

An Affirming Congregation of The United Church of Canada

2023 Aug 13

**Sacrament of Communion** 

Pentecost 11



#### Welcome and Inclusion

We open our hearts and our church family to all people in our community regardless of ethnicity, economic circumstances, sexual orientation, age, gender identity, or differing abilities. 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.



## Friends in Christ

Prelude: *Grand Choeur*, by Theodore Dubois

**Embracing Our Spirit** 

Call to Worship:

Every morning, God calls you to be, and, when you rise and as you become, God gives a promise:

As I live and as you live, I will never abandon you.

And each day, we may respond:

As you live and as I live, I will go with you.

And each day, we may say to one another:

As God lives and as I live, let us worship and serve together. Amen.<sup>1</sup>

Hymn: Come and Find the Quiet Centre

Voices United 374

Dr. Allan Bevan, organ

Come and find the quiet centre in the crowded life we lead, find the room for hope to enter, find the frame where we are freed: clear the chaos and the clutter, clear our eyes that we can see, all the things that really matter, be at peace and simply be.

Silence is a friend who claims us, cools the heat and slows the pace, God it is who speaks and names us, knows our being, face to face, making space within our thinking, lifting shades to show the sun, raising courage when we're shrinking, finding scope for faith begun.

In the Spirit let us travel, open to each other's pain, let our loves and fears unravel, celebrate the space we gain: there's a place for deepest dreaming, there's a time for heart to care, in the Spirit's lively scheming there is always room to spare!

Prayer for Transformation:

O God, where hearts are fearful and limited:

grant freedom and daring.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Written by Maggie Watts-Hammond, **Gathering**, Pentecost 1, 2017, p. 29. Used with permission.

Where anxiety is infectious and widening:

grant peace and reassurance.

Where impossibilities close every door and window:

grant imagination and resistance.

Where distrust reshapes every understanding:

grant healing and transformation.

Where spirits are daunted and dimmed:

grant soaring wings and strengthened dreams. Amen.<sup>2</sup>

Coming into God's Presence

Rev. Karen Bridges

# God's Holy Word

Hymn: Jesus Calls Us O'er the Tumult

Voices United 562

Jesus calls us; o'er the tumult of our life's wild restless sea, day by day his clear voice sounding, saying, "Christian, follow me."

Long ago apostles heard it by the Galilean lake, turned from home and toil and kindred, leaving all for Jesus' sake.

Jesus calls us from the worship of the vain world's golden store, from each idol that would keep us, saying, "Christian, love me more."

In our joys and in our sorrows, days of toil and hours of ease, still he calls, in cares and pleasures, "Christian, love me more than these."

Jesus calls us: by your mercies, Saviour, may we hear your call, give our hearts to your obedience, serve and love you best of all.

Scriptures:

Ilona Bevan

1 Kings 19:9-18 • Elijah meets God.

At that place Elijah came to a cave, and spent the night there. Then the word of the Lord came to him, saying, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" He answered, 'I have been very zealous for the Lord, the God of hosts; for the Israelites have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Keri K. Wehlander, **Joy is Our Banquet**, (Etobicoke: The United Church Publishing House, 1996), p. 33.

your prophets with the sword. I alone am left, and they are seeking my life, to take it away." The Lord said, "Go out and stand on the mountain before the Lord, for the Lord is about to pass by." Now there was a great wind, so strong that it was splitting mountains and breaking rocks in pieces before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake; and after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire; and after the fire a sound of sheer silence. When Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave. Then there came a voice to him that said, 'What are you doing here, Elijah?" He answered, "I have been very zealous for the Lord, the God of hosts; for the Isrelites have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword. I alone am left, and they are seeking my life, to take it away." Then the Lord said to him, "Go, return on your way to the wilderness of Damascus; when you arrive, you shall anoint Hazael as king over Aram. Also you shall anoint Jehu son of Nimshi as king over Israel; and you shall anoint Elisha son of Shaphat of Abel-meholah as prophet in your place. Whoever escapes from the sword of Hazael, Jehu shall kill; and whoever escapes from the sword of Jehu, Elisha shall kill. Yet I will leave seven thousand in Israel, all the knees that have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth that has not kissed him."

Matthew 14:22-33 • Jesus walks across stormy waters.

