

Announcements/Life and Work of the Church

✠ **Introit** “Where Two or Three Are Gathered” (MV 14)

OPENING PRAYER

✠ **Procession of Christ Candle**

“Long, long, long ago, before there was anything, before there was a world, before there was light, before there was darkness, there was God: Creator and Source of Life. God moved and God breathed the world into being, and God said, “Let there be light.” We present this worship candle as a visible reminder of the Creator’s great light and love.”

Land Acknowledgement

“Today as we gather to worship let us remember that we worship God on the historic and unceded territory of nations of Treaty 7. As Christ’s people, let us be people of Love, of Truth, and Reconciliation. May we live with respect on this land, and peace and friendship with its people.”

Affirming Vision Statement

“As a community church that gathers from many smaller communities in the Medicine Hat area, Westminster United Church publicly declares our commitment to creating a space where people are welcome, safe, and encouraged to participate in the life of the church inclusive of: Sexual orientation, gender identity, two spirited people, differing abilities, age, ethnic background, race, marital status, or economic circumstance.

Participation in the life of the church includes leadership, membership, sacraments, marriage, and celebrating milestones of life's journey.

We celebrate the richness of diversity, and we commit ourselves to openness, growth, education and to influencing the community for social justice.

In our dedication to living our God's word and with God's help, we devote ourselves to proactive learning and inclusion."

Lighting of the Affirming Candle

"Not quite as long but still very long ago, One was born who embodied the light of the Creator in a way that sparked a movement and a new understanding God. We light this rainbow candle as a visible reminder of the radical inclusivity shown to us by Jesus, who calls us to follow him."

Lighting of Peace Candle

"We light the candle of Peace to remind ourselves that Christ is the Prince of Peace. We pray for peace for ourselves and for the world."

✝ Call to Worship

One: Give thanks to the Lord, for God is good.

All: We will call on God's Name and make known God's wonderful works.

One: Together let us worship God, as we gather in the Name of our Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer. Amen.

✠**OPENING HYMN** Though I May Speak (VU 372)

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

One: God, You open the universe to us. The wonder of creation declares Your praise.

All: God, You are the giver of all good gifts, yet our generosity is often limited.

We complain. We compare ourselves to others. We worry about who will be first.

One: I invite each of us now to enter into a moment of silence for self-reflection and private confession . . .

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

One: The mercy of our God is from everlasting to everlasting. In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven. We are set free to live in the renewing power of the Spirit. Therefore, be at peace with God, with yourself, and with one another. And be assured, you are forgiven.

All: Amen.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

THE LORD'S PRAYER (VU 959)

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

SCRIPTURE READINGS (Read by Rev. Helen Reid):

Exodus 16:2-3; 6-8

Good News Translation

² There in the desert they all complained to Moses and Aaron ³ and said to them, "We wish that the LORD had killed us in Egypt. There we could at least sit down and eat meat and as much other food as we wanted. But you have brought us out into this desert to starve us all to death."

⁶ So Moses and Aaron said to all the Israelites, "This evening you will know that it was the LORD who brought you out of Egypt. ⁷ In the morning you will see the dazzling light of the LORD's presence. He has heard your complaints against him—yes, against him, because we are only carrying out his instructions." ⁸ Then Moses said, "It is the LORD who will give you meat to eat in the evening and as much bread as you want in the morning, because he has heard how much you have complained against him. When you complain against us, you are really complaining against the LORD."

One: This is the witness of Israel.

All: Thanks be to God for the Word.

Epistle: Philippians 1:21-30

Good News Translation

²¹ For what is life? To me, it is Christ. Death, then, will bring more. ²² But if by continuing to live I can do more worthwhile work, then I am not sure which I should choose. ²³ I am pulled in two directions. I want very much to leave this life and be with Christ, which is a far better thing; ²⁴ but for your sake it is much more important that I remain alive. ²⁵ I am sure of this, and so I know that I will stay. I will stay on with you all, to add to your progress and joy in the faith, ²⁶ so that when I am with you again, you will have even more reason to be proud of me in your life in union with Christ Jesus.

²⁷ Now, the important thing is that your way of life should be as the gospel of Christ requires, so that, whether or not I am able to go and see you, I will hear that you are standing firm with one common purpose and that with only one desire you are fighting together for the faith of the gospel. ²⁸ Don't be afraid of your enemies; always be courageous, and this will prove to them that they will lose and that you will win, because it is God who gives you the victory. ²⁹ For you have been given the privilege of serving Christ, not only by believing in him, but also by suffering for him. ³⁰ Now you can take part with me in the battle. It is the same battle you saw me fighting in the past, and as you hear, the one I am fighting still."

One: This is the witness of the Church.

All: Thanks be to God.

ANTHEM: Just as the Deer

Gospel: Matthew 20: 16

Good News Translation

¹⁶And Jesus concluded, “So those who are last will be first, and those who are first will be last.”

One: This is the Good News of Jesus Christ.

All: Praise to Christ, the Living Word.

SERMON: “Let Go of Control”

✝**HYMN:** Morning Has Broken (VU 409)

MINUTES FOR MISSION “Learning and Listening on the Path to Reconciliation” (Read by Sharon Clay)

When Alf Dumont’s Roman Catholic father and Anishinaabe mother asked the priest serving the Shawanaga reserve to marry them, the priest rejected their request, advising them to “marry someone of their own kind.” Nearby, a United Church minister had a different response. He told the couple he had

just two rules: “If you have differences, talk them out and just try to get along.”

“Dad and Mom said ‘I think we can do that.’ They brought together First Nations understanding and non-First Nations understanding. That’s how I came to the church,” Dumont recounts in a United in Learning [webinar](#).

Dumont spent his life as a spiritual leader, serving the United Church as a minister while staying connected with his traditional Indigenous spirituality. His memoir *[The Other Side of the River: From Church Pew to Sweat Lodge](#)* shares stories of how Dumont walks between the two worlds of Indigenous and settler, traditional spirituality and Christianity.

“Part of the struggle with me in life was to find out who I was as Anishinaabe and who I was as French, Irish, and English mix,” Dumont shares. With a foot in both sides of the river, Dumont’s words eloquently draw together spiritual threads.

“There are seven truths in some of the Anishinaabe teaching: love, courage, respect, humility, truth, wisdom, and honesty. But you can’t have one of those teachings or truths without having the others. So you can’t have respect without love. You can’t have truth without humility,” explains Dumont. “I took those underlying teachings and applied them to the four teachings on love: Love God. Love your neighbour. Love your enemy. Love yourself. You can’t have one teaching without the other. You can’t love God if you don’t truly love yourself. You cannot love your neighbour unless you truly love God.”

In an [interview](#), *Broadview* magazine asked Dumont to weigh in on the future of reconciliation: “Part of the struggle has to do with learning to walk together again. It means being as open as

we can,” he says. “You bring a gift that I don’t have; I bring a gift that you may not have. And as we share, we learn from the gifts that we have been given.”

Your gifts through Mission and Service help support the creation and publication of luminous, timely work like Dumont’s book as well as the webinar discussions and education events that follow. Through listening and learning, we take important steps forward on the journey toward reconciliation.

Invitation to the Offering

Offertory (Offering Gathered with Reflection Music)

✠Doxology For the Gift of Creation (VU 538)

✠Offertory Prayer

✠A NEW CREED (VU 918)

✠CLOSING HYMN: “Glorious Things of Thee Are Spoken” (Lyrics on PP)

✠BENEDICTION/COMMISSIONING

✠CHORAL AMEN VU 969

✠SENDING FORTH HYMN “Halle, Halle, Halle” (VU 958 X 2)

POSTLUDE: