



An Affirming Congregation of The United Church of Canada

2024 January 7

Life Passages

Epiphany Sunday



Welcome and Inclusion

We open our hearts and our church family to all people in our community regardless of age, gender identity, differing abilities, ethnicity, economic circumstances, or sexual orientation. 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 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

Friends in Christ

Announcements at 10:15 AM

Prelude: *Christ unser Herr zum Jordan kam*, by Dietrich Buxtehude

Dr. Allan Bevan, organ

Embracing Our Spirit

Call to Worship:

In the midst of shadows and despair, the chaos and uncertainty that existed before the world was born...

God said: "Let there be light."

In the trials and temptations of everyday life, we seek assurance that we are not alone...

God says: "Let there be light."

In the journey to the future, inspired by mentors from the past, remaining open to the guidance of prophets from the future, we live with anticipation...

God will say: "Let there be light."¹

Prayer of Transformation:

God of the Cosmos, out of the mystery of your love and grace, the right combination of elements and heat have burst forth to become stars and planets.

And we, amazed, are part of this wonder, formed of stardust.

As you guided the magi to the Living Light by the light of the heavens, guide our lives that we might draw nearer to your presence.

(a time of silent prayer will be observed)

Grant us the wisdom to bow before your mystery, offering who we are and what we have,

rejoicing in the blessing we have found and will find. Amen.²

Hymn: *I Am the Light of the World*

Voices United 87

"I am the light of the world!

You people come and follow me!"

**If you follow and love, you'll learn the mystery
of what you were meant to do and be.**

**When the song of the angels is stilled,
when the star in the sky is gone,
when the kings and the shepherds have found their way home,
the work of Christmas is begun:**

"I am the light of the world!

You people come and follow me!"

¹ Written by **Bill Steadman**, Goulais River U.C., Goulais River, Ont., **Gathering**, Advent/Christmas/Epiphany, 2023/24, page 39. Used with permission.

² Written by **Sudbury Presbytery Liturgy Writing Team**, Sudbury, Ont., **Gathering**, Advent/Christmas/Epiphany, 2023/24, page 39. Used with permission.

**If you follow and love, you'll learn the mystery
of what you were meant to do and be.**

**To find the lost and lonely one,
to heal that broken soul with love,
to feed the hungry children with warmth and good food,
to feel the earth below, the sky above!**

**“I am the light of the world!
You people come and follow me!”
If you follow and love, you'll learn the mystery
of what you were meant to do and be.**

**To free the prisoner from all chains,
to make the powerful care,
to rebuild the nations with strength of good will,
to see God’s children everywhere!**

**“I am the light of the world!
You people come and follow me!”
If you follow and love, you'll learn the mystery
of what you were meant to do and be.**

**To bring hope to every task you do,
to dance at a baby's new birth,
to make music in an old person’s heart
and sing to the colours of the earth!**

**“I am the light of the world!
You people come and follow me!”
If you follow and love, you'll learn the mystery
of what you were meant to do and be.**

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 as you are able*)

**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.**

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 live, 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:

God, sometimes as we receive the scriptures, we are afraid or become confused. Help us to wisely discern the words of life and love you are teaching us today. **Amen.**³

Scripture:

Nancy Heule

Mark 1:21-45 • Jesus heals and teaches.

They went to Capernaum; and when the sabbath came, he entered the synagogue and taught. They were astounded at his teaching for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes. Just then there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit, and he cried out, 'What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are, the Holy One of God.' But Jesus rebuked him, saying, 'Be silent, and come out of him!' And the unclean spirit convulsing him and crying with a loud voice, came out of him. They were all amazed, and they kept on asking one another, 'What is this? A

³ Written by **Susan Girard**, River View U.C, Atikokan, Ont., **Gathering**, Advent/Christmas/Epiphany, 2021/22, page 48. Used with permission.

new teaching - with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him.” At once his fame began to spread throughout the surrounding region of Galilee. As soon as they left the synagogue, they entered the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John. Now Simon’s mother-in-law was in bed with a fever, and they told him about her at once. He came and took her by the hand and lifted her up. Then the fever left her, and she began to serve them. That evening, at sundown, they brought to him all who were sick or possessed with demons. And the whole city was gathered around the door. And he cured many who were sick with various diseases, and cast out many demons; and he would not permit the demons to speak, because they knew him. In the morning, while it was still very dark, he got up and went out to a deserted place, and there he prayed. And Simon and his companions hunted for him. When they found him, they said to him, “Everyone is searching for you.” He answered, “Let us go on to the neighbouring towns, so that I may proclaim the message there also; for that is what I came out to do.” And he went throughout Galilee, proclaiming the message in their synagogues and casting out demons. A leper came to him begging him, and kneeling he said to him, ‘If you choose, you can make me clean.’ Moved with pity, Jesus stretched out his hand and touched him, and said to him, “I do choose. Be made clean!” Immediately the leprosy left him, and he was made clean. After sternly warning him he sent him away at once, saying to him, “See that you say nothing to anyone; but go, show yourself to the priest, and offer for your cleansing what Moses commanded, as a testimony to them.” But he went out and began to proclaim it freely, and to spread the word, so that Jesus could no longer go into a town openly, but stayed out in the country; and people came to him from every quarter.

