

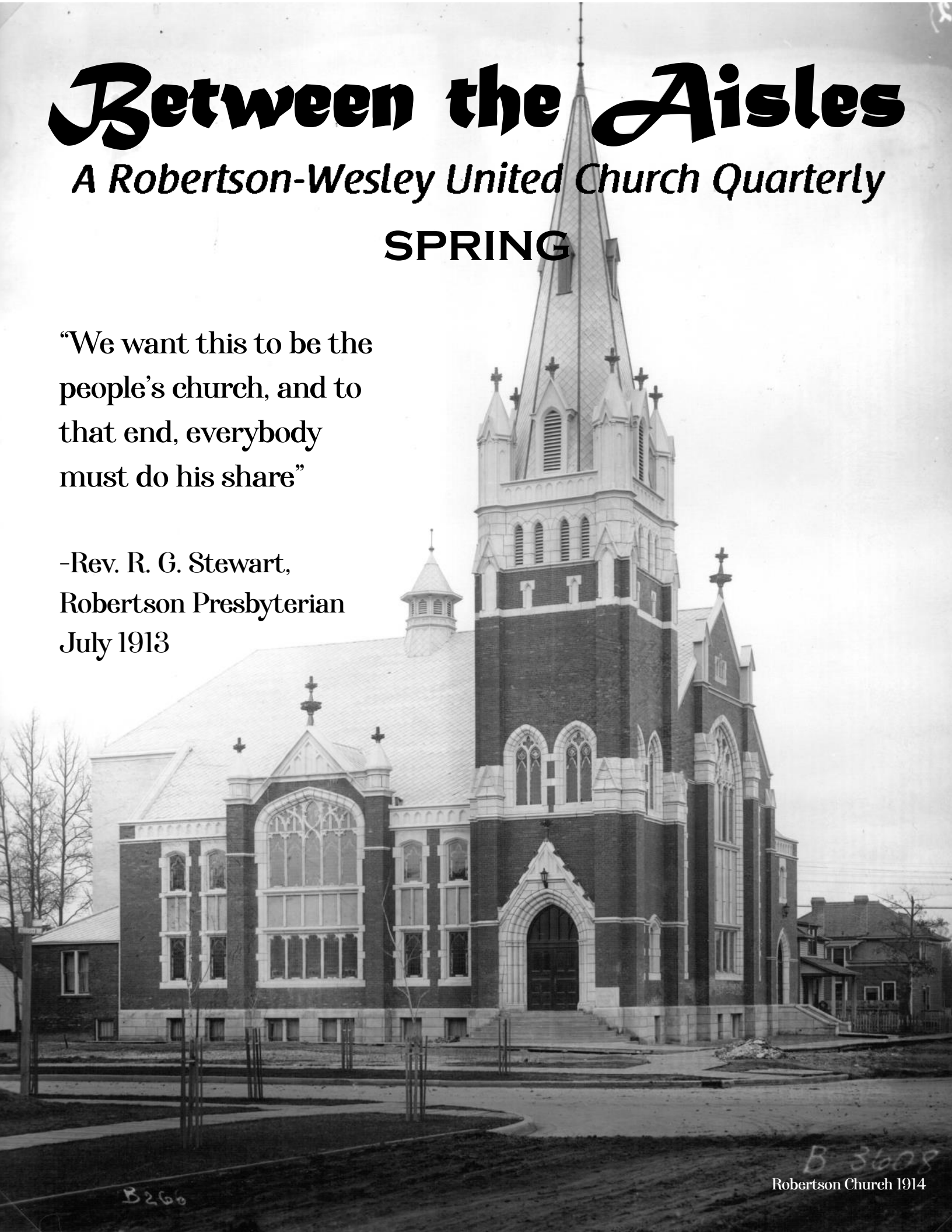
Between the Aisles

A Robertson-Wesley United Church Quarterly

SPRING

“We want this to be the people’s church, and to that end, everybody must do his share”

-Rev. R. G. Stewart,
Robertson Presbyterian
July 1913



B260

B 3608
Robertson Church 1914

Editor's Welcome

Greetings to all of you who are members and adherents of Robertson-Wesley United Church, welcome to the Spring edition of *Between the Aisles*! Because we are marking the 110th anniversary of our church in its present location, the reader will find articles about aspects of our history throughout several decades. No doubt there will be something of interest for everyone, be it photographs, recipes, recollections, or poetry.

As well, readers will find a questionnaire that will help the editors of *Between the Aisles* set a course for the next few years. Please take the time to candidly answer the questions. Responses can be left at the entries to the sanctuary, mailed or emailed to the church, or left in the office. The questionnaire can be found on the last page of this issue.

