



An Affirming Congregation of The United Church of Canada

2023 September 17

Creation 2



Welcome and Inclusion

We open our hearts and our church family to all people in our community regardless of economic circumstances, sexual orientation, age, gender identity, differing abilities, or ethnicity. 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 A Major*, by G. P. Telemann 1. Allemande 2. Courante 3. Gigue

Dr. Allan Bevan, piano

Embracing Our Spirit

Introit: *Cantate Domino*, by Giuseppe Pitoni

Choir of Robertson-Wesley

*Cantate Domino canticum novum;
laus ejus in ecclesia sanctorum.
Laetetur Israel in eo qui fecit eum,
et filii Sion exsultent in rege suo.*

O sing unto the Lord a new song:
Praise him in the holy sanctuary.
O Israel be glad in him who made Israel
And the children of Zion rejoice in your King.
-Psalm 148

Call to Worship:

We come to worship this morning, some with joyful hearts, and some with hurting souls.

God is here, ready to celebrate, ready to heal.

We come to worship this morning, some of us tired, some of us full of energy.

God is here, giving us strength, giving us purpose.

We come to worship this morning, some of us feeling right with God and others repentant.

God is here full of grace, full of forgiveness.

We come to worship, some of us full of questions, some of us sure in our faith.

God is here present in doubt, present in assurance.

We come to worship this morning, all of us, knowing...

God is here!¹

Hymn: *Teach Me, God, to Wonder*

Voices United 299

**Teach me, God, to wonder,
teach me, God, to see;
let your world of beauty capture me.
Praise to you be given,
love for you be lived,
life be celebrated, joy you give!**

**Let me, God, be open,
let me loving be;
let your world of people speak to me.
Praise to you be given,
love for you be lived,
life be celebrated, joy you give!**

¹ Written by **Sandra Jenkinson**, Zion, U.C., Sunridge, Ont., **Gathering**, Pentecost 2, 2022, p. 33. Used with permission.

**Let me, God, be ready,
let me be awake,
in your world of loving, my place take.
Praise to you be given,
love for you be lived,
life be celebrated, joy you give!**

**Teach me, God, to know you,
hear you when you speak,
see you in my neighbour when we meet.
Praise to you be given,
love for you be lived,
life be celebrated, joy you give!**

Coming into God's Presence

Rev. Dirk Jessen

God's Holy Word

Prayer of Illumination:

God of the ages, through these passages from long ago, touch us and teach us in the here and now. You are our God and you call us just as you called others long ago. Open our hearts to receive your call this day. Amen.²

Litany: *God of Abraham Litany*, vv. 1-2, 13, 15, 17, by Bernadette Farrell

Claire Rolheiser, Raydene Koch cantors, Choir of Robertson-Wesley

Scripture:

Trisha-Lee Wasmund

Genesis 18:1-15; 21:1-7 • Abraham and Sarah encounter God;

Isaac born to Sarah and Abraham

The Lord appeared to Abraham by the oaks of Mamre, as he sat at the entrance of his tent in the heat of the day. He looked up and saw three people standing near him. When he saw them, he ran from the tent entrance to meet them, and bowed down to the ground. He said, "My lord, if I find favour with you, do not pass by your servant. Let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree. Let me bring a little bread that you may refresh yourselves, and after that you may pass on - since you have come to your servant." So they said, "Do as you have said." And Abraham hastened into the tent to Sarah, and said, "Make ready quickly three measures of choice flour, knead it, and make cakes." Abraham ran to the herd, and took a calf, tender and good, and gave it to the servant, who hastened to prepare it. Then he took curds and milk and the calf that he had prepared, and set it before them; and he stood by them under the tree while they ate. They said to him, "Where is your wife Sarah?" And he said, "There, in the tent." Then one said, "I

² Written by **Beth W. Johnson**, Bridging Waters P.C., Nipawin Ontario, **Gathering**, Pentecost 2, 2022, p. 39. Used with permission.

will surely return to you in due season, and your wife Sarah shall have a son.” And Sarah was listening at the tent entrance behind him. Now Abraham and Sarah were old, advanced in age; it had ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women. So Sarah laughed to herself, saying, “After I have grown old, and my husband is old, shall I have fruitfulness?” The LORD said to Abraham, “Why did Sarah laugh and say, “Shall I indeed bear a child, now that I am old?” Is anything too wonderful for the LORD? At the set time I will return to you, in due season, and Sarah shall have a son.” But Sarah denied saying, “I did not laugh”; for she was afraid. He said, “Oh yes, you did laugh.” The LORD dealt with Sarah as the Lord had said, and the Lord did for Sarah as the LORD had promised. Sarah conceived and bore Abraham a son in his old age, at the time of which God had spoken to him. Abraham gave the name Isaac to his son whom Sarah bore him. And Abraham circumcised his son Isaac when he was eight days old, as God had commanded him. Abraham was a hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him. Now Sarah said, “God has brought laughter to me; everyone who hears will laugh with me.” And she said, “Who would ever have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children? Yet I have borne him a son in his old age.”

