



An Affirming Congregation of The United Church of Canada

2023 July 16

Pentecost 7



Welcome and Inclusion

We open our hearts and our church family to all people in our community regardless of gender identity, differing abilities, ethnicity, economic circumstances, or sexual orientation, age. 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: *Grand Choeur in C*, by Charles-Alexis Chauvet Dr. Allan Bevan, organ

Embracing Our Spirit

Introit: *Hymn of Promise*, by Natalie Sleeth

Jacqueline Hernandez, Raydene Koch, Claire Rolheiser, soloists

Call to Worship:

In the seed that lies unseen, resting, cold, and still, God is—
and hope grows.

In the possibilities that await us, unknown, unimagined, God is—
and life grows.

In our hurt and emptiness, masked, buried, overlooked, God is—
and healing grows.

In this time of worship, singing, praying, and being, we come to
know this God who is—
and we grow.

We gather to worship and remember that even in the most barren of
times, God is at work.

May the Spirit be our guide and strength.¹

Hymn: *God, We Praise You for the Morning*

**God, we praise you for the morning;
hope springs forth with each new day,
new beginning, prayer and promise,
joy in work and in play.**

**God, we praise you for creation,
mountains, seas and prairie land.
Waking souls find joy and healing
in your bountiful hand.**

**God, we praise you for compassion,
all the loving that you show;
human touching, tears and laughter,
help your children to grow.**

**God, we praise you for your Spirit,
Comforter and daily friend;
restless searcher, gentle teacher,
strength and courage you send.**

**Hallelujah, hallelujah,
hallelujah, hallelujah!
Hallelujah, hallelujah!
Christ is Lord of our days!**

Voices United 415
vv. 1-4, 6

¹ Wetaskiwin Writers, *Gathering*, Pentecost 1, 2023, p. 38. Used with permission.

Prayer of Confession:

Your Spirit calls us to new relationships, gracious God, relationships of peace and equality. The old ways of inequality, power and privilege lead only to distress and despair. Only the mind of Christ within us can lead us to new understandings of life for ourselves and our world. May we be open to the mind of Christ transforming and renewing both us and our world.
(a time of silent prayer) Amen.

Word of Assurance:

With Christ in us, we are raised to new life and new possibilities.²

Coming into God's Presence

Rev. Dirk Jessen

God's Holy Word

Prayer of Illumination:

God of the ages, you reach out to us at all the times in our lives. The biblical story shows us many examples of your presence in good times and days of hardship and trial. Open us to your presence as we receive the words of scripture today and help us to know that we are never alone. Amen.³

Scriptures:

Teigan Benson

Genesis 25:19-34 • Rebekah and Isaac as parents to Esau and Jacob. These are the descendants of Isaac, Abraham's son: Abraham was the father of Isaac, and Isaac was forty years old when he married Rebekah, daughter of Bethuel the Aramean of Paddan-aram, sister of Laban the Aramean. Isaac prayed to the Lord for his wife, because she was barren; and the Lord granted his prayer, and his wife Rebekah conceived. The children struggled together within her; and she said, 'If it is to be this way, why do I live?' So she went to inquire of the Lord. And the Lord said to her, "Two nations are in your womb, and two peoples born of you shall be divided; the one shall be stronger than the other, the elder shall serve the younger." When her time to give birth was at hand, there were twins in her womb. The first came out red, all his body like a hairy mantle; so they named him Esau. Afterwards his brother came out, with his hand gripping Esau's heel; so he was named Jacob. Isaac was sixty years old when she bore them. When the boys grew up, Esau was a skillful hunter, a man of the field, while Jacob was a quiet man, living in tents. Isaac loved Esau, because he was fond of game; but Rebekah loved Jacob. Once when Jacob was cooking a stew, Esau came in from the field, and he was famished. Esau said to Jacob, 'Let me eat some of that red stuff, for I am famished!' (Therefore he was called Edom.) Jacob said, 'First sell me your

² Wanda Whitfield, **Gathering**, Pentecost 1, 2023, p. 44. Used with permission.