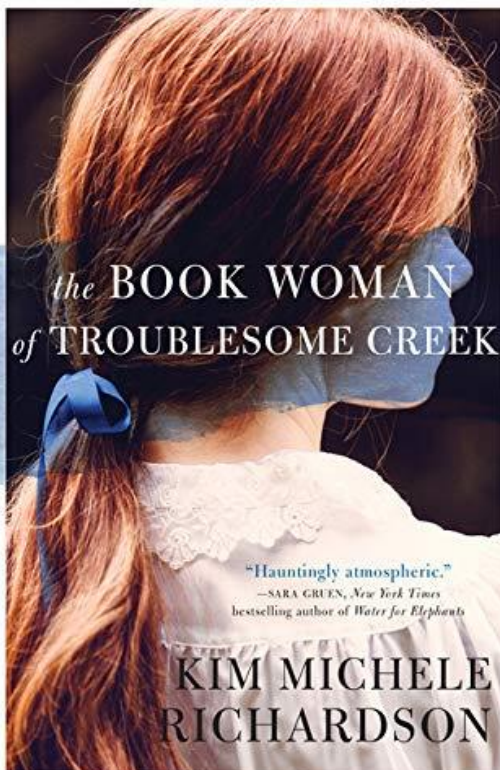
As always, we would like to thank the contributors to our newsletter, and should you have any concerns or comments, don't hesitate to send letters to the editor(s)!

Best Wishes for a Happy 2024!

Marilee Stephens, Lisa Lane, and Nancy Heule, co-editors of *Between the Aisles*.

BOOK REVIEW

The Book Woman of Troublesome Creek by Kim Michele Richardson



Would you like to be black or blue? Would you like to live in Appalachia, Kentucky in 1936? The answer is definitely not. "Book Woman of Troublesome Creek" by Kim Michele Richardson is a captivating historical novel which personalizes conditions in the Dirty Thirties of Kentucky.

Many living in the Appalachians at that time were totally isolated and incredibly poor. To address this, Roosevelt introduced the New Deal, one action being the establishment of "book women" who were hired, yes they were paid, to deliver reading material throughout the mountains, alone, by mule, donkey or horseback, to families or classrooms destitute of books or social contact. In Kentucky in the early 1900's there was a small group of people with a rare genetic disorder which resulted in blue skin. How they were treated in the deep south emulates the mistreatment of African Americans. That is the second theme. The third is husband selection: a burning candle, the law of the parent, tragedy for many women. How the protagonist, a nineteen-year-old, experiences these situations is riveting. I highly recommend the book.

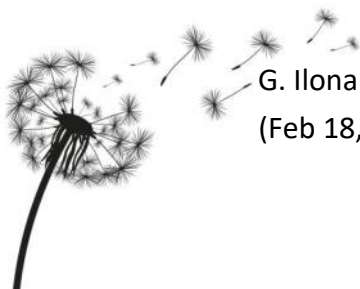
Submitted by Lorna Berlinguette

FEEL LIKE A CHILD

I feel like a child...
 I want to play and run in a field of daisies
 not knowing where I'll stop
 I look to the sky and make friends with the clouds
 laughing out loud.
 My dress is spread around me as
 I stop to rest on my knees.
 Joyous, happy me!
 It's summer.
 I'm alone in this place of
 dandelions and sweet grass;
 trees frame me in the moment.
 I stay still,
 allowing all the bugs and
 creatures of nature to move for me.
 God.
 God is all around me
 In the blue, green, yellow, and music of my soul
 Can I stay here, Lord?
 Can I be here with you
 even as I am in that "other" world?

I feel the heat of the sun on my cheeks,
 the breeze softly plays with my hair,
 I am no one else's at this moment
 Just God's.
 It's where I've always wanted to be
 It's where I've always known I was going
 It's where I've always been.
 The day seems never ending...
 fluff from the dandelions float in the air.

G. Ilona Bevan
 (Feb 18, 2005)



SPIRITED ARTS WORKSHOPS

Finding Light in the Shadows

February 24, 1 - 4 pm



In her book "The Dark Side of the Light Chasers", Debbie Ford says that the path to wholeness and healing is through loving embrace of both our light and shadow selves. By creating self-portraits with dry media, we will explore how all form is modeled with light and shadow and reflect on how we may use this as a metaphor for self-awareness, acceptance and healing. Portraits can be realistic or abstracted/expressive!

