All who follow Jesus, all around the world! Yes, we're the church together."

When we talk about church more often than not people think about the building or they equate church with Sunday morning worship. Anthony B Robinson writes the following: "Church is not the building nor is it the leader. It is the people gathered into community in response to God's call in Jesus Christ...the church belongs to and owes its existence to God and not to us. God has created and claimed the church for God's purposes." (from *What's Theology got to do with it?* p. 159)

The purpose of communities of faith, otherwise known as churches, is not only to meet our own needs, but to live out God's mission and ministry in the world for the good of all people. Being a part of a faith community has the potential to transform people, to encourage people to share in the abundance of all that God has provided.

Living our faith in the world means getting involved, sharing our time, sharing our resources, sharing our skills with others. Jesus has commanded us to love one another and to serve one another, both stranger and friend. We need to live our lives in love. No one person is going to do this in the same way because we have all been uniquely created. As Paul writes to the Corinthians, "There is a variety of gifts, but always the same Spirit. There is a variety of ministries, but we serve the same One. There is a variety of outcomes, but the same God is working in all of them. To each person is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good." 1 Corinthians 12:4-7

I once started listing the names of people doing various pieces of volunteer work here at the church and came up with a list of over 500 ways that people volunteer, and this was just off the top of my head! On the list were many things that needed to be done, some every day, some weekly and some monthly. This did NOT include all the ways that people are sharing their time and skills out in the world on a daily basis. Without the

people serving the world in the love, God's mission would never be lived out.

What I want to say to you all today, is don't discount all the small ways you help others, or serve others or share in the work of the church. When we all contribute we truly are the body of Christ. I hope that you will help each other recognize the ways that you make a difference in the world, whether it is tending a plant, caring for an animal, calling a friend, sharing food with others, picking up garbage, helping someone across the road, smiling at people or saying hello.

All of these along with reading scripture, helping at the food bank, singing, dusting, greeting people, serving on a committee and thousands of other things are the ways that we together answer God's call. So as the saying goes, do not hide it under a bushel! Let your light shine in this world for we are the church together!

Rev. Karen Bridges

Volunteers Needed

The Community & Connection 2SLGBTQIA+ Advocacy Conference is fast approaching! In order to put on an event like this we know it takes a village.

We are looking for volunteers who would be interested in helping us with the conference. We are looking for people to volunteer in the following roles; greeter, registration, beverage server, workshop presenter support and floater (answering registrant's questions).

There is a sign-up sheet in memorial hall. Time slots will also be posted. The days of the conference are June 22 - June 24.

If you have any questions, please contact Angela Glasel at angela.glasel@rwuc.org

Thank you to all who are interested!

Beyond Gratitude... How are we leaving our mark?

Everyone of us, are the light that shines bright for the Lord and our church.

From the Hymn: "The church is wherever God's people are helping,

Caring for neighbours in sickness and need.

The church is wherever God's people are sharing

The words of the Bible in gift and in deed."

At Robertson-Wesley United Church we are blessed with many, many, volunteers. People of all ages come to our community of faith daily: to plan, lead, assist, grow and work hard. Become part of a group, share a coffee or cup of tea, listen, support one another and give to our community both here and throughout our city. They create music and advocate for those in need. That is only part of the way we leave our mark and show our gratitude. It is all of us, working and volunteering together that creates our loving, caring, sharing, exciting, diverse, and ever evolving R-W community of faith. All are welcome!

For the first number of years that I attended R-W, I went to the service and then left. Bill Butler recruited me to sit on the M&P committee and I haven't looked back since. By volunteering, I've felt a great sense of meaning, contributing to the life of the church. I became a member of the community and a miracle happened. When you get involved, you meet so many wonderful people. Besides personal satisfaction, you also feel the appreciation of people with whom you volunteer. Lastly, do not hesitate to get involved...everyone is needed, no effort is too small, and every action leads to the kingdom of God on Earth.

When we moved to this area, we were looking for a church to go to. We saw the sign for this church, and we heard the church bells. We like volunteering. We met with Rev Karen, who told us about volunteering, and she showed us the volunteer lists. We enjoy helping people. It makes us feel good and makes us happy and smile. We like working in the church. We enjoy being in lots of groups. AND it is fun.

