

September 3rd Full Order of Service

Announcement/Life and Work

Introit “Lord, Listen to your Children Praying” (VU 400)

Opening Prayer

Lord of summer sunshine and autumn harvest, be with us this day as we gather to encounter your word and your way for us. Remind us that we can place our trust in your eternal love. Enable us to be more effective in our witness to that love by word and deed. Guide our steps and pick us up when we falter. Dust us off and place us on the pathways of grace and service. These things we pray in Jesus’ name. AMEN.

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

L: There are so many directions in which we are being pulled.

P: We struggle and hope that we have chosen the right way.

L: Some of these paths are falsely enticing and others dangerous.

P: How can we know what to do?

L: Look to Jesus! He will be your guide and Holy Spirit will guard your life.

P: I am going to follow Jesus. He is the example of compassion, healing and hope.

✠ OPENING HYMN “Creatures of our God and King” (VU 217)

Prayer of Confession

God of love and mercy, be with us this day. We have faltered in our service to you. We create divisions between various people; we judge before we listen; we condemn before we make any attempt to understand. Our lives are in turmoil and we confess that we have turned away from you. It is fear and anger that too often surrounds us and our actions become based on those fears and anger. Slow us down, Lord. Give us hearts

overflowing with grace and compassion. Help us to mirror Jesus who loved and healed others who were rejected by “polite” society. Remind us that we are called to be strong voices of hope for those who feel alienated and lost; we are called to be a home to strangers; to quench thirst and to give nourishment; to welcome and bring words of hope. Forgive us when we have forgotten these things. In Jesus’ Name, we pray. AMEN.

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

Christ calls each of us into lives of service and hope. He equips us for these ministries and places us on the pathways of peace. Rejoice! You are called by God’s Son and blessed by him. AMEN.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

THE LORD’S PRAYER (spoken [vu 959])

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

God of Wisdom, we pray that you will send your Holy Spirit to give us new understanding of your message to us in Holy Scripture. Inspire us to respond with renewed commitment to hear the message that is sent to us today. Amen

SCRIPTURE READING (Read by Sharon Clay)

Exodus 3:1-15

Moses and the Burning Bush

3 Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian, and he led the flock to the far side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. **2** There the angel of the Lord appeared to him in flames of fire from within a bush. Moses saw that though the bush was on fire it did not burn up. **3** So Moses thought, “I will go over and see this strange sight—why the bush does not burn up.”

4 When the Lord saw that he had gone over to look, God called to him from within the bush, “Moses! Moses!” And Moses said, “Here I am.”

5 “Do not come any closer,” God said. “Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground.” **6** Then he said, “I am the God of your father,^[a] the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob.” At this, Moses hid his face, because he was afraid

to look at God.

⁷ The Lord said, “I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering. ⁸ So I have come down to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land into a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey—the home of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites. ⁹ And now the cry of the Israelites has reached me, and I have seen the way the Egyptians are oppressing them. ¹⁰ So now, go. I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people the Israelites out of Egypt.”

¹¹ But Moses said to God, “Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?”

¹² And God said, “I will be with you. And this will be the sign to you that it is I who have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you^[b] will worship God on this mountain.”

¹³ Moses said to God, “Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you,’ and they ask me, ‘What is his name?’ Then what shall I tell them?”

¹⁴ God said to Moses, “I am who I am.^[c] This is what you are to say to the Israelites: ‘I am has sent me to you.’”

¹⁵ God also said to Moses, “Say to the Israelites, ‘The Lord,^[d] the God of your fathers—the God of Abraham,

the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob—has sent me to you.’

“This is my name forever,
the name you shall call me
from generation to generation.

One: This is the witness of the Israel.

All: Thanks be to God.

Psalm 105:1 & 3 VU 828 refrain 1 VU 826

Bless, O my soul, the Almighty, who rules all creation

Give thanks and call on God's name.

Make known to the nations what God has done.

