



An Affirming Congregation of The United Church of Canada

2023 July 23

Pentecost 8



Welcome and Inclusion

We open our hearts and our church family to all people in our community regardless of age, gender identity, differing abilities, ethnicity, economic circumstances, or sexual orientation. 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: *I know whom I have believed*, El Nathan, arr by Lloyd Larson

Raydene Koch, piano

Embracing Our Spirit

Introit: *I See the Love of God in Every River*, by David Ouchterlony

Jacqueline Hernandez, soloist

Opening Prayer:

Great Spirit, receive our prayer.

We come seeking your understanding and your compassion.

As nomads, we come seeking, wandering through the waste of a society that celebrates the lives of the famous while ignoring others whose lives are scattered on the debris pile of a wanting world.

We come seeking your understanding and your compassion.

Nomads all, we seek the knowledge found in the message that tells us of a realm of compassion, that opens up a new way of being in which all are cared for, valued, and respected.

We come seeking your understanding and your compassion, Great Spirit, for in you, we live. You breathe life into our very being. Open us to your mindfulness, Great Spirit, that we might be your blessing in this world. Amen.¹

Hymn: *We Plough the Fields*

Voices United 520

**We plough the fields
and scatter good seed on the land,
but it is fed and watered
by your almighty hand;
you send the snow in winter,
the warmth to swell the grain,
the breezes and the sunshine,
and soft refreshing rain.**

**All good gifts around us
are sent from heaven above;
we thank you, God, O holy God,
for all your love.**

**You only are the maker
of all things near and far;
you paint the wayside flower,
you light the evening star;
the wind and waves obey you,
by you the birds are fed;**

¹ Written by Jim McKean, **Gathering**, Pentecost 1, 2023, p. 39. Used with permission.

**much more to us, your children,
you give us daily bread.**

**All good gifts around us
are sent from heaven above;
we thank you, God, O holy God,
for all your love.**

**We thank you then, O Maker,
for all things bright and good,
the seed-time and the harvest,
our life, our health, our food;
accept the gifts we offer
for all your love imparts,
and, what from us you long for,
our humble, thankful hearts.**

**All good gifts around us
are sent from heaven above;
we thank you, God, O holy God,
for all your love.**

Prayer of Confession:

**Loving God, receive our prayers. We bring our whole lives
before you today, especially our failures and our inattentiveness
to your word and to your ways. *(one prayerful breath)***

**Loving God, we bring broken relationships with you, with
family, with others. *(two prayerful breaths)***

**Loving God, we come to this house of worship seeking healing
for our brokenness and strength in our weakness. We ask
forgiveness for the times we have chosen our path rather than
yours. *(three prayerful breaths)***

**Loving God, we wait for you and put our hope and trust in you.
Amen.**

Words of Assurance:

**With God is unfailing love and full redemption. God redeems the
people of God from all their sins and brokenness. God restores
the people of God to loving relationship. We are forgiven and
redemed through Jesus Christ our Lord. Thanks be to God.
Amen²**

Coming into God's Presence

Rev. Dirk Jessen

² Written by Jeanne Wilson, **Gathering**, Pentecost 1, 2023, p. 47. Used with permission.

God's Holy Word

Prayer of Illumination:

Creator God, by your mystery, from acorns stretch mighty oaks, from bulbs emerge beautiful flowers, from tiny seeds unfurl sprawling vines. By that same mystery, may your nourishing spirit touch the gift of scripture today, that it may burst forth with the expansive love that will grow and bear fruit in our lives and, through us, fulfill the needs of others in our community and beyond. All thanks be to God. Amen.³

Scriptures:

Brenda Sheppard

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

Jacob left Beersheba and went toward Haran. He came to a certain place and stayed there for the night, because the sun had set. Taking one of the stones of the place, he put it under his head and lay down in that place. And he dreamed that there was a ladder set up on the earth, the top of it reaching to heaven; and the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. And the Lord stood beside him and said, "I am the Lord, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and to your offspring; and your offspring shall be like the dust of the earth, and you shall spread abroad to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south; and all families of the earth shall be blessed in you and in your offspring. Know that I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you." Then Jacob woke from his sleep and said, "Surely the Lord is in this place - and I did not know it!" And he was afraid, and said, "How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven." So Jacob rose early in the morning, and he took the stone that he had put under his head and set it up for a pillar and poured oil on the top of it. He called that place Bethel.