The Gratitude Team celebrates the volunteers of our Faith Community at Robertson-Wesley. Without them

the church could not, be a Food Bank Depot or be able to hand out lunches. The Community Dinners would not be happening. There would be nobody to help foster community spirit following Sunday Service, with food and beverage hospitality. What would our grounds look without our gardeners? These are just a few examples of how important volunteers are to the mission of the church.

To those who make sandwiches and serve dinners...to those who usher and greet, who run the kids' church and youth group...to those who serve on committees and organize fundraisers...to those who are a loving presence for all around them. To anyone who has shared any bit of their time, energy, and skills with others. THANK YOU! You bring an invaluable gift to the world, and you contribute in a way that no one else can. You are a precious part of that.

Volunteers like YOU (members and friends of Robertson-Wesley), use their time and talents to make the World and Robertson-Wesley a better place. THANK YOU! Every day we are grateful to God for your assistance and support.

by Ed, Gwen, Ian, Jill, Pat, Roy, Sylvia, Vicky

Recycling?

I have to admit until a few years ago, I never really thought about plastic.....I used it of course, it's easy, convenient and helps keep food fresh. But now we are learning how much damage it's doing to the oceans, fish, and other marine creatures. And in return, to us. We consume the fish, it's full of plastic that no one really tests for and we get sick. So the cycle continues. On Sunday last, May 14th, Mother's Day. I watched a video about a coalition that want to enforce laws on recycling plastic. It brought to light quite a few things, for those of us who watched it. We tried to think what we could do, as a community of faith, to help with this situation. Besides petitions, we had a few other ideas. Personal responsibility was a big one, but what can we do as servants of God? Is there anything that one of you might suggest, besides all we already do?

Lisa Lane

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A VERY EXCEPTIONAL VOLUNTEER AT RWUC

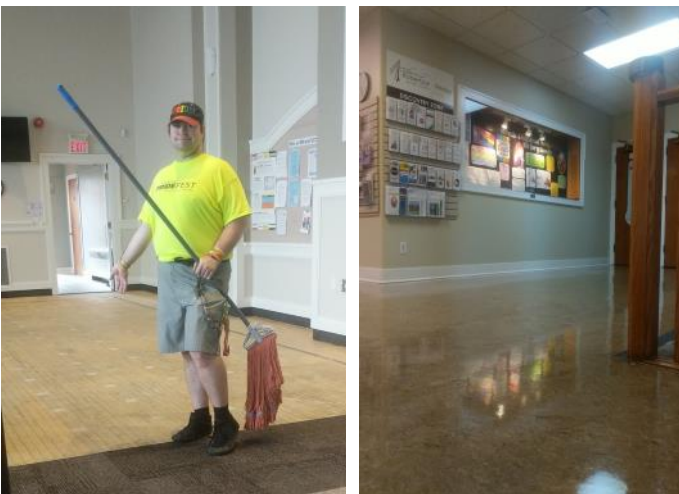
Richard Andrew Kennedy aka Rickey Tickey

I moved to this area in 2012, came to R-W in 2015, started working in 2016 and have kept working up till now. I am a very hard worker .

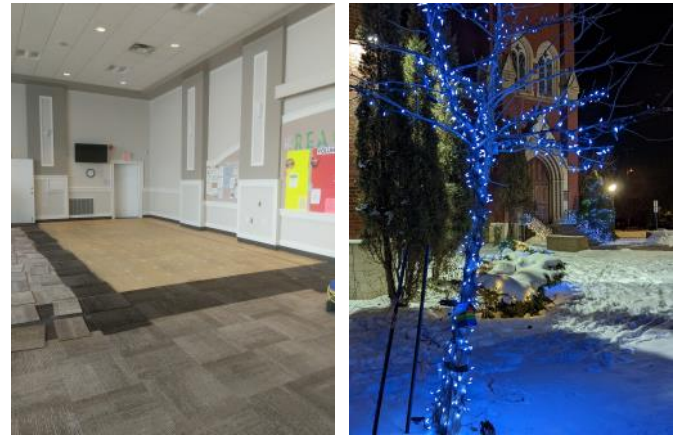


I have lots of awesome duties:

