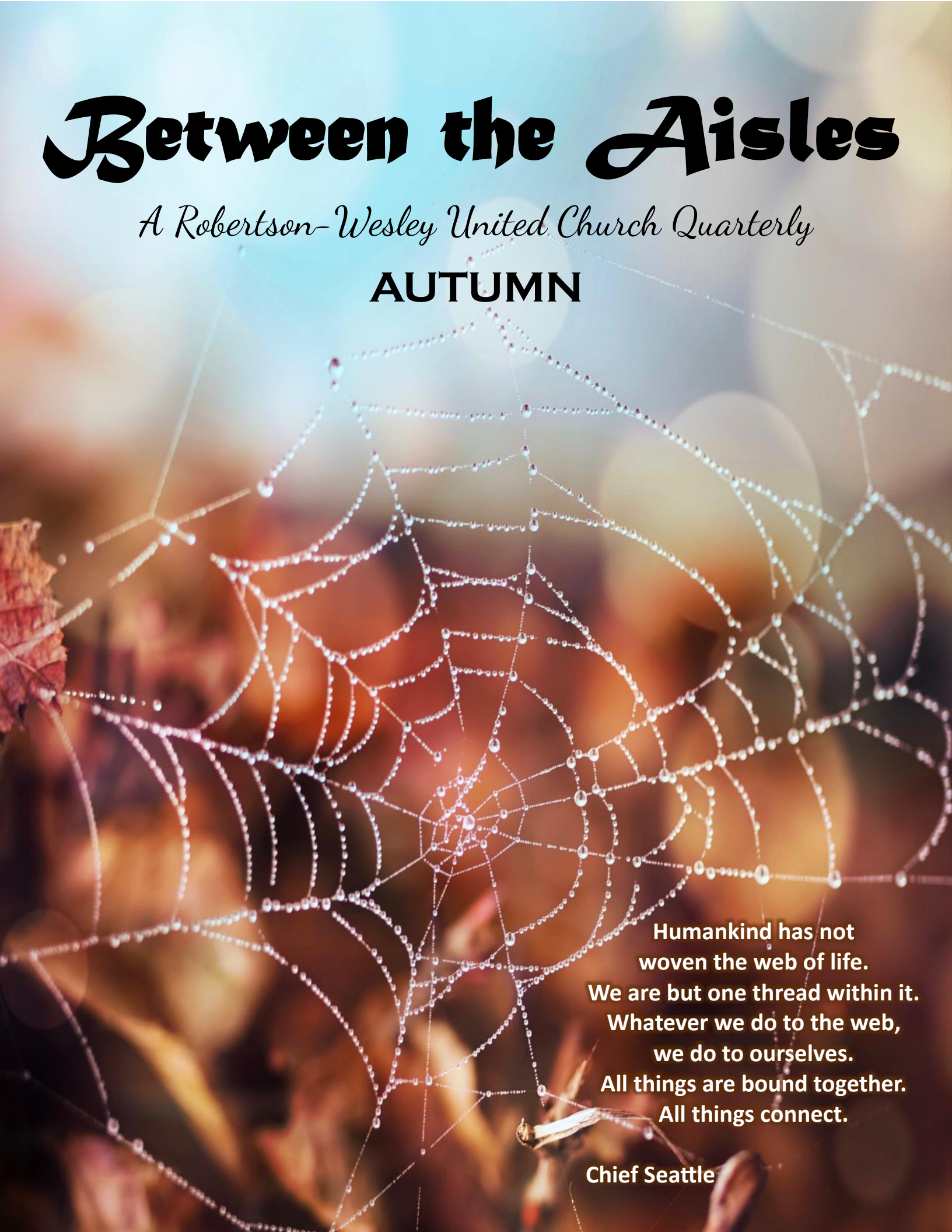


Between the Aisles

A Robertson-Wesley United Church Quarterly

AUTUMN



**Humankind has not
woven the web of life.
We are but one thread within it.
Whatever we do to the web,
we do to ourselves.
All things are bound together.
All things connect.**

Chief Seattle

Welcome from the Editors'

As we move into the season of crisp mornings and sweaters. Let us try to remember the work God put into this planet. We have to try our best to keep it clean and healthy for all God's creatures, not just us. So please, remember to recycle, reuse and/or upcycle your things. And let's try to leave a very small carbon footprint. There is no planet if we do not do this.

In this edition, you will find a number of interesting recipes for the fall season. Ones that will warm you up on the cool autumn days. In keeping with that, a number of submissions, while not food recipes per say, have used the "recipe" format to convey a number of very interesting concepts and ideas.

We also have a financial update on the church, that is very informative of where the church could be heading, both short-term and long-term. I would definitely check it out. As well, there is an article about Guaranteed Annual Income that explains the history of this concept and where we could take it.

In terms of the arts side, we have a number of interesting poems, and a submission from Doug Graham (our bass section lead in the choir) about his 6-week sojourn to Sicily, where he got to spend a lot of time working on his operatic skills. There is also a photo submission about how someone spent their talent silent auction win. Nice to see how that was being used.

We hope that your summer has gone well and that the upcoming autumn is even better.

