



*An Affirming Congregation of the United Church of Canada*

2023 December 24

Christmas Eve

7:00 PM

**O come, let us adore him!**



### **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, 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.



10209 123 St, Edmonton T5N 1N3 780-482-1587  
mail@rwuc.org www.rwuc.org

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## *Friends in Christ*

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Prelude: *Fanfare-Toccata on "Mendelssohn,"* arr. by J. William Greene  
Brass Quartet and 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

Introit: *Angel's Carol*, by John Rutter Douglas Graham, soloist

Call to Worship:

Where's the line to see Jesus?

**Pardon me?**

Where's the line to see Jesus?

Can I find him here?

Can I ask him the questions I've always wondered?

Can I listen to him teach?

Can I be healed by his touch?

Can I live in his love?

**Yes!**

Well, where's the line to see Jesus?

**There is no line.**

**Each of us meets the Christ, in our own way,  
in our own time...and no one has to wait.**

Christ is with us.

Christ is with you.

Christ is with the world!

**Christ is with me?**

Christ is with you.

**Merry Christmas!**<sup>1</sup>

Opening Prayer:

O Gracious God, we celebrate the birth of a tiny babe, born of a woman named Mary.

**Come let us adore him, Christ the Lord.**

We marvel at the miraculous story shared with us, a story of when love came to a young woman to bring us out of the shadows into the glorious light.

**Come let us adore him, Christ the Lord.**

We celebrate how you came to dwell among us, O God, joining us just where we are, just as we are, in joy, in sorrow, in pain, in tragedy.

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<sup>1</sup> Written by Richard Bott, **Gathering**, Advent/Christmas/Epiphany, 2016/17, p. 34. Used with permission.

**Come let us adore him, Christ the Lord.**

You experienced our ways through your life in Christ.

**Come let us adore him, Christ the Lord.**

You showed us the way, the ultimate truth. You let us glimpse or touch your face, your presence, your nature.

**Come let us adore him, Christ the Lord.**

Never can we say we do not know you, for you revealed your innermost essence to us:

**for the Word became flesh and dwelt alongside us and among us.**

Loving and Gracious One, we know you are with us now and forever, and so we declare:

**Come let us adore him, Christ the Lord.<sup>2</sup>**

Hymn: *Hark! the Herald Angels Sing*

*Voices United 48*

**Hark! the herald angels sing,  
“Glory to the newborn King,  
peace on earth and mercy mild,  
God and sinners reconciled!”**

**Joyful, all ye nations, rise,  
join the triumph of the skies;  
with angelic host proclaim,  
“Christ is born in Bethlehem!”  
Hark! the herald angels sing,  
“Glory to the newborn King!”**

**Christ, by highest heaven adored,  
Christ, the everlasting Lord,  
late in time behold him come,  
offspring of a virgin’s womb.  
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see;  
hail the incarnate deity,  
pleased with us in flesh to dwell,  
Jesus, our Emmanuel!  
Hark! the herald angels sing,  
“Glory to the newborn King!”**

**Hail, the heaven born Prince of Peace!  
Hail, the Sun of Righteousness!  
Light and life to all he brings,  
risen with healing in his wings.  
Mild he lays his glory by,  
born that we no more may die,  
born to raise us from the earth,  
born to give us second birth.  
Hark! the herald angels sing,  
“Glory to the newborn King!”**

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<sup>2</sup> Written by Barbara Johns, **Gathering**, Advent/Christmas/Epiphany, 2023/24, p. 36.  
Used with permission.

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## God's Holy Word

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Scripture: Isaiah 9:2-7

John Kilduff

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness - on them light has shined. You have multiplied the nation, you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as people exult when dividing plunder. For the yoke of their burden, and the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian. For all the boots of the tramping warriors and all the garments rolled in blood shall be burned as fuel for the fire. 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 Father, 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: *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,  
descend 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.**

Scripture: Luke 2:1-7

Angela Glasel

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. 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.

Reflection: Joseph - Acts of Service.

Rev. Karen Bridges

Scripture: Luke 2:8-14

Angela Glasel

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!'

Reflection: Angels - Words of Affirmation

Rev. Dirk Jessen

Scripture: Luke 2:15-20

Angela Glasel

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.

Hymn: *It Came upon the Midnight Clear*

***Voices United 44***

**It came upon the midnight clear,  
that glorious song of old,  
from angels bending near the earth  
to touch their harps of gold,  
“Peace on the earth, good will to all,  
from heaven’s all gracious King!”  
The world in solemn stillness lay  
to hear the angels sing.**

**Still through the cloven skies they come  
with peaceful wings unfurled;  
and still their heavenly music floats  
o’er all the weary world;  
above its sad and lowly plains  
they bend on hovering wing,  
and ever o’er its Babel sounds  
the blessed angels sing.**

**Yet with the woes of sin and strife  
the world has suffered long;  
beneath the angel strain have rolled  
two thousand years of wrong;  
and warring humankind hears not  
the love song which they bring.  
O hush the noise, and cease your strife,  
to hear the angels sing.**

**For, lo! the days are hastening on,  
by prophets seen of old,  
when with the ever circling years  
shall come the time foretold,  
when peace shall over all the earth  
its ancient splendours fling,  
and the whole world send back the song  
which now the angels sing.**

Scripture: Matthew 2:1-12

John Kilduff

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.

