



An Affirming Congregation of The United Church of Canada

2023 September 10

Pentecost 15



Welcome and Inclusion

We open our hearts and our church family to all people in our community regardless of sexual orientation, age, gender identity, differing abilities, ethnicity, or economic circumstances. 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: *Suite in D Minor*, by G. F. Handel

1. Allemande 2. Courante 3. Sarabande 4. Variation 1 5. Variation 2 6. Gigue

Dr. Allan Bevan, piano

Embracing Our Spirit

Introit: *All People That On Earth Do Dwell*, arr. by R. Vaughan Williams

Choir of Robertson-Wesley

Opening Prayer:

Creator God we come before you today

with a spirit of innocence.

We stand before you, O God

with a spirit of innocence.

We notice the potential and the gift of each person we meet

with a spirit of innocence.

We listen to the possibilities and seek hope in God's call

with a spirit of innocence.

We share the abundance of all we receive

with a spirit of innocence.

We reach out to one another in friendship and respect

with a spirit of innocence.

We worship God this day!

Amen.

Hymn: *Creator God You Gave Us Life*

More Voices 27

Creator God you gave us life,

your image formed within our souls,

yet through the mist of time and space,

we search for that which makes us whole.

Through hands that paint majestic skies,

and voices chanting melody,

with words that reach beyond the page,

we comprehend your mystery.

In ev'ry flow'r and ev'ry tree,

we see your great diversity,

yet greater still we see your love,

expressed in our humanity.

Through hands that paint majestic skies,

and voices chanting melody,

with words that reach beyond the page,

we comprehend your mystery.

When with our hearts, our hands our minds,

we share our gifts with all the world,

our spirits soar beyond the veil,

to touch the very face of God.

**Through hands that paint majestic skies,
and voices chanting melody,
with words that reach beyond the page,
we comprehend your mystery.**

Coming into God's Presence

Rev. Karen Bridges

Life Passages

Sacrament of Baptism:

Prayer for the Holy Spirit (*in unison*)

**Eternal God, whose Son the Servant-Lord Jesus Christ has
commissioned us to make disciples of people of all nations baptizing
them in your name. May your Spirit be upon us and what we do, that
this water may be a sign for all of new life in Christ, in whose name
we pray. Amen.**

Congregation's Promise (*standing*)

**We will continue to support you, walk with you, and grow with you.
With God's help we will live out our baptism as a loving community
in Jesus Christ: nurturing one another in faith, upholding one
another in prayer, encouraging one another in God's work.**

Recommitment: *A New Creed*

Voices United 918

Please note that the last line of the creed (omitted in some of the hymn books) is:

We are not alone.

We live in God's world.

We believe in God who has created and is creating,

Who has come in Jesus the word made flesh,

To reconcile and make new.

Who works in us and others by the Spirit.

We trust in God.

We are called to be the church;

To celebrate God's presence

To live with respect in creation

To love and serve others

To seek justice and resist evil

To proclaim Jesus crucified and risen

Our judge and our hope.

In life, in death, in life beyond death

God is with us,

We are not alone.

Thanks be to God.

Blessing: (*sung*)

Voices United 454

**May God who creates you give you light;
May God who sustains you make you wise;
May God who protects you give you joy;
May God who surrounds you give you peace.**

God's Holy Word

Prayer of Illumination:

Open our spirits to receive the stories of your people, O God. Open our hearts to notice our own story within them. Open our minds that we might be transformed by the act of listening and receiving. **Amen.**¹

Scripture:

Jericho Ferguson

Genesis 2:4b-25 • The Garden of Eden

In the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens, when no plant of the field was yet in the earth and no herb of the field had yet sprung up - for the Lord God has not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was no one to till the ground; but a stream would rise from the earth, and water the whole face of the ground - then the Lord God formed human from the dust of the ground, and breathed into their nostrils the breath of life; and the human became a living being. And the Lord God planted a garden in Eden, in the east; and there God put the human whom God had formed. Out of the ground the Lord God made to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food, the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. A river flows out of Eden to water the garden, and from there it divides and becomes four branches. The name of the first is Pishon; it is the one that flows around the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold; and the gold of that land is good; bdellium and onyx stone are there. The name of the second river is Gihon; it is the one that flows around the whole land of Cush. The name of the third river is Tigris, which flows east of Assyria. And the fourth river is the Euphrates. The Lord God took the human and put them in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it. And the Lord God commanded the human, "You may freely eat of every tree of the garden; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for on the day that you eat of it you shall die." Then the Lord God said, "It is not good that the human should be alone; I will make a helper as a partner." So out of the ground the Lord God formed every animal of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to the human to see what the human would call them; and whatever the human called every living creature, that was its name. The human gave names to all cattle, and to the birds of the air, and to every animal of the field; but for the human there was not found a helper as a partner. So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the human, and they slept; then God took one of the ribs and closed up its place with flesh. And the rib that the Lord God had taken from the human he made into another human and brought them to each other. Then the human said, "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh". And the humans were both naked, and were not ashamed.