Making Space for Your Spirit

April 20, 10 am – 4 pm



When aspects of our life no longer "bear fruit", our energy and spirit can feel stagnant. As in nature, paring back can clear space and energy for more fruitful abundance. Using this metaphor as inspiration, we will do some reflective writing and create 3D collages to visually express that which grounds us in our most heartfelt meaning and purpose!

Art Mask-Making Retreat

June 22, 10 am – 4 pm



In this multi-media workshop, we will explore the concept of masks as expressions of how we see ourselves and perhaps how we would like to be seen. Give your imagination free reign to explore shapes, colours and visual metaphors to create a whimsically personal art mask.

All workshops are facilitated by Julie Kaldenhoven. No previous experience required. All supplies included. Please register by visiting rwuc.org/workshops

An Uplifting Service

As Robertson-Wesley United Church celebrates its 110th birthday, I reflect back to when I first noticed the appealing architecture of its red brick exterior with its prominent steeple. This church, reminiscent of many churches in Europe – towering and stately – is situated in the central part of our city. My husband and I were familiar with the location of Robertson Wesley United Church since we had driven by on many occasions on our way to and from the downtown area.

Our family was searching for a church to attend. We had outgrown our nearby Presbyterian Church. Our children were in their teenage years and there were limited options in the church's youth programming.

One of our daughter's friends invited her to attend their family's church. We decided to accompany her. Our family arrived at this church to find all the men squeezed into the front pews. Only women occupied the pews behind.

"What an odd seating arrangement."

At this church, there was no choir singing nor music playing before the beginning of the service. At the end of the service, a curtain was drawn back to reveal a bathtub filled with water. An invitation was extended to the congregation for anyone who wanted to be saved, to come forward to be baptised by immersion. Our family returned home realizing we didn't fit in.

Several years before, my husband was a member of Forest Grove United Church in Toronto. He and I were married in Toronto at Forest Hill United Church. Since we had an earlier connection to the United Church, and we liked Robertson Wesley's central location, we decided to attend a Sunday service.

We were pleased to observe on our first attendance, close to twenty-five years ago, that there were two ministers sharing the duties of that day's service; Rev. Peggy and Rev. Bruce. We observed the congregation was

scattered throughout the upper level and the lower level, with no designated areas for men or women. Before, during, and after the service, uplifting music filled the building. During the service there was incorporation of Celtic elements, Muslim prayers, Hebrew prayers, Christian prayers, and the sounding of a Buddhist bell to close the silent meditation. All these practices of inclusivity, diversity, and unity conjured feelings within me that all was right with the world. Both ministers, being dynamic speakers, made references to texts written by other authors, that were new to me. After that first sermon at Robertson Wesley, I was eager to search the Edmonton Public Library's catalogue to find those referenced texts.

My husband and I feel that Robertson-Wesley United Church continues to be a church of inclusivity, diversity, and unity, and we find that pleasing. As we celebrate our church's birthday, may we also celebrate each other by looking deeply to find the image of God within.

Devika Short

SIGN UP AND VOLUNTEER

R-W now has an online sign-up service to make it easier for coordinators, volunteers, and future volunteers to sign-up to get involved at R-W. Visit rwuc.org/volunteer or use the tablet in the outer office.

LEADERSHIP SEARCH

We are seeking to fill several positions on the R-W Board as people have finished their two year terms. It is up to the Community of Faith to help discern who amongst us is being called by God to lead R-W in the next few years. In Memorial Hall (and on the website at rwuc.org/leadership-search) there are job descriptions posted, along with a booklet that explains the process for filling these roles. We encourage everyone to prayerfully consider if you are called or if you know of someone who would be great in these positions.

Lent & Easter

Ash Wednesday

Wednesday, February 14 at 7:00 pm in the Sanctuary and Live Streamed. Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of Lent. Please join us for a time of reflection, worship and ritual. During the service we will be burning the palm branches from Palm Sunday last year, turning them into ashes and then the congregation will be invited to receive the sign of the cross with ashes on their hand or forehead. It is a very reflective and meaningful service. Everyone is welcome.

Easter Hydrangeas

Honour a loved one with a symbol of the Resurrection! Order a Hydrangea to display for the Easter Season. You can choose a family member who has passed away or perhaps a best friend who is always there for you! A special Easter Sunday bulletin will include all your honourees names.

You can order on Sundays, **March 10, 17** and **24** in Memorial Hall following worship, by calling (780-482-1587) or emailing the office at mail@rwuc.org. Delivery will be available.

Lent & Easter

All services will be both in person and livestreamed at rwuc.org/live with the exception of the Easter Sunrise service which will be in person only.