Immediately Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, but by that time the boat, battered by the waves, was far from the land, for the wind was against them. And early in the morning he came walking toward them on the sea. But when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified, saying, "It is a ghost!" And they cried out in fear. But immediately Jesus spoke to them, and said, "Take heart, it is I; do not be afraid." Peter answered him, "Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water.' He said, "Come." So Peter got out of the boat, started walking on the water, and came toward Jesus. But when he noticed the strong wind, he became frightened, and beginning to sink, he cried out, "Lord, save me!" Jesus immediately reached out his hand and caught him, saying to him, "You of little faith, why did you doubt?" When they got into the boat, the wind ceased. And those in the boat worshipped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God.

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

Thanks be to God.

Duet: The Power of Your Love, by Geoff Bullock arr. by Lloyd Larson

Ilona Bevan and Marilee Stephens, soloists

Sermon: Prayer Grounds Us Rev. Karen Bridges

# Grateful Response

Hymn: We Will Take What You Offer

More Voices 196

We will take what you offer, we will live by your word: we will love one another and be fed by you, Lord. We will take what you offer, we will live by your word: we will love one another and be fed you. Lord. (3x)

**Pastoral Prayers** 

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.

A Gratitude Minute:

Sylvia Duffus

### 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:

You have called our names and we have responded with song, prayer, and financial offerings. Now in the silence, hear our commitment of gifts of our time and efforts. (silence)

It is our hope that these offerings will allow all of us to hear you address us more often and to respond more readily with gratitude and praise to you, and kindness to all your creation. Amen.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Written by Karen Boivin, **Gathering**, Pentecost 1, 2017, p. 39. Used with permission.

# Sacrament of Holy Communion

All who worship with us today, regardless of age or church membership, are invited and welcome to partake in this sacrament. For people who worship online, please prepare whatever is available in your house, a cracker, bread, muffin, and juice, wine, or water. People in the sanctuary will be offered bread and grape juice. There is a gluten free option available.

The voice of God speaks: "Listen, all you who thirst, come to the waters, and you that have no money, come buy and eat! Come buy wine and milk without money and without price. Why do you spend your money on bread which fails to satisfy? Come to me, that you may have life."

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up to God.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

Source and Sustainer of life, we gather at this table to offer thanks, and to taste afresh the wonder of a holy love. In companionship with all creatures, we are one in gratitude for the gift and mystery of life, and one in longing for a world reborn.

Creator and Friend, we praise you for your presence in and with your creation, ever drawing it toward healing and wholeness. In our joy, you are the overflowing cup: in our need, you are the bread by which we journey on. With all who abide in your presence and care, we lift our voices to you:

Holy, Holy, Holy:

Holy, holy, holy God, power of life and love!

Heaven and earth are full of your glory!

Hosanna through the ages!

Blest is the One who comes to bring your justice to earth!

Remembering Jesus at Table:

Let us remember together that vision of God's reign shown to us in Jesus at table:

He shared food with followers and friends,

with saints and sinners,

with crowds of thousands on the hillside,

and a few friends in an upper room.

On the night before he died, he had supper with his companions.

He took a loaf of bread, and after giving thanks, he broke it, and gave it to them, saying:

"Take, eat. Do this in remembrance of me."

Then, he took a cup, and after giving thanks, he passed it among them, saying:

"Drink this. Do this in remembrance of me."

Through this loaf and cup, Jesus lives within us.

In word and deed, Jesus lives among us.

Eternal God, we unite in this covenant of faith, as we break bread and share the cup, giving thanks for your love in Jesus, the Christ. We spread your table with these gifts of the earth and of our labour. We present to you our very lives, committed to your service on behalf of all people.

Therefore we proclaim the mystery of our faith:

Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

We pray you, God of Love, send your Holy Spirit upon us and what we do here, that we and these gifts, touched by your Spirit may be signs of life and love to each other, and to all the world.

Through Christ, with Christ, and in Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory is yours, God most holy, now and forever. Amen.

Sharing the Bread and the Cup

Meditation: Ave Maria, by Guilio Caccini arr. by Patrick Liebergen

Marilee Stephens, soloist

Prayer after Communion:

Gracious God, may your gifts of love transform and enliven us that we may live lives of thanksgiving. May your presence among us provoke such longing for your realm, that we will never be satisfied until the whole earth knows your justice, your peace, and your love. In Christ's name, we pray. Amen.