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

Thanks be to God.

Duet: *He's Got the Whole World In His Hands*, arr. by Stephen DeCesare

Raydene Koch and Marilee Stephens, soloists

Sermon: *God is present, always!*

Rev. Karen Bridges

¹ Written by Tori Mullin, **Gathering**, Pentecost 2, 2022, p. 37. Used with permission.

**Would you bless our homes and families,
Source of life who calls us here;
in our world of stress and tension
teach us love that conquers fear.
Help us learn to love each other
with a love that constant stays;
teach us when we face our troubles,
love's expressed in many ways.**

**When our way is undemanding,
let us use the time that's ours
to delight in simple pleasures,
sharing joys in gentle hours.
When our way is anxious walking
and a heavy path we plod,
teach us trust in one another
and in you, our gracious God.**

**From the homes in which we're nurtured
with the love that shapes us there,
teach us, God, to claim as family
every one whose life we share.
And through all that life may offer,
may we in your love remain;
may the love we share in families
be alive to praise your name.**

**Let us reach beyond the boundaries
of our daily thought and care
till the family you have chosen
spills its love out everywhere.
Help us learn to love each other
with a love that constant stays;
teach us when we face our troubles,
love's expressed in many ways.**

Grateful Response

Pastoral Prayers
Sung Lord's Prayer:

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name.
Your kingdom come,
your will be done on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins,
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil
for the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours,
now and forever.**

Rev. Dirk Jessen
Voices United p. 959

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 by scanning the QR code. Tax receipts are issued at the end of the year for donations over \$20 if your name and address are provided.



Offertory: *Touch the Earth Lightly*

Voices United 307 vs 3&4

**Let there be greening, birth from the burning,
water that blesses and air that is sweet,
health in God's garden, hope in God's children,
regeneration that peace will complete.**

**God of all living, God of all loving,
God of the seedling, the snow and the sun,
teach us, deflect us, Christ reconnect us,
using us gently and making us one.**

Prayer of Gratitude:

What do we bring to God?

The work of our hands. The work of our minds.

The work of our hearts.

What does God bring to us?

The work of our hands. The work of our minds.

The work of our hearts.

With what do we worship God?

**With the work of our hands, the work of our minds,
and the work of our hearts.**

Does God accept what we offer, as imperfect as it might be?

Yes!

In this moment - in every moment of our lives!

Alleluia, amen.²

Blessings & Covenant:

Let us answer the call to discipleship this day by proclaiming:

I am a disciple of Jesus.

I am open to learning.

I am committed to praying.

I am ready to share my gifts with others.

We are blessed and will be a blessing in the world.

Hymn: *This Is God's Wondrous World*

Voices United 296

With Introduction and Interludes by Samuel Metzger

**This is God's wondrous world,
and to my listening ears
all nature sings, and round me rings
the music of the spheres.**

² Written by Richard Bott, **Gathering**, Pentecost 2, 2023, p. 39. Used with permission.

**This is God's wondrous world;
I rest me in the thought
of rocks and trees, of skies and seas,
God's hand the wonders wrought.**

**This is God's wondrous world:
the birds their carols raise,
the morning light, the lily white,
declare their Maker's praise.**

**This is God's wondrous world:
God shines in all that's fair;
in the rustling grass or mountain pass,
God's voice speaks everywhere.**

**This is God's wondrous world:
O let me ne'er forget
that though the wrong seems oft so strong,
God is the ruler yet.**

**This is God's wondrous world:
why should my heart be sad?
Let voices sing, let the heavens ring:
God reigns, let earth be glad!**

Commissioning:

Focus outward, into the beyond. Focus inward, into your soul.

Feel God's presence outside and within.

Feel your life in the Spirit, and give thanks to God.

Thank you, God!

For inviting us to be family. For giving us new life. For sharing with us the Christ. For loving us, no matter what. For healing and wholeness and true love, give thanks to God.

Thank you, God! Amen.³

Postlude: *The Rejoicing*, by Charles Callahan

Dr. Allan Bevan, organ

Questions for Reflection:

How do you know that God is present?