Palm Sunday
Sunday, March 24 10:30 am

Maundy Thursday
Thursday, March 28 7:00 pm

Good Friday
Friday, March 29 10:30 am

Easter Vigil
Saturday, March 30 7:00 pm

Easter Sunrise
Sunday, March 31 7:30 am
Outdoors in Paul Kane Park

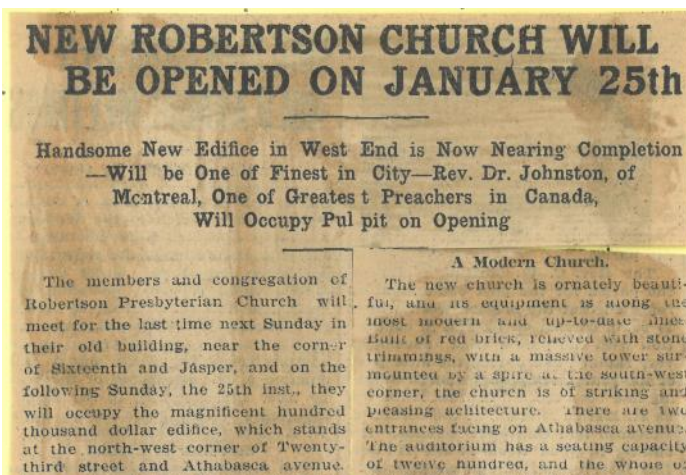
Easter Sunday
Sunday, March 31 10:30 am

10209 123 Street • www.rwuc.org



R-W in the News

In the basement of Robertson-Wesley's there is a vault and inside lies a hidden abundance of history. Previous Minister Aubrey Edworthys wife Winn carefully curated many news articles and photographs into scrap books during their family's time with R-W. The very first article in those scrapbooks is this one, from an unnamed newspaper from Jan 17, 1914. It has been re-typed below for ease of reading.



NEW ROBERTSON CHURCH WILL BE OPENED ON JANUARY 25TH

Handsome New Edifice In West End Is Now Nearing Completion--Will Be One Of The Finest In The City- Rev. Dr. Johnson, Of Montreal, One Of The Greatest Preachers In Canada, Will Occupy Pulpit On Opening

The members and congregation of Robertson Presbyterian church will meet for the last time next Sunday in their old building near the corner of sixteenth and jasper, and on the following Sunday, the 25th, they will occupy the magnificent hundred thousand dollar edifice, which stands at the north-west corner of twenty-third street and Athabasca avenue.

It is a church in every way worthy of the growing importance of the city, and reflects great credit upon those who in season and out of season have manifested their faith in the future of the congregation. Four years ago, when the old building was erected, there were only fifty members, and it was thought the accommodation that

was then provided would serve every need for some years to come. But under the able leadership of the Rev. R. G. Stewart, who was called to the pastorate from Manitoba, this membership has been steadily increasing, and the congregation have been gradually expanding, until it was soon seen that more commodious quarters would have to be obtained. A new site, therefore, was purchased a year ago, and last May the erection of the new building was proceeded with. Under Mr. Stewart's regime the membership has increased exactly one hundred per year, and the church will start in its new home with four hundred and fifty on the roll.

Opening Services on January 25th

The opening services will begin on Sunday, January 24th, continue throughout the following week, and close on Sunday, February 1st. The special preacher will be the Rev. Robert Johnston D.D. of the American Presbyterian church, Montreal, who is an eloquent pulpiteer of continent-wide fame, and the church will no doubt be filled to overflowing by those who would like to hear his able sermons. Dr. Johnson will also address the Canadian Club at a banquet to be held on Wednesday, the 28th, and will speak at mass meetings which have yet to be arranged.

A Modern Church

The new church is ornately beautiful, and its equipment is among the most modern and up-to-date. Built of red brick, relieved with stone trimmings, with a massive tower surmounted by a spire at the south-west corner, the church is of striking and pleasing architecture. There are two entrances facing on Athabasca avenue. The auditorium has seating capacity of twelve hundred, and the whole of the furnishings and woodwork are of oak. The interior of the dome and the ceilings are tinted in white, and the walls in cream, giving a most pleasing effect in contrast with the dark decorative effect of the fixtures. All the windows are of stained class, the larger lights depicting Biblical scenes, protected on the outside by addition of windows of plate glass. The arch over the choir loft of old ivory, and is a very artistic piece of work. There is room for a choir of fifty-two, and space

has been provided for a nine thousand dollar pipe organ, which will be installed in May of this year.

