



Robertson - Wesley  
UNITED CHURCH *Spirited*

*An Affirming Congregation of the United Church of Canada*

2023 December 24

Christmas Eve

4:00 PM

"For a child has been born for us, a song given to us...  
and he is named Wonderful Counselor,  
Mighty God, Prince of Peace."



### **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*

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*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 cell phone 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.



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## *Friends in Christ*

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Prelude: *Cradle Song*, by Malcolm Archer

Dr. Allan Bevan, organ

Greeting:

I greet you in the name of the One born this night: Jesus our Emmanuel.  
May the hope, peace, joy and love of Christ be with you.  
**And also with you.**

Welcome

Call to Worship:

On this night,  
**the stars were shining bright.**  
Angels sang,  
**words of hope filled with delight.**  
While Shepherds  
**journeyed into the night.**  
Mary cried,  
**in joy, at such a sight.**  
A baby,  
**whose spirit would unite,**  
a world,  
**in need of a re-write.**  
Gift offered  
**in love, as an invite.**  
For peace,  
**on earth shared on this night.**

Opening Prayer: (Repeat after me with actions)

God of shadows, God of light  
Come be with us on this night.  
Bless the gifts we give today,  
let them help us live your way!  
We find your baby in the hay,  
with songs of joy we sing “hooray!”  
We tell you the story of way back when,  
we love you, Jesus! Thank you! Amen!<sup>1</sup>

Hymn: *Joy to the World*

*Voices United 59 vs 1, 2 & 4*

**Joy to the world! the Lord is come;  
let earth receive her King!  
Let every heart prepare him room,  
and heaven and nature sing,  
and heaven and nature sing,  
and heaven and heaven and nature sing.**  
**Joy to the earth! the Saviour reigns:  
let all their songs employ,  
while fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains  
repeat the sounding joy,**

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<sup>1</sup> Written by Michelle Johnson-Armstrong and Penny Nelson, Dec 2023. Used with permission.

**repeat the sounding joy,  
repeat, repeat the sounding joy.**

**He rules the earth with truth and grace,  
and makes the nations prove  
the glories of his righteousness  
and wonders of his love,  
and wonders of his love,  
and wonders, wonders of his love.**

A Story of Love Revealed - Part 1

Hanna Gregory

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## *Angels*

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Scripture: Isaiah 9:2, 6-7

McKinley Norrad

The people who have walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness - on them light has shined. For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Creator, Prince of Peace. His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time onward and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

Hymn: *Angels We Have Heard on High*

*Voices United 38*

**Angels we have heard on high  
sweetly singing o'er the plains,  
and the mountains in reply,  
echoing their joyous strains.  
Glo-ria, in excelsis Deo!  
Glo-ria, in excelsis Deo!**

**Shepherds why this jubilee?  
Why your joyous strains prolong?  
What the gladsome tidings be  
which inspire your heavenly song?  
Glo-ria, in excelsis Deo!  
Glo-ria, in excelsis Deo!**

**Come to Bethlehem and see  
Christ whose birth the angels sing;  
come, adore on bended knee  
Christ, the Lord, the newborn King.  
Glo-ria, in excelsis Deo!  
Glo-ria, in excelsis Deo!**

**See him in a manger laid,  
whom the choirs of angels praise;  
Mary, Joseph, lend your aid,  
while our hearts in love we raise.  
Glo-ria, in excelsis Deo!  
Glo-ria, in excelsis Deo!**

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## Mary and Joseph

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Scripture: Luke 2:1-7

Sienna Nairne

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

Hymn: *O Little Town of Bethlehem*

*Voices United 64*

**O Little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie!  
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by;  
yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting light;  
the hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.**

**For Christ is born of Mary, and gathered all above  
while mortals sleep, the angels keep their watch of wondering love.  
O morning stars together proclaim the holy birth,  
and praises sing to God the King, and peace to all on earth.**

**How silently, how silently the wondrous gift is given!  
So God imparts to human hearts the blessed gift of heaven.  
No ear may hear his coming; but in this world of sin,  
where meek souls will receive him, still the dear Christ enters in.**

**O holy child of Bethlehem, descending to us, we pray;  
cast out our sin, and enter in; be born in us today.  
We hear the Christmas angels the great glad tidings tell;  
O come to us, abide with us, our Lord Emmanuel.**

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## Shepherds

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Scripture: Luke 2:8-14

Talia Folk

In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flocks by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid; for see - I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.' And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, 'Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom God favours!'

**Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,  
the little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head.  
The stars in the bright sky looked down where he lay,  
the little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.**

**The cattle are lowing, the baby awakes,  
but little Lord Jesus, no crying he makes.  
I love you, Lord Jesus; look down from the sky,  
and stay by my side until morning is nigh.**

**Be near me, Lord Jesus, I ask you to stay  
close by me forever, and love me, I pray.  
Bless all the dear children in your tender care,  
and fit us for heaven, to live with you there.**

Scripture: Luke 2:15-20

Sebastian Nairne

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, 'Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us.' So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

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### *Wise Ones*

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Scripture: Matthew 2:1-12

Cambrie Norrad

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise ones from the East came to Jerusalem, asking, "Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising and have come to pay him homage." When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet: 'And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who is to shepherd my people Israel. Then Herod secretly called for the wise ones and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage." When they had heard the king, they set out; and there ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the house they saw the child with Mary, his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

Solo: *Kling Glockchen*, Trad. German Carol arr. by Vicki Courtney Raydene Koch, soloist

Pastoral Prayers

Rev. Karen Bridges

Lord's Prayer

*Voices United* p. 921

**Our Creator, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy name,  
thy kindom come,  
thy will be done,  
on earth, as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread,  
And forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive those who trespass against us.  
And lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil:  
For thine is the kindom, the power, and the glory  
forever and ever. Amen.**

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*Grateful Response*

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Offering:

*Your donations 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](mailto: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.*

Offertory Hymn: *In the Bleak Midwinter*

*Voices United* 55 v.4

**What can I give him, poor as I am?  
If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb;  
if I were a wise man, I would do my part;  
yet what I can I give him - give my heart.**

Prayer of Gratitude

Lighting the Christ Candle:

Madeleine Patterson

Why do we light candles on Christmas Eve?

We light the first blue candle because

**Jesus brings us hope that we can change the world!**

We light the second blue candle because

**Jesus teaches that peace comes when we listen to each other with respect and speak to each other with kindness.**

We light the third pink candle because

**we find joy in seeing the beauty and humanity in every person we meet in this world and through sharing what we have with people in need.**

We light the fourth blue candle because

**love is the greatest gift any of us can give and receive.**

Tonight we light the final white candle which is the Christ candle because  
**Jesus is the light of the world.**

Lighting of our Candles/Glow Sticks

**Silent night! Holy night!**  
**All is calm, all is bright**  
**round yon virgin mother and child.**  
**Holy infant so tender and mild,**  
**sleep in heavenly peace,**  
**sleep in heavenly peace.**

**Silent night! Holy night!**  
**Shepherds quake at the sight:**  
**glories stream from heaven afar,**  
**heavenly hosts sing Hallelujah,**  
**Christ the Saviour is born,**  
**Christ the Saviour is born.**

**Silent night! Holy night!**  
**Son of God, love's pure light**  
**radiant beams from thy holy face,**  
**with the dawn of redeeming grace,**  
**Jesus, Lord, at thy birth,**  
**Jesus, Lord, at thy birth.**

Benediction:

May all heaven's angels watch over you. And heal you and keep you safe till the morning all through the night. These blessings I will send, sweet dreams till your waking life.

Postlude: *Gabriel's Message*, by Michael Bedford

Dr. Allan Bevan, organ

*As hearts are joined together on this holy night,  
may each one be touched by the peace and joy  
of the wondrous birth.*

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## *Worship Notes*

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Christmas is a celebration of the long awaited birth of Jesus, our Emmanuel which means "God with us". The season of Christmas lasts for 12 days and ends with the arrival of the wise ones who brought gifts to Jesus, which is known as Epiphany Sunday. This is the season when light is born in human hearts through receiving and sharing the gifts of God. The central symbols of Christmas are "light" and "gifts". The colour of this season is White/Gold for Jesus said, "I am the light of the world!" We wish you a Merry Christmas!

Thank you to Raydene Koch, and all of the readers, and greeters this night.

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## *Cover Image*

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This image was painted by Mira Warkentin, Dec. 15, 2023.

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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