Hymn: What a Friend We Have in Jesus

Voices United 664

What a friend we have in Jesus, all our sins and griefs to bear! What a privilege to carry everything to God in prayer! O what peace we often forfeit, O what needless pain we bear, all because we do not carry everything to God in prayer.

Have we trials and temptations? Is there trouble anywhere? We should never be discouraged; take it to the Lord in prayer. Can we find a friend so faithful, who will all our sorrows share? Jesus knows our every weakness; take it to the Lord in prayer.

Are we weak and heavy laden, cumbered with a load of care?

Christ the Saviour is our refuge; take it to the Lord in prayer.
Do our friends despise, forsake us?
Are we tempted to despair?
Jesus' strength will shield our weakness, and we'll find new courage there.

### Commissioning:

Go into this new week, ready to be surprised by God. May God startle you out of complacency and into compassion, awaken you to understand all you have to give, and amaze you with the awe-inspiring scope of God's care for you and for this world. Amen.<sup>4</sup>

Postlude: For the Beauty of the Earth, by W. C. Dix

Dr. Allan Bevan, keyboard, Ron Soans, guitar

#### Question for Reflection:

When has your faith given you the courage to do something you didn't think was possible?

# R-W Report

## Next Sunday Sunday, Aug 20, 2023 Pentecost 12

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

Matthew 15:10-28 • Being ritually unclean.

Sermon: Inside Out/Outside In

Within the culture of Jesus' time, there were those who insisted that the ills of society were due to certain traditional religious laws not being observed rigorously enough. More specifically, some were trying to claim moral superiority (and some measure of power) by being hyper vigilant about what, how and with whom they and those around them ate. For many it became an obsession, a preoccupation that did anything but bring them closer to God. Being the radical that he was ("radical" meaning *not* extremist, but "going back to the roots" of a relationship with God), Jesus insisted that food was really only an, umm, "throughput" and distinctly not the source of a barrier toward God. Instead he insisted that "evil intentions" (NRSV) or "evil thoughts" (NIV) that are within the depths of people were what truly separate us from God. It's so much easier to judge yourself or someone else for their diet, but this does not touch the true core of our separation from and ultimately connection to God. Interestingly and even vexingly, Jesus was a man of his time which included a certain amount of racial/cultural prejudice and even misogyny. This story reminds us that even Jesus needed to be challenged on "right relations." To his credit he accepted the challenge.

Music: Dr. Allan Bevan, organist; Jacqueline Hernandez, soloist

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Written by Gill Le Fevre, **Gathering**, Pentecost 1, 2023, p. 53. Used with permission.

#### WEEK AT A GLANCE

Sun Aug 13	Sunday Worship - Sanctuary & Online	10:30 am
_	Fellowship - Memorial Hall	11:45 am
	Membership Class - Club Room	12:30 pm
Tues Aug 15	Scripture Reflections - Club Room & Zoom	12:00 pm
_	Board Meeting - Room 11 & Zoom	7:00 pm
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	ON THE HORIZON	
Sun Aug 20	Book Sale - Lawn	10:00 am
_	Sunday Worship - Sanctuary & Online	10:30 am
	Fellowship - Memorial Hall	11:45 am
	Membership Class - Club Room	12:30 pm
Tues Aug 22	Scripture Reflections - Club Room & Zoom	12:00 pm
Thurs Aug 24	Labyrinth Walk - Memorial Hall	11:00 am

### **Volunteer Opportunities**

#### YOUTH LEADERS

We are putting together a team of leaders to work with the youth of the church (Grade 7-12). Youth leaders with the support of the ministers gather with the youth on Sunday morning during worship for a discussion time about our faith. Curriculum and discussion topics are provided. The youth also meet twice a month on a Saturday night generally from 7:00 - 9:30 pm for a time of fun and activities. We like to have a team of 4 leaders. If you are interested please contact Rev. Karen at karen.bridges@rwuc.org