How has God's presence guided you and strengthened you?

R-W Report

Next Sunday

Sunday, Sept 17, 2023

Pentecost 16

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

Genesis 18:1-15, 21:1-7 • Isaac born to Sarah

Sermon: God in Those Around Us

The main story we hear today is of God and a couple of other heavenly beings visiting Abraham and Sarah incognito in the form of human travellers. As

³ Written by Richard Bott, *Gathering*, Pentecost 2, 2023, p. 42. Used with permission.

continues to be the case in many cultures, care of and hospitality toward travelling strangers was for Sarah and Abraham a deeply held cultural value. Apparently as a matter of course, Abraham and Sarah treat the trio not with grudging acceptance, but with genuine thoughtful generosity. As can happen in good visits, there is deep conversation and humour shared between guests and hosts. As is also possible, this visit is remembered later because of its importance. In this case, the visit also plays a role in the naming of Sarah and Abraham's first-born. Do you have an experience of giving or receiving hospitality that you remember as being close to a holy encounter?

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

WEEK AT A GLANCE

Sun Sept 10	Sunday Worship - Sanctuary & Online	10:30 am
	Fellowship & Bake Sale- Memorial Hall	11:45 am
Mon Sept 11	Spirited Art Studio - Art Studio	7:00 pm
Tues Sept 12	Scripture Reflections - Club Room & Zoom	12:00 pm
	Property Meeting Committee - Room 11	1:00 pm
	UCW - Memorial Hall	1:30 pm
	Finance Committee Meeting - Club Room	7:00 pm
Wed Sept 13	Spirited Art Studio - Art Studio	1:30 pm
	R-W Choir Rehearsal - Sanctuary	7:30 pm
Thurs Sept 14	Men's Group - Room 11	9:30 am
	Nova Bells - Lower Hall	5:15 pm
	R-W Ringers - Lower Hall	6:45 pm

ON THE HORIZON

Sun Sept 17	Sunday Worship - Sanctuary & Online	10:30 am
	Kids' Church - Garden Patch and Air Room	10:30 am
	Youth Discussion - Youth Room	10:30 am
	Congregational Meeting - Sanctuary	11:30 am
	Photo Directory Photos - Club Room	11:30 am
	Fellowship - Memorial Hall	11:45 am
	Wild Church - Away	1:00 pm
Mon Sept 18	Spirited Art Studio - Art Studio	7:00 pm
Tues Sept 19	Scripture Reflections - Club Room & Zoom	12:00 pm
	R-W Board Meeting - Room 11	7:00 pm
Wed Sept 20	Spirited Art Studio - Art Studio	1:30 pm
	R-W Choir Rehearsal - Sanctuary/Lower Hall	7:30 pm
Thurs Sept 21	Nova Bells - Lower Hall	5:15 pm
	R-W Ringers - Lower Hall	6:45 pm
Sat Sept 23	Storytelling Workshop - Room 11	1:00 pm

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. We like to have a team of people who lead these groups and 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**.

R-W News & Notes

UPCOMING CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

Sunday **Sept 17th** immediately after the worship (11:30 am) in the sanctuary there will be a Congregational Meeting to vote on the recommendation of the R-W Board to have Rev. Karen Bridges move into the *Lead Minister of the Community of Faith and Community Development* position as outlined in the new ministry model which was approved on June 4, 2023. This will be the only agenda item. If you would like a copy of the Community of Faith Profile which outlines the Minister Job Descriptions please contact the Church office or download a copy from this link. If you have questions please speak with Rev. Dirk Jessen or Jonathan Gregory - Robertson-Wesley Board

NEW NAMETAGS

Please take a moment during fellowship to put your name down should you want a nametag, Elyse will then make typed nametags, so please print clearly.

A NEW WAY TO SIGN UP AND VOLUNTEER

R-W has signed up for an online sign-up service to make it easier for coordinators, volunteers, and future volunteers to sign-up to get involved at R-W. Visit rwuc.org/volunteer to check it out or use the tablet in the outer office.

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 - 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

R-W MEN'S GROUP

The Robertson-Wesley Men's Group is having its first gathering for the season of fall 2023 through spring 2024. The first gathering will be held on Thursday, **September 14**; in the basement Room 11; from 9:30 am to 11:00 am. The agenda will consist of discussions as to activities which may be undertaken by the group over the coming year. All are welcome. Bring snacks if available - coffee will be provided. Any questions call Jim Triscott at 780-991-8837.