Wide And Commodious Galleries

The galleries of the three-sides are wide and commodious, and possess the originality of not having any pillars to obstruct the view. The specially-ordered pulpit has not yet arrived, and a temporary one is being fitted up for the opening services. The indirect lighting system is used for both the larger and smaller lights, giving a most subdued and mellow effect.

At the rear of the auditorium, near the main entrance, there is room for late-comers, and containing windows opening into the auditorium, which can be let down for the benefit of those who are unable to obtain seats in the case of crowded congregations.

An extra wide staircase from the main entrance leads down to the basement, the windows of which are entirely above the ground, this affording ample light. Underneath the stairs there are two rooms for the accommodation of the school library, there is a commodious assembly hall, surrounded by a ladies' parlor, which will be elegantly furnished, smaller class-rooms, rooms for the primary departments, and kitchen and serving room for church banquets. Nothing, in fact, seems to have been omitted in the elaborate lay-out of the building. In the basement there is also the fan for the ventilating system and the heating boiler.

Work Done By Day Labour

The construction of the church has been performed entirely by day labour, under the competent direction of Robert Grant, who has carried out his duties very efficiently. The church is an exact replica of the First Baptist Church at Calgary, and the plans of that building were secured and the work carried on without a hitch. The Rev. R. G. Stewart has given an enormous amount of time to the consideration of the various details and construction work, except for one delay on account of non-arrival of material, has proceeded expeditiously. The building committee was under the chairmanship of John Killen, who has been most painstaking in his efforts.

Recipe Corner

Non-Alcoholic Mulled Wine

- 2 C grape juice
- 2 C apple juice
- 1 cinnamon stick
- 4 slices of orange
- 8 cloves
- 2 to 4 Tbsp of maple syrup or honey



Instructions

Combine the above in a pot, let simmer for 15 to 20 minutes, then serve warm.

Bird's Nest Easter Cookies

Ingredients

- 1 1/4 cup shredded coconut
- 1 cup butter, softened
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1 egg
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 2 cups flour
- 3/4 teaspoon salt
- 1 bag egg candies



Instructions

Preheat the oven to 300. Spread the coconut in a single layer on a baking sheet and toast, shuffling occasionally, until golden brown (about 15-20 minutes). Remove from oven and let cool.

Increase the oven temperature to 350. In a large bowl or the bowl of a stand mixer, beat together the butter, sugar, egg, and vanilla until smooth. Add the flour and salt and mix to form a thick dough.

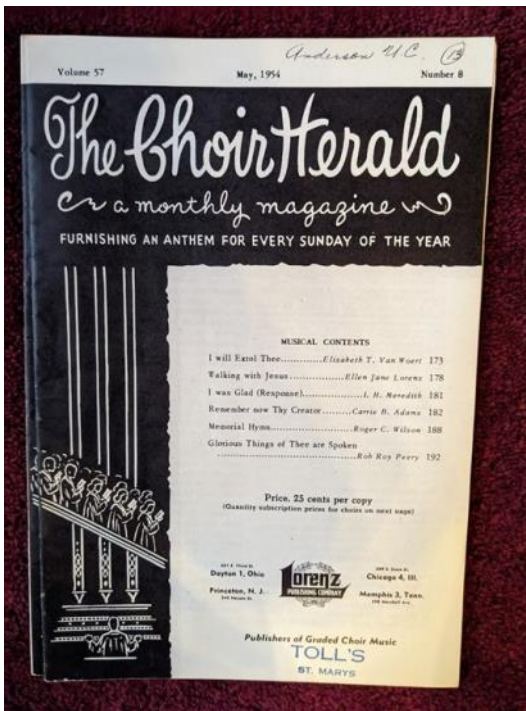
Scoop rounded tablespoon-sized balls of dough and roll in toasted coconut, pressing the coconut into the dough. Place the balls of dough on a lightly greased baking sheet and press down in the center with your finger to make an indent.

Bake 11-13 minutes or until lightly golden brown on the bottom. Let cool and top with candy eggs.

A PEEK AT THE PAST

In the past few months, there have been some major changes in my family. One of the biggest ones was that my brothers, sister and I had to arrange for my mom to move into a senior's residence and out of the house she's been in for the last 15 years or so.

When I was home at Christmas, I spent a few days at the house, going through some of my mom's things and figuring out what we should store and what we can donate or discard. Now, my mom's a "collector" (for lack of a better term)... And she's also been a church organist and choir director for the small country churches I attended as a kid. As such, she has a lot of music. Going through her things, I found in one of her music cabinets a bit of a treasure trove...