³ Beth Johnston, **Gathering**, Pentecost 1, 2023, p. 49. Used with permission.

birthright.' Esau said, 'I am about to die; of what use is a birthright to me?' Jacob said, 'Swear to me first.' So he swore to him, and sold his birthright to Jacob. Then Jacob gave Esau bread and lentil stew, and he ate and drank, and rose and went his way. Thus Esau despised his birthright.

Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23 • Parable of the Sower.

That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the sea. Such great crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat there, while the whole crowd stood on the beach. And he told them many things in parables, saying: "Listen! A sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seeds fell on the path, and the birds came and ate them up. Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and they sprang up quickly, since they had no depth of soil. But when the sun rose, they were scorched; and since they had no root, they withered away. Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. Other seeds fell on good soil and brought forth grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. Let anyone with ears listen! Hear then the parable of the sower. When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what is sown in the heart; this is what was sown on the path. As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; yet such a person has no root, but endures only for a while, and when trouble or persecution arises on account of the word, that person immediately falls away. As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the lure of wealth choke the word, and it yields nothing. But as for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and yields, in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty.

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

Thanks be to God.

Anthem: *Psalm 121*, by Imant Raminsh

Jacqueline Hernandez, Raydene Koch, Claire Rolheiser, soloists

Sermon: *Growing Conditions*

Rev. Dirk Jessen

Grateful Response

Hymn: *Soil of God, You and I*

More Voices 174

**Soil of God, you and I, stand ready to bear
seeds of faith nourished by God's tender care.**

Growing in everyone for here God is found.

All stand together, we are...Holy ground.

**Soil of God, you and I, now ready to be
part of God's promise, for others to see.**

**Open to everyone for here God is found.
All stand together, we are...Holy ground.**

**Soil of God, you and I, now called to rebirth,
joining as partners with all of the earth.
Living in harmony for here God is found.
All stand together, this is...Holy ground.**

Pastoral Prayers

Lord's Prayer:

Rev. Karen Bridges

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.**

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: *Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow* **Voices United 541**

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
praise God, all creatures high and low;
give thanks to God in love made known:
Creator, Word and Spirit, One.**

Prayer of Gratitude:

We dedicate ourselves to you, gracious God, to proclaim the good news to others, and to be your healing touch in a broken world. These offerings are part of our response to generosity toward us. We dedicate these gifts and ourselves to the service of your work. Amen.⁴

⁴ Beth Johnston, **Gathering**, Pentecost 1, 2023, p. 51. Used with permission.

**Though ancient walls may still stand proud
and racial strife be fact,
though boundaries may be lines of hate,
proclaim God's saving act!**

**Walls that divide are broken down;
Christ is our unity!
Chains that enslave are thrown aside;
Christ is our liberty!**

**When vested power stands firm entrenched
and breaks another's back,
when waste and want live side by side,
it's Gospel that we lack.**

**Walls that divide are broken down;
Christ is our unity!
Chains that enslave are thrown aside;
Christ is our liberty!**

**The truth we seek in varied scheme,
the life that we pursue,
unites us in a common quest
of self and world made new.**

**Walls that divide are broken down;
Christ is our unity!
Chains that enslave are thrown aside;
Christ is our liberty!**

**The church divided seeks that grace,
that newness we proclaim,
a unity of serving love
that lives praise to God's name.**

**Walls that divide are broken down;
Christ is our unity!
Chains that enslave are thrown aside;
Christ is our liberty!**

**This broken world seeks lasting health
and vital unity.
God's people, by God's Word renewed,
cast off all slavery.**

**Walls that divide are broken down;
Christ is our unity!
Chains that enslave are thrown aside;
Christ is our liberty!**

Commissioning:

From this time of worship, God scatters us into the world,

like seeds upon waiting soil.

From this time of worship, Christ calls us to reach out,

like sun and rain upon waiting seeds.

From this time of worship, the Spirit invites us to grow,

like fruitful trees greening in God's presence.

