



An Affirming Congregation of The United Church of Canada

2024 March 30

Easter Vigil



Stay with us through the night.
Stay with us through the pain.
Stay with us, blessed stranger
till the morning breaks again.

Welcome and Inclusion

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

Prelude: *Flute Sonata in C Major*, by K. H. Graun 1) *Largo* 2) *Allegro Assai*

Rhondda Gower, flute; Allan Bevan, organ

Call to Worship:

God of life and death

we wait in hope.

God of all the worlds that are

we wait in hope.

God of dazzling darkness

we wait in hope.

We wait in hope and awe.¹

Opening Prayer:

Compassionate and ever present God, we began Holy Week with hearts open to welcome Christ, and voices raised in praise. But as the days of this week pass, the mood changes. We come face to face with dear friends eating their last meal together, with the disloyalty of one of their friends, who betrays Jesus, another who denies him, and the crowd who condemns him. We encounter an unfair trial, torture, abuse, and crucifixion, and arrive at the disappointment of Holy Saturday.

Loving God, our challenge is to be willing to enter into these events and to walk with Christ, so that we can grasp anew the gift of Easter. Help us on the journey. Amen.²

Hymn: *Psalm 121 Unto the Hills*

Voices United p. 842

Unto the hills around do I lift up my longing eyes:

O whence for me shall my salvation come, from whence arise?

From God the Lord doth come my certain aid,

from God the Lord who heaven and earth hath made.

God will not suffer that thy foot be moved; safe shalt thou be.

No careless slumber shall those eyelids close who keepeth thee.

The One who sleepeth not, who slumbereth ne'er,

shall guard thee, Israel with most holy care.

Jehovah is indeed thy keeper true, thy changeless shade;

Jehovah thy defence on thy right hand, thine own true aid.

And thee no sun by day shall ever smite;

no moon shall harm thee in the silent night.

¹ Ruth Burgess & Chris Polhill, **Eggs and Ashes; Practical & Liturgical resources for Lent and Holy Week**, (Glasgow: Wild Goose Publications, 2004), p. 208.

² Written by Camilla LaRouche, **Gathering**, Lent/Easter/Pentecost 2006, p. 37. Used with permission.

**From every evil shall God keep thy soul, from every sin:
Jehovah shall preserve thy going out, thy coming in.
Above thee watching, God whom we adore
shall keep thee hence forth, yea, forevermore.**

God's Holy Word

Motet: *O Jesu Christe*, by Rinaldo del Mel

Claire Rolheiser, Jacqueline Hernandez, Raydene Koch, Cameron Dyck, Douglas Graham,
soloists

*O Jesu Christe, miserere mei, cum dolore languedo,
O Domine, Tu es spes mea,
Clamavi ad te, miserere nobis.*

*O Jesus Christ, have mercy on me,
When I languish with grief.
Lord, thou art my hope.*

Unto thee have I cried: have mercy upon us.

Scripture:

J.S.

John 19:38-42 • The burial of Jesus.

After these things, Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus, though a secret one because of his fear of the Jews, asked Pilate to let him take away the body of Jesus. Pilate gave him permission; so he came and removed his body. Nicodemus, who had at first come to Jesus by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, weighing about a hundred pounds. They took the body of Jesus and wrapped it with the spices in linen cloths according to the burial custom of the Jews. Now there was a garden in the place where he was crucified, and in the garden there was a new tomb in which no one had ever been laid. And so, because it was the Jewish day of Preparation, and the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there.

Hymn: *Stay with Me*

Voices United 950

**Stay with me, remain here with me,
watch and pray, watch and pray. (X3)**

Prayer:

O God of life, of all life and of each life, we lay our lives before you.
We give our lives to you, from whom nothing in us is hidden.

**You are before us God, you are behind; you are around us God,
you are within.**

O God of life you know the secret thoughts of every heart.

**We bring the faith that is in us, and the doubt; we bring the joy
that is in us, and the sorrow.**

O God of life, you are in the light, and in the darkness.

**We bring the knowledge that is in us, and the ignorance; we bring
the hope that is in us, and the despair.**

O God of life, O generous Spirit,
renew us with your life, tonight, tomorrow and always. Amen.³

Hymn: *Stay with Me*

Voices United 950

**Stay with me, remain here with me,
watch and pray, watch and pray. (X3)**

Scripture:

Vicky Mah

Philippians 2:1-11 • Imitating Christ's humility.