- Volunteering with planting the wonderful flower bed in the parking lot of the church.
- Stocking the book library on the street.
- I help with decorating for our many different events.
- When we have our wonderful Art & Book Sales. I make banners, signs and posters.
- Volunteering at Community Dinner & doing the live stream on Sundays.
- I D.J for our wonderful BBQ'S.
- Degreasing the tables and chairs for the fall and steam cleaning the carpet.



- Taking old wax off the floor and doing security, to make sure that no one walks on the newly waxed floor.
- Helping out with all sorts of summer projects .
- Decorating the outside of the church with sparkling lights for Christmas.
- Working as an Events Assistant for R-W.
- Helping with set up, greeting people as they come in for events and assisting with concerts, weddings, memorials and funerals, and any other sort of events.



Thanks to all of the congregation for being an awesome Affirming Church!

As you can see, there are lots of awesome and wonderful opportunities to volunteer. So don't be shy, give one a try. You won't regret it! Come and be a super star and volunteer!

Submitted By Mr. Richard Andrew Kennedy

Write for *Between the Aisles*

Do you write poetry? Have you read a life-changing book lately? Do you have a faith question you are exploring or a passion you want to share? Then why not submit something for inclusion in the church's quarterly publication *Between the Aisles*? For guidelines and publication requirements, see www.rwuc.org/between-the-aisles. Deadline for Fall Edition submissions is **Aug 20**, Published: **Sept 3**.

RECOLLECTIONS OF THE R-W ORGANS

In May of 1954, when I joined the Robertson United Church choir, pride of place in the church went to the electromagnetic Casavant pipe organ which had been installed in 1914. The facade pipes did not speak but were for decoration only; all the real pipes were hidden behind curtains at the back and sides of the alcove. The organ would be rebuilt in 1955.



Fast forward two decades to 1975 and the Official Board was notified that the organ could no longer be repaired. Shortly thereafter, the Casavant 'died' in a very spectacular fashion - at an evening service, everything came to a stop when the organ pipes began to speak, going down the scale from the top to the bottom. The end! We finished that service singing the hymns acapella. We had piano accompaniment for a few services until Bruce Wheatcroft and Bill Hutton installed their house-size pipe organ in the east balcony.

The Organ Technical Committee was then formed with the two church organists and five lay members: Douglas Taylor (Chairman), Karen Hansen, Bill Hutton, Carol Moore, Bruce Wheatcroft, Don Williams, and Blanche Wolfe. Our two-year task was to learn about organs, to listen to music composed for the organ, and to listen to recordings of famous organs including Bach's organ in the St Thomas Church in Leipzig, Germany.

Locally, we visited churches, monasteries, convents, and more, to hear everything from the simple pump organs to the amazing Wurlitzer, designed to accompany silent films, at the Capitol Theatre on Jasper Avenue. We studied the bids and interviewed three organ builders.

On March 12, 1978, the Committee presented to the Official Board its recommendation that the design proposed by Gabriel Kney of London, Ontario for a 35 stop tracker organ be purchased at a cost not to exceed one hundred and eighty-six thousand dollars. A provision was made for two additional stops if donors could be found.

Dr Robert Francis, grandson of James Robertson, and I purchased the optional four foot flute stop but no one came forward to purchase the optional trumpet stop. The Board then presented the design proposal to the congregation at a General Meeting. Not everyone was in favour of a new pipe organ. Some members felt that a smaller electric organ would fill our needs and that the money would be better spent on church programs.

At the congregational meeting, Jeannie Findlay, a long-time member, gave an impassioned plea in favour, reminding the congregation that, in 1914, the women of the church had helped to pay for the Casavant organ with the proceeds from bake sales and that the organ had given us sixty years of music. The proposal passed. The Board signed the contract and the tin and other materials were ordered. A few weeks later, the price of tin soared; by the time it was installed, the organ was worth much more than we had paid.