May you be rooted in God's love,

showered with Christ's peace

and borne upon the winds of the Spirit.

Amen.⁵

Postlude: *My Saviour's Love*, by Charles Gabriel arr. by R. K. Boesiger

Allan Bevan, keyboard, David Kempel, percussion, Ron Soans, bass

Question for Reflection:

What change and growth have you experienced in your life?

What has aided it?

What has made it difficult?

R-W Report

Next Sunday

Sunday, July 23, 2023

Pentecost 8

Children & Youth: Children and Youth are invited to worship with their families in the sanctuary.

Genesis 28:10-19a • Jacob's vision of God.

Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43 • Parable of the weeds, among the wheat.

Sermon: Harvests

From the Book of Genesis, we hear the next part of the story of the people whom God has chosen and who have, in turn, chosen to follow God. Like most relationships, this relationship is complicated to say the least. On the run from a serious family rift, he has helped cause; Jacob directly encounters God for the first time in a vision that is both unforgettable and profoundly affirming. From the Gospel of Matthew we hear another agriculturally rooted parable. The topic is the bad growing and flourishing alongside the good. How have you experienced God's blessing? What do you do to remember God's personal interest in and care for you? How do you reconcile the good in life alongside the bad?

Music: Raydene Koch, accompanist; Jacqueline Hernandez, soloist

⁵ Wetaskiwin Writers, Grace Lutheran Church and First U.C., Wetaskawin, Alta, **Gathering**, Pentecost 1, 2023, p. 52. Used with permission.

WEEK AT A GLANCE

Sun July 16	Sunday Worship - Sanctuary & Online	10:30 am
	Fellowship - Memorial Hall	11:45 am
Tues July 18	Scripture Reflections - Club Room & Zoom	12:00 pm
	R-W Board Meeting - Club Room	7:00 pm

ON THE HORIZON

Sun July 23	Sunday Worship - Sanctuary & Online	10:30 am
	Fellowship - Memorial Hall	11:45 am
Tues July 25	Scripture Reflections - Club Room & Zoom	12:00 pm
Thur July 27	Labyrinth Walk - Memorial Hall	11:00 am
Sun July 30	Membership Class - Club Room	12:30 pm

R-W News & Notes

THANK YOU

The Book Sale on Sunday raised \$840 for the church! Since there are still books left over there will be a second sale on **August 20**. If you still have books to donate, you can drop them off at the church or Pat & Sheila (780-481-0056) can pick them up. If possible, please bring books in low boxes with spines facing upwards so they can be set right out.

COULD YOU HELP WITH AN ITALIAN DINNER?

Before covid, a group put on an Italian Dinner every fall as a fundraiser, we would like to start this activity up again. Many of us are getting older, and we realized we need more help! We would need help with: Setting up tables and chairs, kitchen food prep like chopping, peeling, slicing, washing and putting away dishes, pots and pans, and clean-up. If you would be interested please let Rosemary Dunbar (780-862-2223) or the Elyse in office (780-482-1587) know.

GREEN BITES

Many of us are familiar with the second harvest that is provided in the Fall by everbearing strawberries. However, in the case of Edmonton and other parts of Canada, Second Harvest is the name of our largest food rescue organization. With several years of practice, it has developed superb expertise in food recovery. Second Harvest offers its services for free to businesses and non-profits, and in so doing, steps in to prevent edible food from going to a landfill. In fact, last year, 2022, 53.3 million pounds of surplus edible food was distributed to 7500 non-profit programs in this country. Of that amount, 5.4 million pounds was rescued and redirected here in Alberta. The organization also conducts research regarding food and its availability. Check out www.secondharvest.ca for amazing information regarding our food! - Environmental Stewardship Group



THE LABYRINTH THIS SUMMER

The Labyrinth at Robertson-Wesley will be available on three Thursday mornings: **July 27, August 10** and **August 24** from 11:00 am to noon. Take some time on these midday occasions to engage in reflection and spiritual renewal on the Labyrinth. There will be some themed quotes and questions to guide your walk if you desire, along with guidance for labyrinth walking for those for whom the experience is new.