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

Jesus put before them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to someone who sowed good seed in his field, but while everybody was asleep, an enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and then went away. So when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared as well. And the slaves of the householder came and said to him, 'Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? Where, then, did these weeds come from?' He answered, 'An enemy has done this.' The slaves said to him, 'Then do you want us to go and gather them?' But he replied, 'No; for in gathering the weeds you would uproot the wheat along with them. Let both of them grow together until the harvest; and at harvest time I will tell the

³ Written by Elise Feltrin, **Gathering**, Pentecost 1, 2023, p. 48. Used with permission.

reapers, collect the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn.” Then he left the crowds and went into the house. And his disciples approached him, saying, “Explain to us the parable of the weeds of the field.” He answered, “The one who sows the good seeds are the children of the kin-dom; the weeds are the children of the evil one, and the enemy who sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are angels. Just as the weeds are collected and burned up with fire, so will it be at the end of the age. The Son of God will send the angels, and they will collect out of the kin-dom all causes of sin and all evildoers, and they will throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kin-dom of their Creator. Let anyone with ears listen!”

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

Thanks be to God.

Anthem: *Deep Peace*, by Andrew Carter

Jacqueline Hernandez, Raydene Koch, soloists

Sermon: *Harvests*

Rev. Dirk Jessen

Grateful Response

Hymn: *The Lone, Wild Bird*

Voices United 384

**The lone, wild bird in lofty flight
is still with you, nor leaves your sight.
And I am yours! I rest in you,
Great Spirit, come, rest in me, too.**

**The ends of earth are in your hand,
the sea's dark deep and far off land.
And I am yours! I rest in you,
Great Spirit, come, rest in me too.**

**Each secret thought is known to you,
the path I walk my whole life through;
my days, my deeds, my hopes, my fears,
my deepest joys, my silent tears.**

**In secret depths you knit my frame,
before my birth you spoke my name;
within my soul, as close as breath,
so near to me, to life, in death.**

**O search me, God, my heart reveal,
renew my life, my spirit heal;
for I am yours, I rest in you.
Great Spirit, come, rest in me too.**

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.**

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:

Gracious God, we bring our gifts this morning, amazed and gratified that they are considered worthy of your use. Bless these gifts, O God, and bless us in the giving. Amen.⁴

Hymn: *Be Thou My Vision*

Voices United 642

**Be thou my vision, O joy of my heart;
naught be all else to me, save that thou art,
thou my best thought, by day or by night,
waking or sleeping, thy presence my light.
Be thou my wisdom, my calm in all strife;
I ever with thee, and thou in my life;
thou loving parent, thy child may I be,
thou in me dwelling, and I one with thee.**

⁴ Written by Fern Gibbard, **Gathering**, Pentecost 1, 2023, p. 50. Used with permission.

**Be thou my battle shield, sword for the fight;
be thou my dignity, thou my delight,
thou my soul's shelter, thou my high tower;
raise thou my heavenward, O power of my power.**

**Riches I heed not, nor vain empty praise,
thou mine inheritance, now and always;
thou and thou only, first in my heart,
great God of heaven, my treasure thou art.**

**Great God of heaven, after victory won,
may I reach heaven's joys, O bright heaven's sun!
Heart of my own heart, whatever befall,
still be my vision, O ruler of all.**

Commissioning:

As we go: let us experience the voice of God telling us that we are beloved. Let us go, living into our fullest selves, helping others lean into that same calling. Let us go, remembering that we are blessed by God, the mother and father of us all, and by Christ whose body we are as we travel, and by the Spirit who binds us all together. Amen.⁵

Postlude: *Blessed Assurance* by Phoebe Palmer Knapp arr. by Mark Hayes
Raydene Koch, piano

Questions for Reflection:

What types of “harvests” have you experienced in your life? What made them bad or good in terms of quality or quantity? What did you have control over and what did you have no control over?