Next came the demolition of the Casavant which had been sold to a college in the United States. Jeannie Findlay was also my partner on the demolition team. The men took down the pipes and we carried them to a designated spot in Memorial Hall. The pipes of that organ were largely made of lead, a soft material; over the years the pipes had been patched with bubble gum and adhesive tape and some were held in place with coat hangers over which they had folded. They had not been dusted in decades; by the end of each shift, we looked like coal miners!



The organ demolition team

The installation of the new organ began in 1979. The original design for the star in front of the pipes was for a brass star that would rotate when the Zimbel (Chimes) stop was pulled.

Some of us Committee members liked the absurd suggestion that when the star rotated, it would spit fire - that would really catch the attention of the people! (We were usually very serious about our work but we did have our giddy moments.). The following anecdote was related to me by Jack Waters who was in the church at the time. The technicians were working on the rotating star when the Rev. Aubrey Edworthy protested vehemently "You will NOT turn my sanctuary into a circus!" Back to the drawing board. Finally, the fixed wooden star was agreed upon. The Gabriel Kney organ was dedicated on Sunday, September 16, 1979 with the first of four recitals.



The next time that you are in the sanctuary, take a minute to have a really good look at the organ. The facade pipes all speak; all the other pipes, a total of 2,750, are housed in the free-standing cruciform oak case. Our music director, Dr. Allan Bevan, says that the Gabriel Kney organ is "a joy to play". The organ has now enhanced our services for more than forty years.

Submitted by Karen Hansen

NOTE-ABLES: All things Musical

In early May, R-W hosted a magnificent vocal concert given by Dreamscapes. The performance featured eight singers including Douglas Graham, a member of our church choir. Accompanying them was well-known pianist Frances Thielmann. The audience was treated to songs from both opera and musical theatre. If applause is an indication of appreciation, those in attendance had burning hands!

Nancy Heule

I enjoyed attending two performances (April 30 and May 6) of my "Perfectly Mad..." in Ontario over the past two weeks. This composition was commissioned four years ago but its performance was postponed three times due to the pandemic so it was a real pleasure to finally hear it! "Perfectly Mad..." is about creativity and mental health and is based upon the writings and art works of William Blake (1757-1827). Blake was a prolific writer and visual artist, largely misunderstood in his own time and he suffered from a mental illness described in his day as "nervous fear". "Perfectly Mad..." (a term applied to Blake) celebrates his creativity by combining passages of his poetry with excerpts from his letters which are sung and said throughout the 45-minute work. Blake was a Christian who was a self-proclaimed prophet and unorthodox theologian as well so "Perfectly Mad..." reflects his religious views as well. The piece was performed by Toronto Orpheus Choir, Chorus Niagara, the Sidgwick Scholars, and Concordo Orchestra, with Shaw Festival actor Benedict Campbell playing the part of the author. Both performances were directed by Robert Cooper, long-time producer of CBC Choral Concert.

I'm hopeful that we can gather the forces together to perform this piece in Edmonton at some point in the future.

And on March 19, I had the pleasure of guest conducting the Edmonton Metropolitan Chorus in a program of some of my shorter choral compositions composed over the past twenty years.

Dr. Allan Bevan, Director of Music

June 22-24 2023
 Robertson-Wesley United Church
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Community & Connection

2SLGBTQIA+ Advocacy Conference

BRINGING TOGETHER THOSE WHO DO WORK IN THE 2SLGBTQIA+ COMMUNITY TO SHARE THEIR CHALLENGES AND EXPERIENCES WITH EACH OTHER AND THE GREATER COMMUNITY.



NISHA PATEL
SPEAKER

POET LAUREATE
EMERITUS OF THE CITY
OF EDMONTON
PHOTO BY ANDREW PEEBODD



SISSY THIESSEN
KOOTENAYOO
SPEAKER

PERFORMER AND
EDUCATOR
PHOTO BY COLLE RICHARDS
INDEPENDENT PHOTOGRAPHY



EMMET MICHAEL
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PERFORMER

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SONGWRITER
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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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