MEMBERSHIP CLASS

Sundays for 5 weeks from 12:30 - 2:00 pm (**July 30, Aug 6, 13, 20, 27**) in the Club Room. This is an opportunity to talk about your faith, to learn about God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit. It is also an opportunity to learn about the history, polity and faith practice of The United Church of Canada, and how we live out our faith in the world. After the class you will be asked to discern for yourselves whether or not you wish to publicly proclaim your commitment in this dynamic faith organisation. If you wish to participate in the group please contact Rev. Karen at karen.bridges@rwuc.org to register.

EMAIL SAFETY TIPS

Recently a few folks from the church have been experiencing scam emails, using a method called spoofing. Email spoofing is when a scammer forges (spoofs) the emails *from* address, so the sent message appears to have been sent from someone you know with the intention of infecting your computer with malware, asking for money or stealing information. These addresses can either be created by using alternative numbers or letters to look slightly different than the original, or by disguising the '*from*' field to be the exact email address of someone in your network. If you receive an email that looks like it is from someone you know, requesting gift cards or help and asking for secrecy, please feel free to call Elyse in the church office or the person who sent it to confirm legitimacy, do not reply to the email because the reply will get sent to the scammer.

What to do if your email has been spoofed:

- Don't panic, spoofing does not mean that the scammer has access to your account, they are only making it appear as though they do. You have not been hacked. Spoofing is a temporary issue that will often be resolved in a few weeks when the scammer will move on.
- Email everyone in your contacts to let them know to disregard any suspicious emails from you.
- Just to be safe, run a full virus scan on your computer. This ensures that you have not experienced a malware or virus infection and helps eliminate the possibility that you have a compromised account.
- Update your email password

MUSIC IN WORSHIP

Now is the time to be thinking about getting involved in the R-W Music program this fall! Opportunities are available as an instrumentalist, (strings, winds, brass, percussion) choral singer, or as a handbell ringer (beginning to advanced). Please speak with Allan Bevan after any service this summer, or email: music@rwuc.org for further information.

BETWEEN THE AISLES

For the fall issue they are looking for submissions of favourite poems and prayers, recipes for hearty meals, including vegan and vegetarian options and stories on how we can do more for the environment. Send your submissions to news@rwuc.org. Submissions are due: **Aug 20**.

In the Community

CAMP DRAGONFLY

Summer Camp For Trans+ Youth: **August 25 - 27, 2023**, Edmonton, AB
Camp Dragonfly is a summer camp based in Edmonton with a goal to create a safe and welcoming space for trans+ and gender-creative youth aged 6-13 where they can be their authentic selves, meet trans+ role models, and have fun. Over the past 6 years, Camp Dragonfly has provided this opportunity to over 160 families from Alberta and beyond. At camp we invite youth, as well as their siblings and friends, to take part in the impactful experience that is being known and loved exactly as they are through creativity, connection, and celebration. For more information, and to register a camper, volunteer, or contribute to a scholarship fund, please visit us at www.camp-dragonfly.com.

Worship Notes

Thanks today to our vocal leaders Jacqueline Hernandez, Raydene Koch, and Claire Rolheiser and to our instrumentalists Ron Soans (guitars) and David Kelmer (percussion).

Cover Image

Cover image is of a fresco in the Orthodox Church of St. Elias, Israel.

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

Welcome to Robertson-Wesley

If you would like you can fill out this page, tear it off, and place it in the offering plates at the exits. This form is also available to fill out online at rwuc.org/infocard

Today's Date: _____

Contact Information:

Name: _____

Preferred gender pronouns: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Province: _____

Postal Code: _____ Phone #: _____

Email: _____

I would like to subscribe to the email newsletter

Yes No

I am new in the community

I am a visitor

I am interested in speaking with a minister

I am considering making this my church

Please put in the offering plate. Thank you