R-W Report

**Next Sunday
Sunday, July 30, 2023
Pentecost 9**

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

Romans 8:26-27 • The Spirit intercedes.

Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52 • Five parables.

Sermon: Everything counts in small amounts.

One drop of rain won't really make a difference right? One rotten apple won't ruin the bunch right? What about one small mustard seed? All of God's creation is interconnected. More often than not we feel helpless and hopeless in changing the world, we convince ourselves that our one vote won't make a difference. What happens when we trust that the Spirit is at work behind the scenes? In Romans it says “The Spirit helps us in our weakness...(for) we know that all things work together for the

⁵ Written by Peter Chynoweth, **Gathering**, Pentecost 1, 2023, p. 52. Used with permission.

good of those who love God..." How will our love for God impact the world in which we live?

Music: Dr. Allan Bevan, organist; Raydene Koch, soloist

WEEK AT A GLANCE

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
	Gratitude Meeting - Club Room	5:00 pm
Thur July 27	Labyrinth Walk - Memorial Hall	11:00 am

ON THE HORIZON

Sun July 30	Sunday Worship - Sanctuary & Online	10:30 am
	Fellowship - Memorial Hall	11:45 am
	Membership Class - Club Room	12:30 pm
Tues Aug 1	Scripture Reflections - Club Room & Zoom	12:00 pm
Wed Aug 2	Canterbury Worship - Away	10:30 am

R-W News & Notes


GREEN BITES

Waste Not, Want Not was a well-known saying decades ago. We use the phrase nowadays to refer most often to food. In years gone by, Waste Not Want Not meant much more than food only. For instance, clothing was patched, pillow slips and other items were made from flour sacks, and rugs were designed using strips of wool salvaged from worn-out garments. Let's not forget socks that were knit by hand and darned when holes appeared. Most of the goods mentioned above were re-used whereas now they usually go to the landfill. Mother Earth must be weeping! - Environmental Stewardship Group

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**.

THE LABYRINTH THIS SUMMER

The Labyrinth at Robertson-Wesley will be available on three Thursday mornings in Memorial Hall: **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.

STAFF

Rev. Karen is away **July 23-29** on vacation and study leave and Dr. Allan Bevan is away from **July 21-26** on vacation.

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.

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.

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.

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. 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

Why are parables so harsh? Both last week and this week the Gospel reading consists of two distinct parts: a parable itself and an interpretation of the parable. The parable tends to be straightforward in its descriptions and observations. However, as have many, many generations of hearers/readers, we perceive that there is also another level beyond the obvious, almost straightforward meaning. In both readings, the explanation of each of the parables seems to be more than a little judgemental and takes many of us into difficult places, in the first case it's a sense that maybe we are bad soil and should be more fruitful than we are and in the second case that maybe we are weeds that will ultimately go up in judgement flames. Neither is helpful or edifying. How *do* we take the Bible seriously, but not literally? One thing to remember is that the first people to hear and retell these stories were living in a very different time, one dominated by the impression that the final judgement was coming literally any day. This judgement day was seen as necessary as it was inevitable and that it was vital that the correct side be chosen, and chosen immediately! Now, after almost two millennia without this day having come, many of us are taken aback by and sometimes even take offence to, words that sound harsh and unhelpful, especially since they were ostensibly spoken by Jesus whom we understand to be supremely gentle and kind. Welcome to the world of a faith based on ancient texts!

Thanks today to our music leaders Jacqueline Hernandez and Raydene Koch.

Cover Image

Cover image is of *The Sower* by Vincent van Gogh (1888)

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