When I was about 3 years old, the church we attended, Anderson United Church, closed and we switched over to Motherwell Presbyterian (yes, I'm a bit of a mongrel when it comes to church denominations). My mom got from the church all the various pieces of sheet music that they had, including several issues of these Choir Magazines that were produced, and that had been produced for decades. The one I've included here is from May 1954, but she had issues going back to about 1945, up until 1968 (the year before the church closed). The Choir Herald and

the Volunteer Choir were the ones she has most issues of. Each edition would have the sheet music for 4 or 5 anthems, which would cover the Sundays for the next month (ie The November issues were always the Christmas issues). The church purchased enough of each issue to cover the choir members, so my Mom ended up with several copies of each issue.

The publisher, Lorenz Publishing Company, has been in the business of music publishing since 1890, with production of the first magazine for choral music in 1903. Over the years, they have had their own in-house composers, which developed a number of the anthems that were included in the magazine. These days, their website indicates they still keep a number of composers on staff and still are putting out the magazines (though I imagine the price is somewhat higher than the 25 cents that the one above cost). Over time, there were three magazines that they put out. The Choir Herald (shown above) apparently has music of medium difficulty, while The Volunteer Choir music was a bit easier. There was another magazine, The Choir Leader, which contained the harder, more classical anthems (we didn't have many copies of that particular magazine... I wonder why... J).

I do remember using some of the issues that my mom got from Anderson United when I was older and singing at Motherwell Presbyterian (in the late 1970's and early 1980's), so she obviously just didn't keep them in the cabinet. Coming across them when going through the house took me back a few decades. A number of the anthems that I've grown up as thinking as standards of church choir singing had arrangements in some of these issues. But to get a month's worth of anthems in one publication would have been very helpful for a number of organists and choir directors in small churches, who were working with volunteer choirs.

It was a bit of a trip going through these and remembering a number of the music pieces I had sang with the church choir in my youth. Going through these did take me back to those churches and with the people that I had spent some much time with back then....

Marilee Stephens

HELEN MACK, THE WONDER WOMAN

I first met Helen about 55 years ago when I was living in Toronto and attending Metropolitan United Church. Rev. Clifford Elliott was the minister there once he left (then) Robertson United Church, so when I moved to Toronto, I naturally attended his church. I volunteered to teach CGIT in the three years I was there and who should I meet but Helen Mack. She was a dynamic lady even then and we had a great time leading the girls.

When I returned to Edmonton to be married, naturally I returned to Robertson-Wesley and there was Helen, larger than life. What a surprise. She was very involved in UCW and wouldn't take no for an answer. Maxine Baker attended one unit meeting and ended up being secretary --much to her surprise. Helen had volunteered her. She could draw everyone in and bring out the best in them.

I visited her once when she lived in a seniors' residence. Helen always had the door to her room open so she could call to anyone passing by and involve them in some personal project.

Although she had very little vision, she was able to conquer the hearts, minds and abilities of everyone she met. She was a strong, indomitable, capable woman. At her funeral, I was surprised to meet her brother, a twin no less. His daughter told me he was mild in comparison. I'm sure Helen exited the womb running.

Memories of Lorna Berlinguette

Robertson-Wesley has a long history and passion for outreach services. Some of our current projects are: Food Bank Depot, Community Dinner on the second Saturday of every month, Magic Pantry (handing out lunches 3 days a week), and Inner City Pastoral Ministry lunch once a year.

Helen Mack was a longtime resident of the Oliver community, and member of Robertson-Wesley who shared this passion. Her Will stated that her bequest to Robertson Wesley United Church was to be used "for the work and services provided to the community by the Outreach Committee, more particularly but not limited to the community dinner program"

In accord with her wishes the Outreach Committee ac-

cepts small funding requests to the Helen Mack Fund for projects that meet a need in reaching out to others. Typically these requests will be evaluated twice per year based on availability of funds.

The Helen Mack Fund has been somewhat reduced recently and will be completely depleted in a few years. If anyone desires they may donate to the Helen Mack fund to keep these worthwhile projects functional.

Lois Field

Robertson-Wesley: *A Special Memory*

When I gave birth to my first child many years ago, life was difficult. My husband was seldom home because he was a medical resident, in training to be a fully-licensed physician. He sometimes missed meals and special events. The telephone never ceased ringing in the middle of the night, and he was often called back to the hospital to care for patients.

I had no opportunity to socialize with my work mates because my office was outside of Edmonton. None of my colleagues lived in town, and believe it or not, making a phone call to friends only twenty miles away was long distance, for which there was a charge!

