



An Affirming Congregation of The United Church of Canada

2023 December 3

Life Passages

Advent 1



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 on each floor located near the elevator.



For hearing assistance download the Listen Everywhere app on your cellphone and connect to the R-W network by scanning this QR code. Please bring your own headphones to listen on. Classic hearing assists headsets are still 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

Announcements at 10:15 AM

Prelude: *Meditation on “Veni Emmanuel”*, by Philip Moore Dr. Allan Bevan, organ

Embracing Our Spirit

Introit: *Prepare the Way, O Zion*, Swedish melody arr. by Sondra Tucker

Choir of Robertson-Wesley, Jean Triscott, flute

Call to Worship:

Promises are made and hope is the result.

Advent is the glorious season of hope-filled expectation!

Signs of anticipation and yearning surround us.

We long for the Christ child – the one who brings hope!

Amen.¹

Hymn: *O Come, O Come Emmanuel*

Voices United 1 vv. 1, 4, 6-7

**O come, O come, Emmanuel,
and ransom captive Israel,
that mourns in lonely exile here
until the Son of God appear.**

**Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to thee, O Israel!**

**O come, O Rod of Jesse’s stem,
from every foe deliver them
that trust your mighty power to save
and give them victory o’er the grave.**

**Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to thee, O Israel!**

**O come, O Dayspring, from on high,
and cheer us by your drawing nigh,
disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
and death’s dark shadows put to flight.**

**Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to thee, O Israel!**

**O come, Desire of nations, bind
all peoples in one heart and mind;
O bid our sad divisions cease,
and be for us our Prince of Peace.**

**Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to thee, O Israel!**

¹ Written by Laura Turnbull, Penticton, B.C., **Gathering**, Advent/Christmas/Epiphany, 2019/20, page 29. Used with permission.

Advent Candle Lighting:

Light the candle of hope

Sung response: *Hope Is A Star*

Voices United 7 vs.1

**Hope is a star that shines in the night,
leading us on till the morning is bright.
When God is a child there's joy in our song.
The last shall be first and the weak shall be strong,
and none shall be afraid.**

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:

As we hear the scriptures today, help us to hear how much you love your people, affirming them even in difficult times. Allow us to feel this loving affirmation and be inspired to find ways to pass it on. **Amen.**

Anthem: *How Beautiful Upon the Mountains*, by John Stainer

Choir of Robertson-Wesley

Scripture:

Garnet Thomas

Jeremiah 33:10-11, 14-18 • Promise of the Messiah

Thus says the Lord: in this place of which you say, "It is a waste without human beings or animals," in the towns of Judah and the streets of Jerusalem that are desolate, without inhabitants, human or animal, there shall once more be heard the voice of mirth and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride, the voices of those who sing, as they bring thank offerings to the house of the Lord: "Give thanks to the Lord of hosts, for the Lord is good, for the Lord's steadfast love endures forever!" For I will restore the fortunes of the land as at first, says the Lord. The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will fulfill the promise I made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah. In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch to spring up for David; and he shall execute justices and righteousness in the land. In those days Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will live in safety. And this is the name by which it will be called: "The Lord is our righteousness." For thus says the Lord: David shall never lack someone to sit on the throne of the house of Israel, and the Levitical priests shall never lack someone in my presence to offer burnt offerings, to make grain offerings, and to make sacrifices for all time.

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

Thanks be to God.

Solo: *For Behold, Darkness Shall Cover the Earth/The People That Walked in Darkness*, by G. F. Handel

Douglas Graham, soloist

Sermon: *Affirming God*

Rev. Dirk Jessen

**Lo, how a rose, e'er blooming
from tender stem hath sprung,
of Jesse's lineage coming,
as seers of old have sung.
It came a blossom bright,
amid the cold of winter,
when half spent was the night.**

**Isaiah 'twas foretold it,
the Rose I have in mind,
with Mary we behold it,
the virgin mother kind.
To show God's love aright
she bore for us a Saviour
when half-spent was the night.**

Grateful Response

Pastoral Prayers

Rev. Karen Bridges

Lord's Prayer:

Voices United p. 916 A Paraphrase

**Eternal Spirit, Earth-maker, Pain-bearer, Life-giver,
Source of all that is and that shall be.
Parent of us all,
Loving God, in whom is heaven:
The hallowing of your name echo through the universe!
The way of your justice be followed by peoples of the world!
Your heavenly will be done by all created beings!
Your commonwealth of peace and freedom
sustain our hope and come on earth.
With the bread we need for today, feed us.
In the hurts we absorb from one another, forgive us.
In times of temptation and test, strengthen us.
From trials too great to endure, spare us.
From the grip of all that is evil, free us.
For you reign in the glory of the power that is love,
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 by speaking to an usher, 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.



**Christ shall come down like showers upon the fruitful earth,
and love, joy, hope, like flowers, spring in his path to birth.
Before him on the mountains shall peace the herald go,
And righteousness in fountains from hill to valley flow.**

Prayer of Gratitude:

Just as a single, small candle flame marks the beginning of Advent,
what we offer you, O God, seems small amidst the immensity of need.
**As we ask for your blessing of transformation for these offerings,
we trust that what we give will light a blaze of hope to help the
world. Amen.²**

Hymn: *Herald! Sound the Note of Gladness!*

Voices United 28

**Herald! Sound the note of gladness!
Tell the news that Christ is here;
make a pathway through the desert
for the one who brings God near.
Sound the trumpet!
Tell the message!
Christ the Saving One has come!**

**Herald! Sound the note of judgement,
warning us of right and wrong;
turning us from sin and sadness,
till once more we sing the song.
Sound the trumpet!
Tell the message!
Christ the Saving One has come!**

**Herald! Sound the note of pardon!
Those repenting are forgiven;
God receives these wayward children,
and to all new life is given.
Sound the trumpet!
Tell the message!
Christ the Saving One has come!**

**Herald! Sound the note of triumph!
Christ has come to share our life,
bringing God's own love and power,
granting victory in our strife.
Sound the trumpet!
Tell the message!
Christ the Saving One has come!**

² Written by Gord Dunbar, Kincardine P.C., Kincardine, Ont. **Gathering**, Advent/Christmas/Epiphany, 2019/20, page 34, Used with permission.

Commissioning:

Advent challenges us to change, to turn ourselves around, to reach out with mercy, forgiveness and love.

Go forth with open hearts, ready to find hope in your community.

Amen.³

Sung Benediction:

More Voices 222

May the peace of God be your peace.

May the love of God be the love you show.

**May the joy of God be the joy you know,
and may the world that God would see
be found in you.**

Postlude: *Postlude on “Winchester New,”* by Christopher Tambling

Dr. Allan Bevan, organ

Questions for Reflection:

When and how have you felt affirmed and loved by God?

When and how have you affirmed your faith in and love *for* God?

R-W Report

Next Sunday

Sunday, Dec 10, 2023

Advent 2 White Gift Sunday, Whole Family Worship

Children & Youth: Children and youth are invited to worship with their families this Sunday.

Isaiah 40:1-11 • Comfort, O comfort my people.

Sermon: Peace will be found when we serve one another.

The second Sunday of Advent brings us the proclamation that God is here to comfort us. God does this through acts of service. God is depicted as a shepherd who cares for and feeds the flock. God’s love is expressed through acts of service, and so we spread that love to others by our own acts of service. How will you serve the world and bring peace to all?

Music: Dr. Allan Bevan, organist, Cantilon Children’s Choir

WEEK AT A GLANCE

Sun Dec 3	Sunday Worship - Sanctuary & Online	10:30 am
	Youth Discussion - Youth Room	10:30 am
	Kids’ Church - Air Room	10:45 am
	Fellowship - Memorial Hall	11:45 am
	Membership Classes - Library	12:30 pm
	Spiritual Formation Pod Meeting - Room 11	12:00 pm
Mon Dec 4	Spirited Art Studio - Art Studio	7:00 pm

³ Written by George Allan, Chatham, Ont., **Gathering**, Advent/Christmas/Epiphany, 2019/20, page 36. Used with permission.