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

Thanks be to God.

Solo: *Wade in the Water*, Trad. American Spiritual arr. by Harry Burleigh

Marilee Stephens, soloist

Sermon: Needs Emerge

Rev. Dirk Jessen

Hymn: *God, Whose Almighty Word*

Voices United 313

**God, whose almighty word
chaos and darkness heard,
and took their flight,
hear us, we humbly pray,
and where the gospel day
sheds not its glorious ray,
let there be light.**

**Jesus, who came to bring
on your redeeming wing,
healing and sight,
health to the troubled mind,
sight to the Spirit-blind,
O now to humankind
let there be light.**

Spirit of truth and love,
life-giving, holy dove,
speed forth your flight;
move on the water's face,
bearing the lamp of grace,
and in earth's darkest place
let there be light.

Blessed and holy three,
glorious trinity,
wisdom, love, might,
boundless as ocean's tide
rolling in fullest pride,
through the world far and wide,
let there be light.

Grateful Response

Pastoral Prayers

Lord's Prayer:

Rev. Karen Bridges

Voices United p. 921

**Our Creator, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name.
thy kin-dom 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 that trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil:
For thine is the kin-dom and the power and the glory,
forever and ever. 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.



Offertory: *Song of Thankfulness and Praise*

Voices United 101 v. 4

**Grant us grace to see you, Lord, mirrored in your holy Word;
with you grace our lives endow, grace to imitate you now,
that we like to you may be at your great epiphany,
anthems be to you addressed, God in flesh made manifest.**

Prayer of Gratitude:

Holy One, bless all that we offer today and throughout this year:
our time and finances,
our energy and ideas,
our care and compassion,
our praise and prayers.
Together may we create a community of faith, hope, and love in
Jesus' name. Amen.⁴

Hymn: *When Jesus Comes to Be Baptized*

Voices United 100

When Jesus comes to be baptized
he leaves the hidden years behind,
the years of safety and of peace,
to bear the sins of humankind.

The Spirit of the Lord comes down,
anoints the Christ to suffering,
to preach the word, to free the bound,
and to the mourner, comfort bring.

He will not quench the dying flame,
and what is bruised he will not break,
but heal the wound injustice dealt,
and out of death his triumph make.

O Spirit help us be like Christ:
to live in love and charity.
to walk in truth and justice now,
and grow in Christian dignity.

We praise you, God, source of all life,
we praise you, Christ, eternal Word,
we praise you, Spirit, gracious gift;
your triune presence fills our world.

Commissioning:

Go and continue to be the followers of Jesus that you are called to be.
Take the message of inclusion and justice into the community and
share it boldly. Be among God's beloved wherever you go, and
remember you are the only Bible that many people will ever encounter.
May the love of God envelop you, the blessing of Christ enfold you
and the wonder of the Holy Spirit embrace you, now and forevermore.
Amen.⁵

Postlude: *Be Thou My Vision*, Trad. Irish Melody arr. by Ruth Elaine Schram

Dr. Allan Bevan, organ

⁴ Written by **Catherine Elsdon**, Sydenham Street U.C. and Faith U.C., Kingston, Ont.
Gathering, Advent/Christmas/Epiphany, 2023/24, page 48. Used with permission.

⁵ Written by **Laura Turnbull**, Penticton, B.C., **Gathering**, Advent/Christmas/Epiphany,
2023/24, page 48. Used with permission.

Questions for Reflection:

When have you made an intentional new beginning?

Was what emerged what you had expected?

As Robertson-Wesley United Church begins this year with the intention of being “good news” in our community and world, what urgent needs might be waiting for us as a congregation to meet?

R-W Report

Next Sunday

Sunday, Jan 14, 2024

Epiphany 2

Children & Youth: Children begin in the sanctuary, then go to Kids’ Church. Youth meet in the youth room at the beginning of the service.

Scripture: Mark 4:1-34 • Parables of sower and mustard seed.

Sermon: Emerging Church Growth

Jesus taught in parables which is defined as a short fictitious story that illustrates a moral attitude or a religious principle. The parable of the sower invites faithful followers to not worry about success on the first try, but rather to sow with abundance and trust in God to bear fruit. These teachings remind us to have hope, and to believe that with God all things are possible. What we need to do is be mindful, watch and learn and to see failure as growth rather than something to hide or be ashamed of. This is a year to sow our faith abundantly in the community that Robertson-Wesley serves. Let’s get involved and see what grows in our midst.

Music: Dr. Allan Bevan, organist, Robertson-Wesley Choir

WEEK AT A GLANCE

Sun Jan 7	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
Mon Jan 8	Spirited Art Studio - Art Studio	7:00 pm
Tues Jan 9	Scripture Reflections - Club Room & Zoom	12:00 pm
	Property Committee Meeting - Room 11	1:00 pm
	UCW - Memorial Hall	1:30 pm
	DEAP - Club Room	5:30 pm
	Finance Meeting - Club Room	7:00 pm
	Search Team Meeting - Library	7:00 pm
Wed Jan 10	Spirited Art Studio - Art Studio	1:30 pm
	R-W Choir Rehearsal - Sanctuary/Lower Hall	7:30 pm
Thurs Jan 11	Men’s Group - Memorial Hall	10:00 am
	Nova Bells - Lower Hall	5:15 pm
	R-W Ringers - Lower Hall	6:45 pm
Sat Jan 13	Community Dinner - Memorial Hall	5:00 pm

ON THE HORIZON

Sun Jan 14	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
Mon Jan 15	Spirited Art Studio - Art Studio	7:00 pm
Tues Jan 16	Scripture Reflections - Club Room & Zoom	12:00 pm
	R-W Board Meeting - Room 11 & Zoom	7:00 pm
Wed Jan 17	Spirited Art Studio - Art Studio	1:30 pm
	R-W Choir Rehearsal - Sanctuary/Lower Hall	7:30 pm
Thurs Jan 18	Not Falling for You - Memorial Hall	10:00 am
	Nova Bells - Lower Hall	5:15 pm
	R-W Ringers - Lower Hall	6:45 pm

Volunteer Opportunities

COMMUNITY DINNER KEY LEADERSHIP VOLUNTEERS

R-W's Community Dinners are hugely successful. It's a fulfilling act of service and connection. At this time what we require are 2-3 people able to commit to join our leadership group. Attending the dinner once per month for approximately 5 hours and occasional email communication. Tasks include kitchen work, volunteer liaison and supporting tasks needed on the day of the dinner. If you are interested please contact Rhonda at Rljblack@shaw.ca.

COMMUNITY DINNER

We are in need of more volunteers for the Community Dinner on Saturday, **Jan 13**. To Sign-up visit rwuc.org/volunteer or use the tablet in the outer office or during fellowship.

NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE

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. This is a great way to get to know people in the community of faith and the goal is to help people discover where their gifts from God would best be suited. 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.

COMMUNION SERVER VOLUNTEERS

Sunday, **January 21**, 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.

R-W News & Notes

MEN'S GROUP

The Robertson Wesley Men's Group is having its first meeting of 2024, on Thursday, **January 11th** in Memorial Hall from 10:00 am to 12:00 pm. The agenda will consist of continued discussions as to finalize activities which will be undertaken by the group over the coming five months. All are welcome. Bring snacks if available - coffee will be provided. Any questions call Louis Berlinguette at 780-910-4486.

GREEN BITES

It's resolution time so why not choose a resolution to learn a new skill, one practised by our ancestors but in danger of disappearing in today's world? Below are a few suggestions:

- Cooking from scratch rather than relying on take-out
- Starting bedding plants so we are in touch with the earth
- Making bread and using our hands to do so
- Fly-making if we are fishers
- Wood-working and using forgotten tools to do so

-The Environmental Stewardship Group.

CHURCH GAMES NIGHT

Saturday, **January 20** from 7:00 - 9:00 pm. Come and participate in a Church Games Night. Bring a snack to share, bring your friends, family and children if you have them. This is an all age event. Bring your favourite board game if you have one! There will be a variety of different games that we will play together and in small groups. It will be lots of fun.

SCRIPTURE REFLECTIONS

Tuesdays at 12:00 pm on Zoom and in the Club Room. Reflect on the scripture passages for the coming Sunday. We use the practice of Lectio Divina, which means we read 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 wonderful to hear the diversity of messages that are received. Contact the office for the Zoom link. Come with a bible and a journal, or simply yourself! Tune in when you can.

READING THE BIBLE IN A YEAR

Have you always wanted to read the bible cover to cover? We have a booklet that gives you a reading each day throughout the year for those of you who are interested. We would also like to set up a few groups that could provide a place to discuss what you are reading with others. Please let us know if you would prefer daytime, evenings or weekends, and if you would prefer in person or online. Email or contact Rev. Karen Bridges at karen.bridges@rwuc.org. The booklets will be available on Sunday.

ANNUAL REPORT

The deadline for reports from the committees, pods and groups of the church is **February 4**. Send your information to mail@rwuc.org with “2023 Annual Report Submission” in the subject line.

SPIRITED ART STUDIO

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. **Monday** evenings from 7:00 - 8:30 pm and **Wednesday** afternoons 1:30 - 3:00 pm.

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.

Information and Registration: Thursday, **January 19** at 10:00 am

Classes: Thursdays 10:00 – 11:00 am, **January 25 – April 18**.

Worship Notes

The season of Christmas lasts for 12 days after Jesus is born and ends on Epiphany Sunday. During this time we celebrate the gift of love which comes to us in Jesus of Nazareth. In this time we feel the incarnate love of God found in the vulnerability of a child. Did you know that “Jesus” is a Greek form of the Hebrew name “Joshua” or “Jeshua” which means “God saves.” When Jesus was born, the people of faith were waiting for a leader to bring justice and peace. At this time in our history we too seek justice and peace. May the birth of Jesus remind us that we need to be part of the change that we seek in this world.

Cover Image

The cover image is from Wikipedia, it is of a reproduction of a typical synagogue from the first century CE in the Nazareth Village living Museum in Nazareth.

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