Lisa Lane and Marilee Stephens



A Peek at the Past or How The Past Lives On

In 1971 when Robertson and Wesley United Churches amalgamated, one of the Wesley members who joined Robertson was Janet Hughes.

Janet and her gentle heart were soon part of the R-W congregation. But her connection to the work of the church went deeper into the community when she suggested that a Food Bank be established in Edmonton. In fact she was the first Board Chair of the Edmonton Food Bank when it was formed in 1981.

Janet's memory and her commitment are marked each year when an outstanding volunteer with the Edmonton Food Bank is honoured with the Janet Hughes award. Last year's recipient was our very own Rosemary Dunbar.

The 2023 recipient is chef Tiffany Sorenson, the Program Kitchen Coordinator at YESS, the Youth Empowerment and Support Services. Congratulations Tiffany, and thank you, Janet Hughes, for your foresight and commitment.

Submitted by Nancy Heule

Talent Silent Auction – Floating the Rewards

At the Talent Silent Auction, I purchased a day at the lake hosted by Lois Field. We had a wonderful time. Below are photos that my husband (Kevin Sehn) took of my son and his partner floating on Pigeon Lake



TAKE TIME

Take time to think:

It is the source of Power.

Take time to read:

It is the foundation of wisdom.

Take time to play:

It is the secret of staying young.

Take time to be quiet:

It is the opportunity to seek God.

Take time to be aware:

It is the opportunity to help others.

Take time to love and be loved:

It is God's greatest gift.

Take time to laugh:

It is the music of the soul.

Take time to be friendly:

It is the road to happiness.

Take time to dream:

It is what the future is made of.

Take time to pray:

It is the greatest power on earth.

This poem by an Unknown Author was on a bookmark given to me by my mother about 50 years ago. I still use this bookmark and dearly cherish it.

Submitted by Cindy Reekie

Submitted by Nova Laurin

Our Recipe for Vital, Inspiring and Nourishing Worship

At some point, you may have asked yourself, “What does it take to create a worship service?” Going along with the theme of this newsletter, let’s consider each worship service as a spiritual meal.

As worship planners/chefs are keenly aware that people rightly and deeply experience spiritual hunger and that the main point of worship is to offer our best efforts to God which, in turn, will be spiritually nourishing to those who partake together. We share that same hunger!

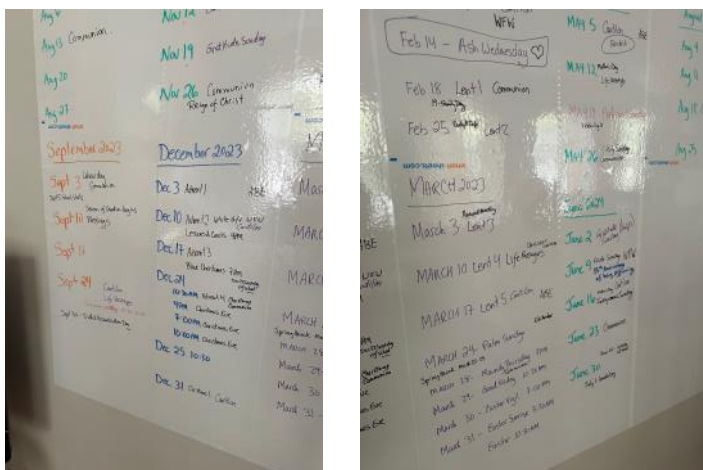
A Yearly Plan

A first step, for us as a staff worship team (ministers and music director), is to decide what Bible readings we will use for the year since scripture is the main ingredient of worship. Robertson-Wesley, like many Christian churches, has usually followed a three-year cycle of readings also known as the lectionary. The lectionary designates a reading from the Hebrew Scriptures (Old Testament), a psalm, a gospel lesson, and an epistle. Each of the three years begins with Advent and focuses on one of the first three gospels (Matthew, Mark and Luke) with the gospel of John interspersed. This captures most of the Bible, but still not all of it.

Starting this September, 2023, Robertson-Wesley will be shifting to a four-year “narrative lectionary” that was created by the Lutheran Church. This lectionary begins in September choosing stories starting at the beginning of the Bible with Genesis and then goes through the rest of the Bible until the end of May. Starting in January, the Narrative Lectionary focuses on a different gospel each year, including the Gospel of John. This lectionary, instead of four shorter readings, provides the service planner with one, longer passage to focus on.

Having chosen the main ingredient, scripture, we look at the passages for the coming year to seek out potential themes that we might explore through worship and programs for various ages. With this foundation the ministers and music director then sit down for several hours to create a worship schedule for the program year September to June. There is a lot to take into consideration as we look at the year.