#### GARDEN PATCH & KIDS' CHURCH LEADERS & VOLUNTEERS

We are seeking some dedicated volunteers to work with the youngest in our midst. On most Sundays from **Sept – June** there is programming for the children in the basement of the church. The programming includes stories, games, activities, crafts, baking, discussion etc. The curriculum is provided. It is most helpful to have 2 people with each group. The Garden Patch is for children who are out of diapers (3 years old to Kindergarten). Kids' Church is Grade 1-6, and if there are enough children it is helpful to split that group into Grade 1-3 and Grade 4-6. We like to have a team of people who lead these groups and we set up a schedule to help spread the work. Please contact Rev. Karen Karen.bridges@rwuc.org if you are interested in leading over the next program year **Sept 2023 – June 2024.** 

#### LIVESTREAM HELP

We are looking for all ages volunteers (youth to seniors!) to run the livestream on **Sundays**, from 9:30 - 11:30 am. The livestream process is a simple one that anyone can learn. The position is flexible, and if we get enough volunteers, weeks can be alternated. Having volunteers in this role is crucial to the ongoing success of the livestream. If you are interested please contact Brad at brad.campbell@rwuc.org. Brad will be away from **August 14-24** and **September 3-8**, so expect a response once he returns.

### R-W News & Notes

#### **STAFF**

Rev. Dirk Jessen is on holidays and will return Aug 15.

#### **BOOK SALE**

Our second book sale is on **August 20** and we are hoping to do as well as we did in early July. We have received 40 boxes of books from Highlands United Church to assist in the book sale - a great gift and follows the art we gave to their Church for their sale last year.

We hope after church, on **August 20th** you will drop by our "bookstore" located on the grass in front of our church. Sheila & Sylvia

#### 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 Thursday morning **August 24** from 11:00 am to noon in Memorial Hall. Take some time on this midday occasion 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.

#### 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.

#### WORKSHOP: WHAT IS COMMUNION?

Have you ever wanted to learn more about what Communion is and why we do what we do in the way we do it? On Sunday **Sept 24** from 12:00 - 1:30 pm in the sanctuary Rev. Karen Bridges and Brian Webb will lead the participants through various forms of communion with the opportunity to explore, ask questions and have conversations about the meaning of this sacrament and the role of ritual in our faith traditions. Please contact Rev. Karen if you are planning on attending or sign up at www.rwuc.org/worshipworkshop

#### ART SALE DONATIONS NEEDED

We are collecting art for the Art Sale on **October 28**. Art is in the eye of the beholder - we are collecting paintings, pottery, china, etc. Please deliver to the church or if you need the art to be picked up please call Pat or Sheila at 780-481-0056.

#### GREEN BITES

The Minister of Environment and Climate Change Steven Guilbault has said "We know that one of the best tools we have to fight climate change is nature". Billions of trees will be planted in the next few years, but let's not forget that our wonderful Prairie Grasslands also absorbs carbon. More than eighty percent of Canada's original Prairie Grassland has already been lost. The equivalent of almost three hundred CFL football fields disappears every single day, thus reducing even more the carbon absorption capacity of Mother Earth. It's easy to speak up for trees, with their trunks reaching towards the heavens, and their branches swaying in the wind. But prairie grasses sway too, and call us to notice them. Let's remember that their gift to the health of the planet is no less important. -The Environmental Stewardship Group

#### **COFFEE QUESTIONS**

We have been using ordinary grocery store coffee for our Fellowship time after church. Is there any interest in changing that up to Organic Fair Trade Coffee? For the next couple of weeks we will be serving coffee from Planet Bean in Guelph. Grown without chemicals and hand-picked in the shade of tropical forests, this Fairtrade Certified coffee is grown on small family farms, so workers make a better living through fair prices, community development and environmental stewardship. Habitat for birds and pollinators is maintained, including migratory songbirds from Canada which winter in the forests. Seems like a plus plus plus ...and of course, it is more expensive than supermarket coffee? Are you willing to pay a bit more? Come to Fellowship after church and have a taste! -Tom (interim coffee maker)

# Worship Notes

Thanks today to our vocal leaders Ilona Bevan and Marilee Stephens, and guitarist Ron Soans.

Elijah is a prophet and his name means "The Lord is my God." Elijah served God in the face of fierce opposition. He is known for his passion, and courage. He is also known for his anger, depression and fear at different points in his call as a prophet. Elijah finds an apprentice, a young boy named Elisha which means "God saves."

# Cover Image

Cover image is taken by Jane Chesebrough.

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