Tues Dec 5	Scripture Reflections - Club Room & Zoom	12:00 pm
	DEAP - Club Room	5:30 pm
	Songs for Solidarity - Chapel	7:00 pm
	Finance Meeting - Club Room	7:00 pm
Wed Dec 6	Spirited Art Studio - Art Studio	1:30 pm
	Labyrinth Walk - Memorial Hall	6:30 pm
	R-W Choir Rehearsal - Sanctuary/Lower Hall	7:30 pm
Thurs Dec 7	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 Dec 9	Community Dinner- Memorial Hall	5:00 pm

ON THE HORIZON

Sun Dec 10	Sunday Worship - Sanctuary & Online	10:30 am
	Fellowship - Memorial Hall	11:45 am
	Membership Classes - Library	12:30 pm
	Lessons & Carols - Sanctuary	4:00 pm
Mon Dec 11	Spirited Art Studio - Art Studio	7:00 pm
Tues Dec 12	Scripture Reflections - Club Room & Zoom	12:00 pm
	UCW - Memorial Hall	1:30 pm
Wed Dec 13	Spirited Art Studio - Art Studio	1:30 pm
	R-W Choir Rehearsal - Sanctuary/Lower Hall	7:30 pm
Thurs Dec 14	Not Falling for You - Memorial Hall	10:00 am
	Men's Group Meeting - Away	10:00 am
	Nova Bells - Lower Hall	5:15 pm
	R-W Ringers - Lower Hall	6:45 pm

Volunteer Opportunities

COMMUNITY DINNER

We are in need of more volunteers for the Christmas Community Dinner on Saturday, **December 9**. To Sign-up visit rwuc.org/volunteer or use the tablet in the outer office or during fellowship.

COMMUNION SERVER VOLUNTEERS

Sunday, **December 24** at 10:30 am we will celebrate communion, sharing Jesus' meal. All people, all ages, are welcome to serve Communion. If this is your first time, know that someone will assist you in learning how to serve Communion. You only need to come a little earlier. If you are able to serve, sign up on the tablet in the outer office, or visit rwuc.org/volunteer.

CANDLESTICK POLISHING

Help the R-W Sanctuary shine! Sign-up to help polish the brass candlesticks that are used in Lessons & Carols and Christmas Eve services. Tuesday, **December 5** at 10:30 am in Memorial Hall.

R-W News & Notes

SPIRITUAL FORMATION POD MEETING TODAY

At today's Spiritual Formation Pod meeting after church, we will be looking at ways to make new people feel welcome in R-W's church community. Specifically, we will be looking at a welcome package, why this is a good idea, and what should go into it. Join us downstairs in Room 11 at **noon** today.

KOINONIA

The Koinonia Advent/Christmas/Year End Potluck will take place on Saturday, **December 2** starting at 5:30 pm in Memorial Hall. Unlike past years, this will not be a progressive dinner, but you are encouraged to bring a variety of Festive Treats, and wear your favourite or ugliest Christmas sweater.

SONGS OF SOLIDARITY

AN EVENING OF SINGING & REFLECTION

The world has felt so heavy lately and while it is important to feel those feelings, it is also important to move them through our spirits and out of the body. One way to do that is in community, through singing. Join us for a quiet night of lifting our voices with songs of freedom, love, peace, unity, and more. This will be a casual gathering with easy-to-join songs, reflections, and meditation. Please bring a contained candle, a pillow for sitting, and your water bottle. If you have a Keffiya please wear it. If you play an acoustic instrument, feel free to bring it along. All are welcome to join. This event is free however we will be taking an offering to pass on to Palestinian aid. **December 5th**, 7:00-8:30 pm. Robertson-Wesley 10209 123 street (west facing doors).

A SERVICE OF LESSONS & CAROLS

December 10 at 4:00 pm. This gentle candlelight service is a classic, with a series of scripture readings that take us through the story of God's promise, Israel's longing and waiting, and the fulfilment of the promise in the birth of Christ. Listen to beautiful Christmas music presented by Robertson-Wesley's music groups and guest instrumentalists, and sing some of your favourite Christmas carols. In person and online.