We begin by slotting in the major liturgical seasons and Holy Days like Advent, Christmas, Lent and Easter. We decide when we will celebrate Communion which happens 10-11 times in a year. We pick some dates for Baptism, Confirmation and other life passages as well as dates when we will have Whole Family Worship services. We also consider the major non-church holidays like Remembrance Day and Victoria Day as well as school holidays. We determine what Sunday around Remembrance Day we will do the Act of Remembrance, the blessing of the backpacks in September, Fire Drill Sunday, Pride Sunday, Indigenous Sunday etc. We think about when the Gratitude Team will take some leadership in worship and once all of that has been decided we start the negotiations for when and how Cantillon Choirs will participate in worship. We look at the Robertson-Wesley church calendar and see what other bookings have been made (i.e., Alberta Baroque Ensemble.) This schedule then gets shared with the Worship Committee for further conversation.



Photos of the whiteboards the staff worship team uses to map out worship

Weekly Preparation

With this big meal plan in place, each week the staff worship team meets to do more detailed planning for the coming week’s worship service or services. One of the ministers takes the lead each week to create the worship service and as a worship team we discuss how the hymns and service music can assist with amplifying the chosen weekly scripture within the overall theme for the year. When it’s time to commit to hymns we begin: “How about _____, number _____ in _____?” The first consideration is to consult our records as to when the hymn was last sung. It is usually eliminated if it has been sung within the past year. If it passes this initial

test, we look at the hymn from a number of different perspectives. How singable is it? Will it require the leadership of the choir or is it well known by the congregation? How do the lyrics fit with our theology and the fact that we are an inclusive, affirming congregation? Where would it fit best within the service—gathering, reflection, sending forth? Do we have a variety of musical traditions and styles within the service? Is there a unifying theme, tone for the service as a whole including responsive readings, prayers, and the sermon?

Each liturgical season we shift some of the elements of the order of service. At times there may be a sung response to the scriptures or a sung benediction, a prayer of transformation, a different version of the Lord's Prayer, and symbols and colours that help to enhance the environment of the sanctuary to reflect the theme. All of this then gets transposed into an order of service which is developed into the weekly bulletin by the staff team. It then gets transferred to our facilities manager who gets the live stream elements ready for the volunteers who run the live stream on Sunday.

Another key set of considerations is involving as many people as possible in the preparation and presentation of our worship services. Whenever possible, these ingredients are prepared and provided by a variety of faithful followers, people offering themselves through their gifts and abilities to reflect the active presence of God in the world. Some have been taking an active part in worship for quite some time, but there is also almost always someone new willing and able to contribute their voice in one way or another. Having a variety of people involved preparing and sharing the ingredients of worship adds considerably to the richness of the experience.

All of this preparation and more sets the table for people to gather every Sunday at Robertson-Wesley United Church in the presence of God to praise, share our thanksgivings, share our sorrows, and open our hearts and spirits to God. People come with differing forms of spiritual hunger: to find comfort, peace, inspiration, healing, to be challenged, to learn, and to be nourished to go out in the world and live out our call from God.

Co-authors/Co-chefs:

Dr. Allan Bevan, Rev. Karen Bridges, Rev. Dirk Jessen

Searching for Calm

I never noticed

The beauty

In the calm

Of the river

As it shimmers in the overhead sun

I never noticed

The strength

In the calm

Of the lake

As it gently rocks the boat on its crystal-clear waters

I never knew

Of this beauty and strength within me

As I sit with this calm

Shoulders down, head up, hands on heart

I close my eyes and breathe deeply

Submitted by Devika Short

Write for BTA

Do you write poetry? Have you read a life-changing book lately? Do you have a faith question you are exploring or a passion you want to share? Then why not submit something for inclusion in the church's quarterly newsletter *Between the Aisles*? For publication requirements, see www.rwuc.org/between-the-aisles.

Deadlines for the Advent edition:

Submissions due by: **Nov 12**

Published: **Dec 3**



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 mornings 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

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.

GARDEN PATCH & KIDS' CHURCH 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. 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 we set up a schedule to help spread the work. contact Rev. Karen Karen.bridges@rwuc.org if you are interested.

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

SPRITELY

Who is SPRITELY???

Spritely is the Spirit of Gratitude.

They are also the mascot of the Gratitude Team. The Team felt a representation of Gratitude could be used to have fun and at the same time keep the thought of Gratitude before people on an ongoing basis. So that when we saw Spritely, we would think of how grateful we are for all of God's gifts.

Spritely represents many things about gratitude. Their three poses try to instill in people the many aspects of Gratitude.



This pose represents the Joy that one feels when we realize with Gratitude what we have. We jump for JOY and spread our arms when we acknowledge all the gifts that GOD has given us.



In this pose Spritely is pondering what we should do with all the gifts we possess. Gifts can be used first to sustain us and our family. Then we realize God has given us more in gifts than we can possibly use for ourselves and that we then need to share them. Like Spritely we ponder how God has intended us to use those gifts. God gave them generously and wants us to share them in the same way.



Then when we share those gifts, like Spritely we realize how good it feels to help others with our time, skills, and money. Seeing the results of this sharing makes us punch the air and jump with satisfaction that we have done what God intended us to do with Gods generosity. We see that we have made the lives of others better and we are able to praise God.

Spritely is lively and fun while at the same time making us realize God has plans for each and every one of us. We just have to listen for that plan and respond to it. And jump for joy like Spritely does!