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

Thanks be to God.

Solo: *O God of Mercy*, by Simon Lole

Douglas Graham, soloist

Sermon: *God in Those Around Us*

Rev. Dirk Jessen

Hymn: *Laughter Lit the Stars of Morning*

More Voices 190

Tune: Abbot's Leigh VU 512

**Laughter lit the stars of morning singing at the dawn of earth;
angel throngs rejoiced to witness so miraculous a birth.**

**As they marvelled at its wonder, teeming life forms, multi-hued,
tenderly the world God cradled and pronounced it very good.**

**Laughter filled a barren Sarah: “Shall this ancient womb conceive?
When I feel new life within me, only then will I believe!”**

**Sarah’s laughter turned to wonder at the thing that God had done
when her longing arms were cradling Isaac, her beloved son.**

**Laughter sweeps the church assembled as an infant’s cry is heard.
Oil and water seal the promise of God’s covenanting Word.**

**Joy and gratitude and wonder have a loving welcome smiled,
and our hearts in union cradle love embodied, God’s own child.**

**Laughter binds the congregation in the joy of fam’ly grown;
oil and water seal the promise each has made, to be God’s own.
Young and old, we share the wonder of God’s covenant renewed,
our baptismal vows remember, and give thanks, for God is good.**

Grateful Response

Pastoral Prayers

Sung Lord's Prayer:

Rev. Karen Bridges

Voices United p. 959

**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. 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 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:

Generous and abundant God, you fill our lives with blessing. We thank you for meeting our needs for food, shelter, companionship and meaning. We respond with joy and celebration. Our offerings are symbols of our lives. We give our lives back to you now. Where we *can* go, may we be a blessing. Where we *cannot* go, bless these offerings to go for us. Amen.³

³ Written by **Karen Pryznyk**, Okotoks United Church, Okotoks, Alta., **Gathering**, Pentecost 2, 2023, p. 41. Used with permission.

**For the fruit of all creation,
thanks be to God.**

**For the gifts of every nation,
thanks be to God.**

**For the ploughing, sowing, reaping,
silent growth while we are sleeping,
future needs in earth's safe-keeping,
thanks be to God.**

**In the just reward of labour,
God's will is done.**

**In the help we give our neighbour,
God's will is done.**

**In our world-wide task of caring
for the hungry and despairing,
in the harvests we are sharing,
God's will is done.**

**For the harvests of the Spirit,
thanks be to God.**

**For the good we all inherit,
thanks be to God.**

**For the wonders that astound us,
for the truths that still confound us,
most of all that love has found us,
thanks be to God.**

Commissioning:

Go from here and forward into this new week trusting the love of God to guide and support you. Open your hearts to God's presence and your lives to God's purpose, living each day with hope and thanksgiving. Amen. **Amen.**⁴

Postlude: *Be Thou My Vision*, Trad. Irish melody arr. by Larry Shackley

Dr. Allan Bevan and Raydene Koch, piano

Question for Reflection:

Do you have an experience of giving or receiving hospitality that you remember as being close to a holy encounter?

⁴ Written by **Gill Le Fevre**, Walton Memorial U.C., Oakville, Ontario, **Gathering**, Pentecost 2, 2022, p. 41. Used with permission.

R-W Report

Next Sunday Sunday, Sept 24, 2023 Creation 3

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 32: 9-13, 22-30 • Jacob wrestles God.

Sermon: God of Blessings

Struggles in life are prevalent, and different for everyone. The story of Jacob is wrought with deceit and self interest at first, but as Jacob goes through life, and he learns and grows and his responsibilities increase, he soon realizes the ramifications of his choices and actions. Jacob has a change of heart, and seeks reconciliation with his brother Esau. Jacob seeks God with a spirit of tenacity and faith. It is in wrestling with God that Jacob finds forgiveness, compassion and blessing. What or who are you wrestling with?

Music: Dr. Allan Bevan, organist; Belle Canto

WEEK AT A GLANCE

Sun Sept 17	Sunday Worship - Sanctuary & Online	10:30 am
	Youth Discussion - Youth Room	10:30 am
	Kids' Church - Air Room	10:45 am
	Congregational Meeting - Sanctuary	11:30 am
	Photo Directory Photos - Club Room	11:30 am
	Fellowship - Memorial Hall	11:45 am
	Wild Church - Paul Kane Park	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	Not Falling for You - Memorial Hall	10:00 am
	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

ON THE HORIZON

Sun Sept 24	Sunday Worship - Sanctuary & Online	10:30 am
	Youth Discussion - Youth Room	10:30 am
	Kids' Church - Air Room	10:45 am
	Photo Directory Photos - Club Room	11:30 am
	Fellowship - Memorial Hall	11:45 am
	Communion Workshop - Sanctuary	12:00 pm
	Koinonia - Memorial Hall	5:30 pm