WILD CHURCH

There are two Wild Church gatherings to look forward to this December! Firstly, as the year's longest night approaches, join the regularly scheduled Wild Church worship on **Dec 17** at 1pm to partake in a Testimony to the Light at the Winter Solstice. Our second gathering will be on the winter solstice itself (**Dec 21**) at 7pm; during this unstructured worship, we invite you, if you wish, to bring/share a reading/story on any theme related to the solstice. For both gatherings, we will meet at the Emily Murphy Park Fire Circle at Picnic Site #3. To keep warm, a fire and hot drinks will be provided (bring a mug). Remember to dress for the weather, and bring along friends of any age (or species)! For questions or transportation arrangements, get in touch by email (wildchurch@rwuc.org), website (wildchurchyeg.org), or Instagram (@wildchurchyeg). Cancelled below -15°C with windchill.

WHITE GIFT SUNDAY

On **December 10**, White Gift Sunday, we will be collecting items for the Bissell Centre, they have provided the Wish List of needed items below. Infants & children: musical toys, rattles, shape stackers, board books, picture books, graphic novels, basketball, soccer ball, craft or science set, puzzles, art supplies, dolls, building toys, vehicle toys, animal toys. Youth: gift cards, sporting goods, sealed cosmetics, board games/puzzles and art supplies *Please no plush toys/ used toys or books/ clothing/ food or candy. These gifts will be collected during Worship and delivered to the Bissell Centre on Sunday, **December 10**. You can also donate toys virtually through the Bissell Centres amazon wishlist, more details at <https://bissellcentre.org/festive-giveaway>. If you would like to donate financially to the Bissell Centre please do so on their website at <https://bissellcentre.org/helpy-holidays> or write a cheque to the Bissell Centre and mail it to them at 10527 96 st Edmonton, AB T5H 2H6.

JOURNEY THROUGH THE LABYRINTH

How will you prepare for Christmas this year? Come for a reflective walk during Advent. The Labyrinth will be open in Memorial Hall Wednesdays **December 6** and **20** from 6:30-8:00 pm.

BLUE CHRISTMAS OF HEALING

December 17 at 7:00 pm. Christmas is a holy time that is not always happy. It brings up so many memories that heighten our feelings of grief or sadness, pain or loneliness. This is a service of quiet reflection, remembrance and peace. We hope that this service will bring a sense of peace in this sacred season with quiet music, scripture, silence and candle light. Everyone is welcome.

BETWEEN THE AISLES

Hot off the presses, a new issue of *Between the Aisles* featuring musings, poetry, recipes, plus church activity listings for Advent and Christmas, grab your copy today from the racks near the entrances.

THE MERCURY BLOCK

If anyone would like to go on a group tour of the new building across the street on **December 10** at 12:30 pm, contact Brad.campbell@rwuc.org and he will add you to the list.

In the Community

NO ROOM IN THE INN

For nearly 25 years, *No Room In the Inn* has led a successful cross-denominational holiday campaign to raise money for housing those in need. For 2023, *A Safe Place* has been selected as the recipient organization. Since 1982, *A Safe Place* has been empowering women by providing comprehensive services, including: advocacy, education, court support, counselling, supported referrals, Community Outreach, New Beginnings, and more. The roof of *A Safe Place*'s current facility, which is used to both serve clients escaping intimate violence and run the organization, is in need of immediate repairs – the cost of which is significant. This partnership with *No Room in the Inn* quite literally serves to put a roof over their heads. To donate you can make a cheque payable to R-W, writing "No Room In the Inn" in the memo line. All proceeds will be collected and forwarded to *A Safe Place*. For more information about NRII, contact Rev. Larry Wright 780-667-3225 or email nrii.edm@gmail.com

Cover Image

The cover image is from wallpaper.com

Minister of Faith Development and Intergenerational Ministry: Vacant

Minister of Social Justice and Outreach: Vacant

Lead 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