Submitted by the Gratitude Team

Guaranteed Livable Income

The following article was written by Ernie Epp, MP for Thunder Bay 1984--1988. He is now on the History Dept of Lakehead University.

The death of the Hon. Hugh Segal on August 9 reminds many of us of the struggle to achieve a Guaranteed Livable Income, for which he advocated throughout his adult life. His 2019 book, *Bootstraps Need Boots: One Tory's Lonely Fight to End Poverty in Canada*, is both a memoir and a manifesto.

Of course, the fight to end poverty is no partisan struggle, as a close reading of Canadian political history over the past half-century and more clearly shows. In an era of social policy advances, Dr. Joe Willard, Deputy Minister of Welfare in the Diefenbaker, Pearson, and Trudeau Governments, wrote a report on social development policy late in the Sixties urging an income maintenance program. This would be an advance on the Canada Assistance Plan established by the Pearson Government.

As the Liberal Party prepared for a policy convention in Ottawa in November 1970, a ginger group at the University of Western Ontario issued a broadside about inequality in Canada and called for action. The London resolution calling for implementation of an income maintenance scheme for Canada did not make it to the convention, but a motion calling for a guaranteed annual income program to be instituted by January 1, 1972, was supported by a vote of 595 to 250, even though Prime Minister Trudeau had told delegates at the opening session that Canada could not afford a guaranteed income plan.

Failure to act on the recommendations of the Carter Commission on Taxation would have fateful consequences. Prior to the Constitutional Conference of First Ministers in Victoria in June 1971, Prime Minister Trudeau offered 50% federal funding to any province establishing a guaranteed income program. Premier Ed Schreyer's Manitoba Government responded by establishing a pilot project based in part in the Dauphin area. Federal funding was ended by spending cuts the Trudeau Government instituted in 1977.

University of Manitoba Professor Dr. Evelyn Forget has only recently been able to assess how well the people--and the province--benefited from the project while it lasted. (See her *Basic Income: From the COVID-19 Emergency to Financial Security for All.*)

Eighteen years later, the Chrétien Government responded to similar financial pressures by gutting Canadian social assistance programs. Among the most significant cuts was abolition of the Canada Assistance Plan in Finance Minister Paul Martin's 1995 budget, which allowed Ontario Premier Mike Harris to establish the Ontario Works program and thus drive unemployed Ontarians to starvation. This has continued for almost thirty years —and through several changes of government!

The need for a Guaranteed Livable Income becomes more obvious with every day that passes. Exacerbating the plight of so many people in our communities is the fact that there is so little social housing and that housing cooperatives have received no encouragement for decades.

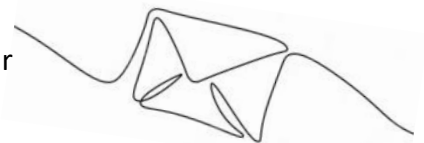
For more information on the United Churches work on Guaranteed livable income visit their website at united-church.ca/social-action/act-now/create-guaranteed-livable-income-program

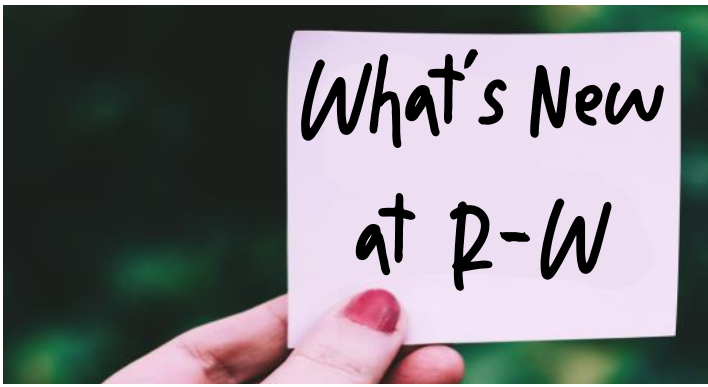
Submitted by Lorna Berlinguette

To me

Dear Letter, go on your way,
Over mountain, plain, and sea,
God bless all who speed your flight,
To where I wish you to be.
And bless all those beneath the roof,
Where I would bid you rest,
But even more, bless the one
To whom this letter is addressed.

Submitted by Bud Squair





#BLESSED

It is time to reconnect and explore our faith together! On Sunday **Sept 10** children and youth are invited to the early part of the worship service as we take time to bless backpacks and other items that are important on our journey in life. We will take time to recommit ourselves to sharing our faith with one another while listening for where God is calling Robertson-Wesley to live out our call and commitment in the world.

Kids' Church and Youth Group

Registration for Kids' Church and Youth Group begins on **Sept 10**. On Sept 10, guardians/parents will be invited to gather downstairs for a brief introduction to what is happening in the church. You will be asked to fill out a registration form so that there is up to date information. Children who are 2 years of age and no longer in diapers up to Kindergarten are invited to register for the Garden Patch. Children grades 1-6 will register for Kids' Church. Youth grades 7-12 will be invited to register for the youth program which includes Sunday morning discussion hour during worship as well as evening activities twice a month. We will be inviting people from the congregation to help with the leadership in this program. All volunteers will need to ensure that they have an up to date Police Record Check for working with vulnerable children. If you have specific questions feel free to contact Rev. Karen at karen.bridges@rwuc.org or call the church 780-482-1587 ext. 224.