PHOTO DIRECTORY

Stop worrying that you have forgotten someone's name, or never knew their name in the first place! It's time to put a name to the face and compile a new photo directory of people who participate at Robertson-Wesley United. Please consider having your photo included (or updated) in the fall edition. It doesn't matter if you have been here for one week or 90 years... please drop by the Club Room starting at 10:00 am or after the Sunday service starting at 11:30 am to get your photo taken on Sundays: **Sept 17** or **24**. The photo directory is produced right here— no cost to you, no photos to purchase, you will receive a directory once it has been compiled. Let's learn each other's names together!

BETWEEN THE AISLES

Hot off the presses! Check out the latest issue of Between the Aisles online at rwuc.org/between-the-aisles or pick up a copy in church.

UCW (United Church Women)

Next Tuesday, **September 12** at 1:30 pm, Robertson-Wesley UCW and Friends will gather for the first meeting of the fall. Come for coffee, tea and goodies. Come to meet friends and to talk about what we want UCW to do and be in the coming year. Or, if you haven't come before, come to meet us!

SPIRITED ARTS STORYTELLING WORKSHOP: Telling Your Stories

Saturday, **September 23** from 1:00 - 3:30 pm in Room 11. If you have a story to tell but aren't sure how to approach it, this workshop's for you. If you aren't sure you have any stories worth telling, this workshop's for you. We'll mine life experience for some story gems and do a bit of polishing. While our focus will be on personal stories and oral storytelling, you could absolutely apply the techniques to fiction, to written stories. Led by well known storyteller Reneé Englot. Please register at rwuc.org/workshops

WILD CHURCH

Have you joined a Wild Church gathering yet?! Wild Church is an all-age communal practice of learning to converse with nature in order to experience sacred transformation and restore connection with the web of life. We worship next on the theme, "Autumn Equinox," at Paul Kane Park (wheelchair and stroller accessible) on **September 17** at 1:00 pm. Rain or shine! Contact us at wildchurch@rwuc.org. Follow us on Instagram @wildchurchyeg

GREEN BITES

Many older people in Canada have childhood memories of seeing the Northern Lights, the Aurora Borealis, in the night sky. However, nowadays the Northern Lights are seldom seen in cities because of "light pollution". Scientists and others who are especially concerned with the huge increase in artificial lights outdoors have succeeded in establishing Dark Sky Reserves throughout the world. They are places where artificial light is considerably reduced, and the public is welcome to visit and observe the night sky. Edmonton's closest Dark Sky Preserves are Elk Island National Park and Miquelon Park. For more information check out www.albertaparks.ca and the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada's website, rasc.ca. As well, interested Aurora watchers can sign up for alerts via the U of A's www.aurorawatch.ca.

CLOTHING SALE FUNDRAISER

Save the date! The New to You Clothing Sale will be held on **September 30th**. Donations of clothing, shoes, jewellery and other accessories will be accepted one week prior to the sale.

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 pick up please call Pat or Sheila at 780-481-0056.

In the Community

NOT FALLING FOR YOU

Not Falling for You is a free physical activity program for adults 50 and above, aimed at reducing the risk of falling through mobility improving exercises. R-W is collaborating with Alberta Health Services to host these classes on Thursday mornings at 10:00 - 11:00 am from **Sept 21 to Dec 14**.

KINDRED HEARTS CAMBODIA FOUNDATION

Please join Kindred Hearts Cambodia Foundation at their 9th annual Wine and Cheese and Silent Auction fundraiser on Friday, **October 13, 2023!** The evening entertainment will be musician, Martin Kerr and will be catered by Dutch Delicious Bakery. All proceeds will go toward the KHC programs in remote Cambodia. The event will be at Robertson-Wesley United Church, and tickets are only \$20, available at eventbrite.ca or text Leanne Foff 780-278-0603. See you there!

YOUTH CONNECTION SURVEY

The United Church of Canada is trying to learn from young people (ages 13-35 years) about what encourages a sense of connection to the church and what blocks their involvement. Please share this survey with Canadian young people that you know—they don't need to be currently connected with a church in any way! Visit <https://rb.gy/Ok8cd> to take the survey.

Worship Notes

A pleasure to have our choir back at worship today after their summer break. Thank you choir for your leadership! Thanks also to Raydene Koch and Marilee Stephens for their duet and to Ron Soans for his guitar work.

Cover Image

Cover image is a picture of the mural created by the children of Robertson-Wesley many years ago, painted by Garnet Thomas on the wall in Memorial Hall. This is the children's depiction of the second creation story in Genesis.

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