If then there is any encouragement in Christ, any consolation from love, any sharing in the Spirit, any compassion and sympathy, make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others. Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness, and being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death - even death on a cross. Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is the Lord.

Motet: *Agnus Dei*, by Hans Leo Hassler

Claire Rolheiser, Jacqueline Hernandez, Raydene Koch, Cameron Dyck, Douglas Graham,
soloists

*Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi:
miserere nobis.*

*Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi:
miserere nobis.*

*Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi:
dona nobis pacem.*

The Lamb of God,
Who took the sins of the world,
Have mercy upon us.

The Lamb of God,
Who took the sins of the world,
Have mercy upon us.

The Lamb of God,
Who took the sins of the world,
Grant us peace.

³ The Iona Community, **Iona Abbey Worship Book**, (Glasgow: Wild Goose Publication, 2001), p. 181.

Scripture:

J.S.

Psalm 31:1-4, 15-16 • Prayer and Praise for Deliverance.

In you, O Lord, I seek refuge; do not let me ever be put to shame; in your righteousness deliver me. Incline your ear to me; rescue me speedily. Be a rock of refuge for me, a strong fortress to save me. You are indeed my rock and my fortress; for your name's sake lead me and guide me, take me out of the net that is hidden for me, for you are my refuge. My times are in your hand; deliver me from the hand of my enemies and persecutors. Let your face shine upon your servant; save me in your steadfast love.

Reflection: Waiting, listening, receiving new hope

Rev. Karen Bridges

Pastoral Prayers

Prayer Sung Response: *Jesus, Remember Me* **Voices United 148**
Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.
Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.

Lord's Prayer - A Paraphrase

Voices United p. 916

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.

Grateful Response

Light Litany:

(The Paschal candle is lit.)

Come, liberating Christ, rise to meet us! Hear our wounded cries in the travail of the earth; banish the darkness of our fears; release us from the tomb of powerlessness into empowered living in the light of your liberation.

(Lit individual candles)

Meditation: *Largo* from *Flute Sonata in G Major*, by J. H. Hasse

Rhondda Gower, flute; Allan Bevan, organ

Litany of Renewal:

As we celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ, we give thanks for the promise of Christ to be with us always.

Christ with us in our birthing, our living, our dying.

Through our observance of Lent, we have reflected on God's gift of life. We now recall our baptism in Christ, giving thanks for the waters of birth, play, refreshment, cleansing, life-giving.

We turn to Christ in the love between us, the passion with us, the unexpected inspiring us, and the earth's embrace. We commit ourselves to working for change and healing in ourselves and in the world. We commit ourselves to wisdom in naming evil, courage to expose it, and strength for putting liberation into action. Amen.⁴

Hymn: *Stay with Us through the Night*

Voices United 182

Stay with us through the night.

Stay with us through the pain.

**Stay with us, blessed stranger
till the morning breaks again.**

Stay with us through the night.

Stay with us through the grief.

**Stay with us, blessed stranger
till the morning brings relief.**

Stay with us through the night.

Stay with us through the dread.

**Stay with us, blessed stranger
till the morning breaks new bread.**

Benediction:

Risen with Christ,

may we know the reassurance of God's presence.

Risen with Christ,

may we accept the challenge to work in God's way.

Risen with Christ,

may we be living proof that God's love will never die.

Amen.⁵

⁴ Elizabeth Baxter, **Eggs and ashes; Practical & liturgical resources for Lent and Holy Week**, (Glasgow: Wild Goose Publications, 2004), p. 218-219..

⁵ Written by Beth W Johnston, **Gathering**, Lent/Easter, 2023, p. 37. Used with permission.

All are invited to leave in silence when you are ready. A free will offering can be given in the offering plates by the exit.



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.

Worship Notes

A vigil is the act of keeping awake during a time or even when a person or a group stays together in a place and quietly waits, and prays with candlelight. Please remain in the sanctuary in silence as long as you like. We encourage people to light a candle on this night as we wait at the tomb of Jesus.

Cover Image

Cover image was taken by Rev. Karen Bridges April 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