NEW TO YOU CLOTHING SALE

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

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 at R-W – 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!

R-W Ringers & Choir

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.

Scripture Reflections

Join the minister on **Tuesdays** at 12:00 pm, to reflect on the scripture passages for the upcoming Sunday. We are using the practice of Lectio Divina which means we read through the scripture three times. You will be invited into some moments of silence, and if you are willing you are invited to share with the group. You don't need to be a Biblical Scholar. God speaks through the scriptures and it is always wonderful to hear the diversity of messages that are received. Come with a bible and a journal, or simply yourself on Zoom or in person in the Club Room.

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

SPIRITED ARTS MOVEMENT

Spirited Art Studio will Resume **September 11.**

Mondays: 7:00 pm to 8:30 pm

Wednesdays: 1:30 pm to 3:00 pm

Saturdays: (2nd Sat/month) 5:15-6:45 pm

Spirited Art Studio is a free secular community art program providing an informal, welcoming and inclusive space where we come together to nurture our creative spirit through art and craft activities.

There are as many pathways to creativity as there are individuals! Projects are diverse and fun, no previous experience is required and all supplies are provided! Learn a new process or bring your own projects to work on. Come see what adventures await you as you create, learn and make new connections.

Register for one of two weekly sessions by emailing Spirited Art Director Julie at spiritedartstudio@rwuc.org.

Spirited Arts Workshops

Theme: Who I think I was! Who I think I will be! Who I am now! Telling our stories through the Arts

The Spirited Arts Workshops this year will centre around identity and how we can explore, create, and reinvent our sense of self through various art forms. We will use drawing, story telling, spoken word, poetry and "body mapping" to tell the stories of ourselves and get to know our community in a different way. What are classic, established stories that we stabilize ourselves in? What new stories do we want to discover about ourselves and each other? Stories can be told in pictures, sketches, our voices, in our written words and our bodies actions. The workshops will explore all these forms and more.

Telling Your Stories: An Introduction

Sept 23, 2023 1:00 - 3:30 pm in Room 11 at R-W

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 René Englot.

The Shapes Around Us

Oct 28, 2023 10:00 am - 2:00 pm in Room 11 at R-W
Facilitated by Julie Kaldenhoven and Brooke Leifso, this workshop will explore the archetypal shapes that are everywhere in the world, what we like and what that says about us. We will draw and write stories together. Lunch is included.

Body Mapping

Nov 20, 2023 7:00 - 9:00 pm in Room 11 at R-W
Brooke Leifso will lead a simple experience using basic art supplies to tell the stories of our physical bodies. We will move our bodies, draw and share.

Register for these FREE workshops at rwuc.org/worskhops

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

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 **September 21** to **December 14**.

Annual Art Sale

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

Hamburger Soup

Ingredients:

1 lb ground beef
 1 onion (diced)
 2 garlic gloves (minced)
 2 medium potatoes (peeled/diced)
 3.5 cups beef broth
 Small can diced tomatoes and juice
 1 can tomato or vegetable soup
 2 tsps Worcestershire/Maggi/Soy Sauce
 3 cups mixed vegetables (fresh or frozen)
 Salt and Pepper to taste

Instructions:

- Brown hamburger, onions and garlic until beef is no longer pink, and onions are translucent in a large pot. Drain fat.
- Add potatoes, broth, "w" sauce. Cook covered for 10 minutes.
- Stir in vegetables. Simmer 15-20 minutes or until potatoes are tender.
- Serve with bread and a side salad.

Submitted by Lisa Lane

Stump Pot (German Kraut dish)

Ingredients:

Kielbasa
 Potatoes
 Sauerkraut
 Bacon

Instructions:

- Cut up kielbasa in to bite size pieces
- Peel potatoes and cut into bite size pieces
- Cook Bacon
- In a crockpot, place potatoes topped with kielbasa and sauerkraut. Top with the fried bacon.
- Cook for 8 hours on low, or 3-4 hours on high.

Submitted by Lisa Lane

A SUMMER IN SICILY WITH DOUGLAS GRAHAM

For most of this summer I had the pleasure of attending a training program called the Mediterranean Opera Studio & Festival, that is hosted in Sicily, Italy. It was a tremendous opportunity to spend six weeks in a part of the world I have not had the capability of exploring before. As I said above, this was a training program, one that will hopefully lead to greater opportunities in my career as an opera singer. I can say that it will have an impact on my singing within the church, both for my contribution to the choir, and any additional performances and concerts I put on at Robertson-Wesley in the future.

This trip came about when I was looking for performing opportunities for the summer, part of the "audition circuit" singers go through every year from August to December. While considering different opportunities throughout Canada and the US, this program showed through a bulletin board website I use. I was instantly interested because of the promise of working with an orchestra for the majority of the six weeks, and being under the tutelage of some of the best educators and coaches in the opera world. In addition to this, the participation fee was at or cheaper than other programs of a similar length, and the operas to be performed were not being suggested anywhere else. It is not typical to be performing Verdi operas, but I knew that I wouldn't have the opportunity to perform one any time soon. Thus, I submitted an application and was accepted to perform roles in two of the three operas to be presented, Germont in La Traviata and Dandini in La Cenerentola.