**Sing, O sing the songs of praise;
tell of all God's wonderful deeds.**

Exult in God's holy name;

let those who seek God be joyful in heart. R

Bless, O my soul, the Almighty, who rules all creation

When Israel came to Egypt,

when Jacob settled in the land of Ham,
there you made your people fruitful,
stronger than their foes.

But when you turned their hearts to hate your people,
to deceitful dealing with your servants,
then you sent your servant Moses,
and Aaron, whom you had chosen R

Bless, O my soul, the Almighty, who rules all creation

One: This is the witness of the ancient song-writers.

ALL: Thanks be to God.

Matthew 16:21-28

Jesus Predicts His Death

²¹ From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.

²² Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. "Never, Lord!" he said. "This shall never happen to you!"

²³ Jesus turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not

have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns.”

²⁴ Then Jesus said to his disciples, “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. ²⁵ For whoever wants to save their life^[a] will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it. ²⁶ What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul? ²⁷ For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father’s glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what they have done.

²⁸ “Truly I tell you, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom.”

One: This is the Good News of Jesus Christ.

All: Praise to Christ, the Living Word.

SERMON:

✠HYMN: “Put Peace Into Each Other’s Hands” (MV 173)

MINUTES FOR MISSION (Read by Debi Hoefling)

Sending People to School – Together: Patti Talbot’s Work

How do you make the world a better place?

You can start by taking kids to school.

Around the world, 57 million children cannot attend school.* They may never learn to read, to add or subtract, or to write. These are the skills they need to succeed.

Even more importantly, they never learn about their basic human rights.

It’s a complicated problem, says Patti Talbot, the United Church’s Global Partnership Team Leader. “The work we do isn’t going to lead to immediate societal change,” she says, “but it will make a big difference down the road.”

When children can’t go to school, society suffers. And that is why Mission & Service is in partnership with 85 organizations that work to increase access to education across the globe. Each partner has their own approach to education and skills training, each supported by your gifts to [Mission & Service](#).

Colombia’s Center for Communication uses arts and media to teach children about their rights. Women for Change in Zambia creates educational groups where participants share agricultural knowledge and awareness of their rights. At Japan’s Asian Rural Institute, local leaders gather to learn sustainable agriculture techniques they can take home and transform their communities.

“How can we make the world a better place?” asks Talbot before responding, “We can’t do that by ourselves; our partners know best what the challenges are.”

Talbot, a child of missionaries who was raised in Japan and Korea, knows that educational partnerships are critical. “In our partnerships, we learn from and teach each other,” she says. “The United Church’s focus is more than just sharing resources, but really sharing life together.” It’s an approach that Talbot knows works, even if results take time. “Our partners are very grateful that the United Church of Canada has demonstrated over and over again that we are there for the long term,” Talbot says.

“Partners say to us ‘It makes such a difference to us to know that the United Church is with us, walking with us in prayer, supporting us, remembering us in their lives.’”

A more detailed video, [A Deeper Look: Sending People to School – Together, \(opens in a new tab\)](#) is available on YouTube.

Invitation to the Offering

As God has blessed our lives with abundant love and gifts, let us bring our tithes and offerings to this place, seeking to help others, to offer comfort and hope. Let us receive our morning offering.

Offertory (Offering Gathered with Reflection Music)

Doxology “We Give You But our Own” (VU 542)

Offertory Prayer

Lord of all mercy and compassion, bless these gifts lovingly offered and all the people here. Help us to use these gifts for ministries of hope through our church and into our community, nation and world. Amen.

A NEW CREED (VU 918)

✠CLOSING HYMN: “Guide me, O Thou great Jehovah” (VU 651)

✠BENEDICTION/COMMISSIONING

Jesus has called you and placed his trust in you. Go courageously into this world, bearing the words of hope and healing. Reach out to others in compassion. For it is Jesus' name, that you are sent out to serve. AMEN.

✠CHORAL AMEN "Amen!"

✠SENDING FORTH HYMN: "Take Up His Song of Peace" (MV 123)

POSTLUDE:

Prayers were found in Ministry Matters (adapted)