Thank God I was a member of Robertson-Wesley United Church. When I arrived each Sunday morning with my son, I could leave him in the Babyfold, in the care of loving adults, for about an hour. That hour was very precious for me.

Following the Sunday service, when refreshments were offered to the congregants, at least one of the members would ask to hold my baby while I enjoyed a cup of coffee. What a gift that was. Robertson-Wesley had become my home, and its members were my family. And this many years later, I still feel the same way!

Nancy Heule

ANNIVERSARY SUNDAY

Anniversary Sunday was a wonderful celebration of this beautiful building that we get to worship in and serve the community. As I stood at the pulpit and looked out at the faces of the faithful followers of Christ I was filled with hope, with warmth, and with joy. I saw the people who come every week and have done so for many decades. I saw people who were here for the first time who had come out of curiosity and were excited by what they found.

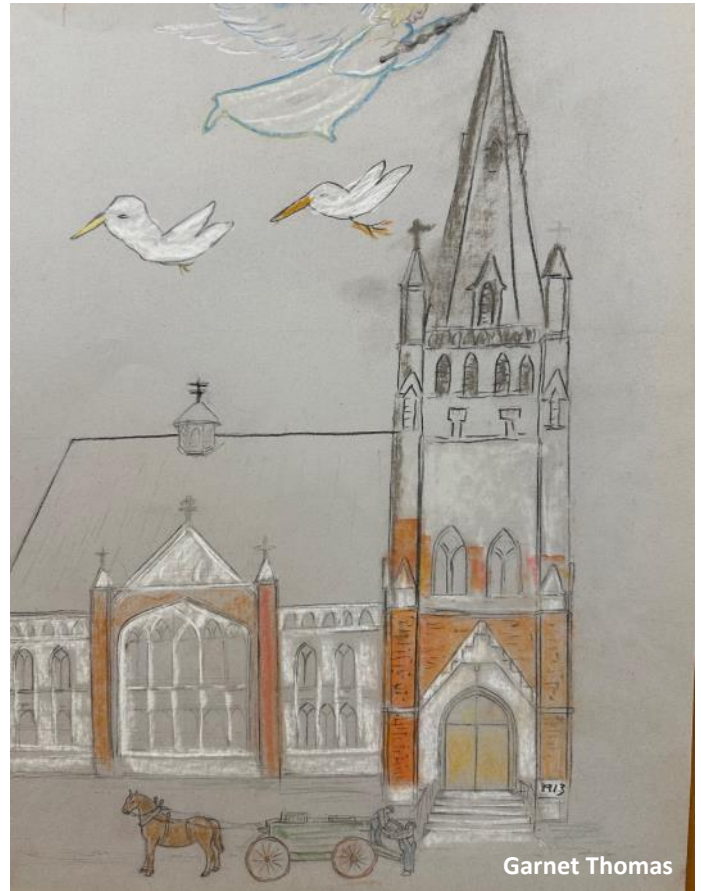
During the sermon time, I had invited Garnet Thomas and Julie Kaldenhoven to paint a depiction of the Robertson-Wesley Community of faith. Garnet was tasked with who Robertson-Wesley was 110 years ago. Julie was tasked to explore who Robertson-Wesley is today.



As they continued to paint I asked the people present to answer the following question: What impact has Robertson-Wesley had? People quickly and with deep concentration shared their answers on colourful pieces of paper. The answers painted a picture of a place of sacredness and safety for all people to be.

One person wrote: "An inclusive place for the marginalized to gather." Another wrote: "I am new here, so I can only

speak for myself. Robertson-Wesley has created a safe place for me to explore my faith. I hope to be part of bring other people here and sharing the message." Another person reflected: "It has brought relationships into being."



Complete strangers become friends in worship, music groups, serving others, welcoming each week. I am blessed by these new bonds in an otherwise lonely work life/world." Other words that were echoed through out are, a place of nourishment and acceptance, meeting people where they are at, shared beauty, love, caring, hope and peace, and sharing.

The faithful people who built this church had a vision which has flourished. Now is our time to be part of a new chapter in the life of this place. The canvas for the future was blank, symbolizing that it is up to us to paint the future. Where is the Spirit of God leading us? What is the next step in being a sacred place in a growing and developing neighbourhood? Over the next year I hope you will engage in the conversations as we claim who we are, what we value, and what our Call and Commitment from God will be for the next 10 years.