The preparation time for the program did not go as smoothly as I would have liked, the wildfires that plagued Alberta for most of the spring had a severe impact on my singing. Before leaving for the program, I informed the program director and the director of La Cenerentola that I would not be able to perform the role of Dandini. It was a difficult decision, but my experience throughout the six weeks reassured me that I made the right one. Upon arrival in Caltagirone and meeting the singers that I would spend the next six weeks with, I was absolutely floored by the talent I was surrounded by. I learned a lot not just from the teaching staff, but also by listening to my peers and talking to them about their musical journeys. This

was also helped by the program director encouraging everyone to be as friendly, warm, and encouraging to everyone. It meant a lot, and I think it will pay great dividends in the future.



Of course, there was more to the trip than just lots of singing, although there was quite a bit of that, we did have several free days, with some of them including day trips to different parts of Sicily. Our first trip was about ten days into the program, we went to the city of Ragusa to have a small tour of a church in the centre of town. Because of the geography of Sicily, you get amazing views when you are in the centre of the older parts of each city. As enjoyable as being in a centuries old church is, the real draw of this day was going to a beach and being able to swim in the Mediterranean Sea. The timing for this day trip couldn't have been better as a heatwave was starting in Sicily and our daily temperatures were in the mid to high 30s by this time, perfect beach weather. Because Caltagirone was more inland, the daily temperatures averaged between 38 and 43 Celsius for the majority of the two week heatwave, and this was made worse by the fact that the rooms we were staying in did not have air conditioners. I'm not sure how much of a difference it would have made because power outages were quite common on the hottest days.



We did get a reprieve on the day that we went to Syracuse, which meant another day we could spend on the beach, if we so chose. I liked Syracuse, it seemed like there

were more things to do, but that may have been because of the history. Syracuse is where Archimedes lived and while we couldn't visit his tomb that day, we were able to tour around some of the Greek ruins of the area, including an amphitheatre that is still used every summer for performances of all kinds. As Syracuse is right on the coast, we had easy access to all sorts of beaches again, and that day a group of us were spending our time on a pebble beach. Because we were there in the afternoon, the beach was shaded and was considerably cooler than when we were in Ragusa, but it was also a fairly rocky beach and I got to learn why water shoes or sandals are not a bad thing to have in these sorts of environments. I was not nice to my feet when I was at the beach.



We had one final day trip before the program concluded, this time going to the city of Taormina. If Syracuse was the southern tip of the eastern side of Sicily, Taormina is moving towards the northern tip. This day I wasn't too interested in being a tourist and instead spent the majority of my time at the beach. There was still some touring to be done at the beach, there was a tiny island called Isola Bella that could be explored as well. The island has a cute villa built on it but is more known as a nature preserve. Still, a lot of good vantage points for pictures. After this trip we only had a few more performances before it was time to return home. By the end we had put on ten shows for La Traviata alone and five of those shows had me performing as Germont, by far the most I've performed a role for one production.

Now that I have returned to Canada I look forward to sharing what I have learned. I plan to put on at least one concert in October or November at Robertson-Wesley to showcase some excerpts from the operas performed at the program and some other favourites of mine. More to come later!

Submitted by Douglas Graham

Stew

“Po-ta-toes. Boil ‘em, mash ‘em, stick ‘em in a stew”, said Samwise Gamgee to Gollum.

So the days are shortening. Yellow leaves are landing on our lawn. Fall might be coming early. And our world is in such a “stew” of contradictions at the moment. Perhaps a savory stovetop stew would be an appropriate and tasty dish to fill our stomachs and settle our nerves. (Plan on it cooking for 2 to 3 hours.)

Start with stew meat browned in a big pot, with a good splash of red wine. Add lots of fresh young potatoes (my favourite part). Add water and some OXO cubes. Cut up some onions and fresh carrots, chopped into “rounds” to float in the pot like orange planets in the void. Now turn the heat back to a gentle boil.

Both terrible misery and awesome wonder buddle together in our world “stew” these days. Soon we will watch with amazement as astronauts loop around the moon again, and at the same time we can view terrible wars, shattering the lives of thousands. We are experiencing global warming and enormous fires are wreaking havoc everywhere. But at the same time, we can change channels and view with awe and wonder the breathtaking beautiful visions of young star clusters and glowing gases in photos coming from the Webb space telescope.



Photo created by Elyse in Photoshop.

These telescopic visions reminded me of the biblical parable of the sower. God the sower, still unreservedly scattering “seed” - or what will become fresh stars, with evolving solar systems, some probably like ours. With trillions of other solar systems in the universe, the odds are certain in my opinion, that there are worlds with other living beings.

Jesus said to his disciples, “My Father’s house has many mansions.” I think he was hinting that our creator continues to sow the new worlds abundantly through all the ages of our universe.