Reflection: The Wise Ones - Gifts Given

Rev. Dirk Jessen

Hymn: *Go, Tell It on the Mountain*

**Voices United 43**

**Go, tell it on the mountain, over the hills and everywhere.**

**Go, tell it on the mountain that Jesus Christ is born.**

**While shepherds kept their watching  
o'er silent flocks by night,  
behold, throughout the heavens  
there shone a holy light.**

**Go, tell it on the mountain, over the hills and everywhere.**

**Go, tell it on the mountain that Jesus Christ is born.**

**The shepherds feared and trembled  
when lo, above the earth  
rang out the angel chorus  
that hailed our Saviour's birth!**

**Go, tell it on the mountain, over the hills and everywhere.**

**Go, tell it on the mountain that Jesus Christ is born.**

**Down in a lonely manger  
the humble Christ was born,  
and God sent our salvation  
that blessed Christmas morn.**

**Go, tell it on the mountain, over the hills and everywhere.**

**Go, tell it on the mountain that Jesus Christ is born.**

Solo: *Ave Maria*, by Franz Abt

Jacqueline Hernandez, soloist

*Ave Maria, gratia plena*

*Dominus tecum.*

*Benedicta tu in mulieribus,*

*Et benedictus fructus ventris tui, Jesus.*

*Sancta Maria, Mater Dei,*

*Ora pro nobis peccatoribus*

*Nunc et in hora mortis nostrae.*

*Amen.*



Hail, Mary, full of grace;  
the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women;  
and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.  
Holy Mary, mother of God,  
Pray for us sinners  
Now and at the hour of our death.  
Amen.

Advent Wreath Lighting

Rev. Dirk Jessen

Pastoral Prayers<sup>3</sup>

Rev. Dirk Jessen

The Lord's Prayer

*Voices United* p. 921

**Our Creator, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy name,  
thy kingdom 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 kingdom, the power, and the glory  
forever and ever. Amen.**

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### *Grateful Response*

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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](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 Music: *On This Day Earth Shall Ring*, 16th c. Carol Melody

arr. by Raymond Haan

Brass Quartet and Dr. Allan Bevan, Organ

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.**

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<sup>3</sup> Based on a prayer written by Joanna MacQuarrie, 1994, *Worship for All Seasons II, Year C*, page 58. Used with permission.

Prayer of Gratitude:

Holy God, bless the work and care that Robertson-Wesley United offers through the gifts to the many situations we encounter year round. Receive these financial gifts on this day and bless them with impact, bringing people nearer to you in faith. Through these gifts, may we take part in the uplifting with hope of those who feel lost, the comforting of all who are grieving, the justice seeking for those who are unhoused and inadequately fed, the compassionate caring for those who are vulnerable in body, mind, and spirit, and the supporting of those recently released from prison. May this offering strengthen this ministry to your glory. **Amen.**<sup>4</sup>

The physical touch of love - receive the swaddling cloth

Spoken Word Reflection: *Whispered words of God are proclaimed!*

Lighting of Candles

Hymn: *Silent Night*

*Voices United 67*

**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:

Let the hope that was born in a stable this night be a sign that God can change the world through one small light.

**May the God of all touch us once again with wonder.**

May the spirit of love fill our hearts to overflowing.

**May Christ's spirit of peace be upon everyone, everywhere.**

The grace of Christ be with you, today and forevermore. **Amen.**<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Elaine Bidgood Sweet, **Gathering**, Advent/Christmas/Epiphany, 2023/24 p. 31. Used with permission.

<sup>5</sup> Written by Kim Falls, **Gathering**, Advent/Christmas/Epiphany 2016/17, p. 36. Used with permission.

Postlude: *People Look East*, Trad. French Carol arr. by Sondra Tucker  
Brass Quartet and 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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Thank you to trumpet players Robin Doyon and Kevin Yue, to trombonists Alden Lowrey and Julien Simard, percussionist David Kelmer, and vocalists Jacqueline Hernandez and Douglas Graham for their gifts of music in our service tonight.

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### *Cover Image*

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Cover image is of art created by Mira Warkentin, December 2023.

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

# *Welcome to Robertson-Wesley*

If you would like you can fill out this page, tear it off, and place it in the offering plates at the exits. This form is also available to fill out online at [rwuc.org/infocard](http://rwuc.org/infocard)

Today's Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Contact Information:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Preferred gender pronouns: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ Province: \_\_\_\_\_

Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

I would like to subscribe to the email newsletter

Yes  No

I am new in the community

I am a visitor

I am interested in speaking with a minister

I am considering making this my church

Please put in the offering plate. Thank you