Mon Sept 25	Spirited Art Studio - Art Studio	7:00 pm
Tues Sept 26	Scripture Reflections - Club Room & Zoom	12:00 pm
Wed Sept 27	Spirited Art Studio - Art Studio	1:30 pm
	Gratitude Team Meeting - Club Room	5:30 pm
	R-W Choir Rehearsal - Sanctuary/Lower Hall	7:30 pm
Thurs Sept 28	Not Falling for You - Memorial Hall	10:00 am
	Nova Bells - Lower Hall	5:15 pm
	R-W Ringers - Lower Hall	6:45 pm
Sat Sept 30	New to You Clothing Sale - Memorial Hall	9:00 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**.

NOMINATIONS TEAM

The Board of R-W is working on creating a new team of people (3-5) that will form the Nomination Committee. The nomination committee is responsible for seeking people to fill the elected roles on the R-W Board. Each year there are 1-4 roles that need to be filled. The team also updates the job descriptions when necessary. The work of this team happens primarily from November until the Annual Meeting in March. The Board is seeking people who are willing to talk to others and ask questions. It is helpful if you are a good listener that can match skills with roles. If you are interested in learning more about this role please contact Rev. Karen Bridges: karen.bridges@rwuc.org

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.

R-W News & Notes

PHOTO DIRECTORY

It's time to put a name to the face and compile a new photo directory of people who participate at Robertson-Wesley United. 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 Sunday service starting at 11:30 am to get your photo taken **Today** or on **Sept 24**.

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 **Today** at 1:00 pm. Rain or shine! Contact us at wildchurch@rwuc.org. Follow us on Instagram @wildchurchyeg

THANK YOU

We raised an awesome \$503.55 for the Anniversary Legacy Fund at last Sunday's bake sale. Your generosity and support makes a difference at Robertson-Wesley, and is truly appreciated. Thank-you! - Sylvia Post

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. Once your nametag has been printed, you will find it in the chapel.

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 during the week or Memorial Hall on Sundays.

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.

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. Contact Rev. Karen if you are planning on attending or sign up at rwuc.org/worshipworkshop

STORYTELLING WORKSHOP

Telling Your Stories: An Introduction

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. Lead by well known storyteller Reneé Englot. Please register at rwuc.org/workshops

KOINONIA

Koinonia resumes at Robertson-Wesley on Sunday, **September 24** at 5:30 pm in Memorial Hall. What is Koinonia you ask? Koinonia is an opportunity for food and fellowship that has been a quiet part of the life of Robertson-Wesley for 50 years. Koinonia is a Greek word the meaning of which embraces such concepts as community, joint participation and sharing. On the last Sunday of every month (except July and August) we gather for a pot-luck supper. The supper is followed by a discussion, a presentation, a time of worship, or some singing, each gathering is unique. It always concludes with a time of prayer lifting up the concerns of those present. We sing grace at 5:30, so bring yourself and a dish or plate of something a bit before that. If you are not in a place where you can contribute food, come anyway and enjoy what is there to be shared. The September Koinonia will include a brief discussion of the year ahead. Hope to see you there! - Larry Wright

GREEN BITES

Just what is the Fifteen Minute City? Many of us grew up in places where we could walk to work, school, church, barber shops, grocery stores, ball diamonds; all accessible within fifteen minutes or less. Along with the reduction in fossil fuel use, the fifteen minute community promotes mental and physical health as well as a sense of community. Citizens may need to leave their neighborhoods to attend medical appointments as well as sports and cultural events on occasion, but usually we don't need to travel far from home. Will we be confined to our neighborhoods and require passes to leave, as some naysayers fear? Highly unlikely. - the Environmental Stewardship Group

CLOTHING SALE FUNDRAISER

On **September 30th** there will be a fundraising event to sell clothing, shoes, jewellery and other accessories for all ages. Donations can be dropped off at the church starting **September 24th**. Unsold items will be donated to Bissell Centre. Sign up to volunteer at rwuc.org/volunteer

In the Community

NOT FALLING FOR YOU - Changed Dates

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 partnering with Alberta Health Services to host these classes.

Information and Registration: **September 21** at 10:00 am

Classes: **October 12 – December 14**, Thursdays 10:00 – 11:00 am

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/0k8cd> to take the survey.

Worship Notes

Welcome back to the Robertson-Wesley Choir and thanks today to cantors Raydene Koch and Claire Rolheiser and soloist Douglas Graham.

Cover Image

The cover image is of Abraham and three Angels (1966) by Marc Chagall.

Minister of Faith Development and Intergenerational Ministry: Vacant

Minister of Social Justice and Outreach: 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