But now let’s sow some more “seeds” into our stovetop stew. Cut a parsnip into “rounds” like the carrots. Add some cubes of turnip. Add four bay leaves, and salt and pepper to taste. Continue to simmer gently.

The bible says, “In the beginning, Jesus was with God” (John 1:1) Is Christ then present in other unnumbered worlds, guiding other beings to compassion and love and in worshipful awe of creation?

Now back on the stovetop. When the vegetables seem medium soft to a fork, and the meat seems tender, add a handful of pearl barley (to thicken) and some frozen green peas (for colour). Taste test. Toast some buns, and when all seems ready, serve, and enjoy!

And may we all try to make the “stew” of living during these days as easy and unstressful for those around us as we are able.

Submitted by Garnet Thomas.

A sky of midnight azure with streaks of rose gold, sings.
 As dawn outside my window, spreads it's heralded wings.
 Buildings black as coal dust etched against the sky.
 A string of city mountains, makes me want to cry, with joy,
 at all God's beauty right there before my eyes.
 Time passes in a heartbeat, the winds of life rush by, and
 every golden minute is here and then it's gone.
 Oh! to hold these precious moments, that beauty beyond
 belief and to offer it to others in their times of fear and
 grief.

Submitted by Lisa Lane

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF GARY PECKNOLD AS A VOLUNTEER

Gary had many volunteer roles that he enjoyed at Robertson-Wesley.

- Coach & Organizer of R-W Storm, the softball team.
- Organized the summer BBQ, purchasing ingredients and asking the softball team to cook and participate.
- Went to all the meetings of the Presbytery around the city and got to know a lot of people. He was awarded an Honorary Lay Membership.
- Hosted many “Guess Who’s Coming to Dinner” dinners and attended many of those dinners at other homes along with Joan.
- Fellowship Committee: consisted of Gary, Joan and some other volunteers who served coffee, tea and goodies every Sunday.
- Started the tradition of serving a birthday cake once a month for anyone who was celebrating a birthday. (We got the idea from Gaetz United in Red Deer). We had a congregational “Happy Birthday” sing along.
- Helped organize the Rundle Retreat for Koinonia at Pigeon Lake for many years.
- Helped at the Community Dinner when George Ford was organizing it.
- Organized the Pancake Breakfast after the sunrise service. The cooks were Ed and the 4 G’s: Gary, Garnet, Garnet, Graham and Ed Verdin.
- Ushered many times when Bill Butler was Head Usher. Was Head usher for many Christmas Eve services along with Joan.
- Went to many Board Meetings (with Joan tagging along).
- Past member of the Worship Committee.
- Past Member of Finance Committee.
- Participated in some of the Men’s Group Activities.
- Curled in Church Curling League at Shamrock Curling Club.

Gary loved his Church family and Robertson-Wesley meant the world to him.

Submitted In Remembrance
And with Gratitude,
Joan



The Key:

Many of you may know that Alison and I ride motorcycles. Well, we took our motorcycles to Yellowknife this summer, and it was a fantastic ride. On the way back, we pulled into a rest stop off the highway, and as I was stopping, my instrument panel told me not to turn off my bike - something about "onward journey without a key was not possible." What!?! I was so surprised by the message, I only got the kickstand half down. Not having the kickstand in place resulted in me dropping the 700-pound loaded bike on its side. In seconds I'd gone from an enjoyable and relaxing ride to rolling on the ground with my bike on its side.



At this point, some history - for those of you that don't know, when we ride motorcycles together, I always lead. It's easier that way, as I tend to be a lousy follower on bikes, something about not following directions, etc., ha ha. In any regard, Alison quickly informed me that she saw something on the highway "a ways back" and that it must have been my key. Once we got my bike upright, we got it started using a plastic key fob that you hold near the bike's battery. Not a convenient way at all to start it. It could have been so much worse, as it always could be. Amazingly, the top box where the spare fob was stored is almost always locked, but this was one instance when it wasn't. Blessing!

Anyway, my bike is more loaded than Alison's, as it is easier to put everything on one bike, so it consumes more gas and consequently gets less mileage. The return venture to find the key that she thought might be on the highway "a ways back" turned out to be about 50 km.

Now for those who have been to Yellowknife, you'll un-

derstand that the ride from Yellowknife to Enterprise is long, and there are no gas stations in between. So here I am doing gas math in my head, trying to figure out if I have enough gas to continue following Alison to my missing key or if I should abandon the quest of the current leader who assures me she knows where the key is. I was thinking if I go much further, I won't be able to make it to the gas station. I was fretting and worrying, and then, believe it or not, Alison slowed down, and we pulled up beside the key in the middle of the road. I picked it up, and everything was beautiful at that point, although I was still slightly worried that I might run out of gas.

Anyway, the lesson for me is that we do change leadership, and we can spend a lot of time wondering what they are doing, and we all have a sense of how far or how many miles we can go with the gas we have. Here at RWUC, we still have lots of gas for our journey, so we have time to find the key.