Rev. Karen Bridges

Between the Aisles Questionnaire

Robertson-Wesley's quarterly newsletter has been published for several years. The editors believe that the time has come to evaluate the newsletter and plan for future issues. We ask that you be very candid in your responses to this questionnaire, and we certainly welcome suggestions for change. Readers will also note that some of the questions are not necessarily related to the newsletter but will give the editors a better idea of readers' backgrounds. The questionnaire is confidential

1. What drew you to Robertson-Wesley in the first place?

2. How often do you read Between the Aisles? Never Occasionally Always

What do you most like about R-W?

Please check which quarterly issue you most enjoy.

- Spring/Easter
- Summer
- Fall
- Christmas/ Advent
- No preference

What activities outside of Sunday worship do you participate in?

What types of articles are of the most interest to you (please check all that apply)

- Poetry
- History of the church or the neighbourhood
- Book reviews
- Announcements or reviews of upcoming or past events
- Info on upcoming events
- Children's activities
- Financial reports

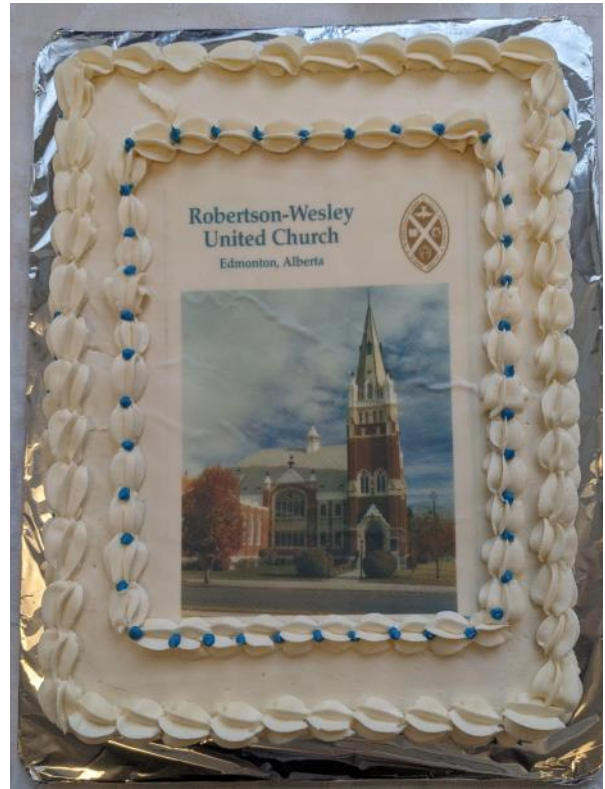
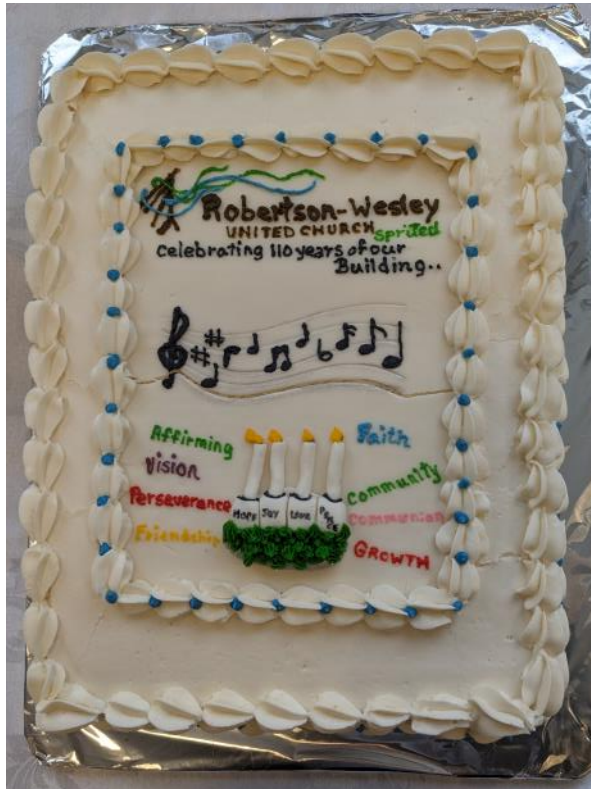
Should BTA become solely an on-line publication? Yes No

What have you learned at R-W that has helped you on your faith journey?

An Anniversary treat

The special cakes pictured to the right were served in Fellowship on January 28 for the Anniversary Celebration of our building. Made by the very talented Sonia Shewchuk.

Thank you to Donna Kruick, Sylvia Duffus, Susan Hutson and Derek Sutherland for facilitating the design, ordering and pick-up of these beautiful cakes.



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