Financial Update:

1 Chronicles 29:12-14: David's Prayer of Praise

Then David praised the Lord in the presence of the whole assembly: "O Lord, the God of our ancestor Israel, may you be praised forever and ever! Yours, O Lord, is the greatness, the power, the glory, the victory, and the majesty. Everything in the heavens and on earth is yours, O Lord, and this is your kingdom. We adore you as the one who is over all things. Wealth and honour come from you alone, for you rule over everything. Power and might are in your hand, and at your discretion people are made great and given strength. "O our God, we thank you and praise your glorious name! But who am I, and who are my people, that we could give anything to you? Everything we have has come from you, and we give you only what you first gave us! We are here for only a moment, visitors and strangers in the land as our ancestors were before us. Our days on earth are like a passing shadow, gone so soon without a trace."

You don't have to go far to find bad news related to money these days; we're saturated in it. Today, I scanned the Globe and Mail. And just today, there was bad news about Government finances, bad news about economic productivity, bad news about increasing rental costs, bad news about rising gas prices, bad news about inflation, bad news about the stock market, bad news about the increasing bond rate impacts on mortgage rates, bad news about economic costs of losing corporate head offices and staff in Canada, bad news about

the lack of funding to build eclectic electric car charging facilities that will be needed.

But there is always good news. Today - I want to provide some good news about the finances of our church while at the same time humbly, gratefully, and faithfully acknowledging that God is with us.

2 Corinthians 9:6

The Apostle Paul writes, "Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver."

We have some cheerful givers! Thank you to everyone; as you know, every dollar we get is precious, and almost all these dollars come from you, ALL the individuals that make up the family of RWUC.

We have increased our fundraising by 748% and will likely hit \$20,000 this year. Thanks to everyone participating in any fundraising activities so far this year! That's \$13,000 more than last year.

We gratefully received bequests from George Ford and Dorothy Kelker. Investments in God's kingdom of this nature humble me, and I am thankful for the blessing of witnessing their example.

How else have we been blessed financially in 2023?

We received grants in the neighbourhood of \$45,000 to replace older, more costly lighting with modern LED lighting, and the project ended at zero cost to RWUC. But best of all - the newer light will save us hundreds of dollars a month!

We have worked hard on bringing our facility rental contracts and prices to an equitable cost recovery manner for all, and while this doesn't sound like much, it will allow us to recover an additional nearly \$18,000 a year.

We are enjoying working with Lyra this summer and used the Canada Student Loans Program to fund her position! It was a win-win situation and one of the many ways RWUC gives back to the community! Thanks, Lyra, for spending the summer with us!

How are we continuing to be blessed?

We've had a flood, but we have insurance. We have over \$1,000,000 in the bank.

So, is there bad news, is the Church running out of mon-

ey? Certainly not in the immediate future. However, we are spending more money than we bring in each year in revenue. This is something we need to analyse and look into carefully. We are spending \$100,000 more than we receive to deliver the programs and services RWUC offers. If we include traditional capital projects, it could be nearer \$170,000.

Is this ongoing shortfall a problem? Well, if current trends continue, yes. However, if the last four years taught us anything, it's that the future rarely remains the same. This trend does not require immediate reaction or panic but careful discernment and planning.

Why is this not something we need to react to immediately? Well, in reality, there are two excellent reasons:

First, the excellent news is we have a lot of money in the bank - over \$1,000,000.

Second, the R-W Board is actively discussing the situation with momentum.

What if we wait too long; will the money in the bank last forever? No, but at current spending rates, it will last over six years. Little today stays the same for a year, let alone six. I believe we have lots of time to plan; I encourage us to talk about this - it is not being ignored, but let's not react negatively or rashly today to the fear of running out of money in six years.

The short 2023 update is as follows:

At this point of the year, it appears that we will be spending \$125,000 instead of the \$105,000 we initially projected - a large portion of the \$20,000 extra is because we have not had as many weddings and funerals as we budgeted. There are other puts and takes for sure, but I find this funny because if you told me our budget would be off by \$20,000, I would not have guessed in advance we would be affected by funerals and weddings, of all things!

The Board is monitoring our finances, and we are assembling a team to explore the annual shortfall further. Prudence is essential, and the board promises it. Please have faith. We will be back with regular updates on the situation.

Regularly, I'm reminded, most of all, to have faith.

Troy Murray, Treasurer.

EMAIL SAFETY TIPS

Occasionally some people in R-Ws community of faith have experienced scam emails, using a method called spoofing. Email spoofing is when a scammer forges (spoofs) the email's *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.

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

FLU SHOTS

R-W with MedEx Pharmacies will be hosting a FREE Drop-in flu shot clinic on October 18 from 10:00 am - 12:00 pm in Room 11. This is an opportunity to help protect yourself, your community, and R-W's community of faith.

Land Acknowledgement

We acknowledge with respect the history, spirituality and culture of the Treaty 6 people, and the Metis people of Alberta region 4, and affirm our responsibility to Treaty members. May we live with respect on this land in peace and friendship with its people.

Courtesy of United Church Women

Robertson-Wesley United Church

10209-123 Street, Edmonton AB T5N 1N3

780-482-1587

mail@rwuc.org www.rwuc.org



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