

October 22, 2023 Full Order of Service WUC

Announcement/Life and Work

Introit VU 402 "We Are One" vs1

Opening Prayer

One: Let all who gather here rejoice in the spirit of our loving God.

All: The spirit of God is in this place and within us; let us respond with whole hearts, and due honour.

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: God of all who seek to love and serve you,

All: as we wander in the wilderness of this world, you go before us as our beacon and guide.

One: You have led us here today, to this, our service of worship, praise, and thanksgiving.

All: Grant that we may offer the best of ourselves to this holy work. In Jesus' name, Amen.

✠ OPENING HYMN “To God Be The Glory” Lyrics on PP

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

One: We who come before the throne of grace freely admit to our weakness and imperfection.

All: Lord, forgive us our wrongdoing, and work in us a steadfast faith, to resist and reject the temptations of this world and draw us ever closer to you, our Saviour and our only judge. Amen.

Word of Assurance

All who place their trust in God's mercy and grace, and confess in a spirit of repentance, be at peace. **Amen.**

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

THE LORD'S PRAYER VU 959

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

One: Wisdom calls from the Scriptures!

All: May the Word of God enlighten us!

SCRIPTURE READINGS (Read by Chris White)

Exodus 33:12–23

Moses and the Glory of the Lord

¹² Moses said to the Lord, “You have been telling me, ‘Lead these people,’ but you have not let me know whom you will send with me. You have said, ‘I know you by name and you have found favor with me.’ ¹³ If you are pleased with me, teach me your ways so I may know you and continue to find favor with you. Remember that this nation is your people.”

¹⁴ The Lord replied, “My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.”

¹⁵ Then Moses said to him, “If your Presence does not go with us, do not send us up from here. ¹⁶ How will anyone know that you are pleased with me and with your people unless you go

with us? What else will distinguish me and your people from all the other people on the face of the earth?”

¹⁷ And the Lord said to Moses, “I will do the very thing you have asked, because I am pleased with you and I know you by name.”

¹⁸ Then Moses said, “Now show me your glory.”

¹⁹ And the Lord said, “I will cause all my goodness to pass in front of you, and I will proclaim my name, the Lord, in your presence. I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. ²⁰ But,” he said, “you cannot see my face, for no one may see me and live.”

²¹ Then the Lord said, “There is a place near me where you may stand on a rock. ²² When my glory passes by, I will put you in a cleft in the rock and cover you with my hand until I have passed by. ²³ Then I will remove my hand and you will see my back; but my face must not be seen.”

One: This is the witness of Israel.

All: Thanks be to God for the Word.

ANTHEM “Psalm of Quietness”

Matthew 22:15–22

Paying the Imperial Tax to Caesar

¹⁵ Then the Pharisees went out and laid plans to trap him in his words. ¹⁶ They sent their disciples to him along with the Herodians. “Teacher,” they said, “we know that you are a man

of integrity and that you teach the way of God in accordance with the truth. You aren't swayed by others, because you pay no attention to who they are. ¹⁷ Tell us then, what is your opinion? Is it right to pay the imperial tax^[a] to Caesar or not?"

¹⁸ But Jesus, knowing their evil intent, said, "You hypocrites, why are you trying to trap me? ¹⁹ Show me the coin used for paying the tax." They brought him a denarius, ²⁰ and he asked them, "Whose image is this? And whose inscription?"

²¹ "Caesar's," they replied.

Then he said to them, "So give back to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's."

²² When they heard this, they were amazed. So they left him and went away.

One: This is the Good News of Jesus Christ.

All: Praise to Christ, the Living Word.

SERMON:

✝ **HYMN:** VU 593" Jesu, Jesu, Fill Us With Your Love "

MINUTES FOR MISSION: "Building Climate Resiliency" (Read by BJ Maddaford)

In areas where historically there has been little rain, now there are floods, and where there were floods, now there are droughts. That's how Shadrick Chembe, the Monitoring and Evaluation Manager at Women for Change—an organization in

Zambia that strives to improve conditions in rural communities by empowering women and girls—describes the changing climate in Zambia. Women bear the brunt.

“In Zambia, women are still responsible for collecting firewood and charcoal and making food. Now, because of climate change, they have to walk a longer distance to gather firewood. Charcoal is harder to get. That means it’s harder to make food. At the same time, women aren’t involved in the decision-making processes that impact this work,” explains Chembe. Women for Change was established in 1992, and its long-standing partnership with the United Church stretches back to 1995. From the beginning, mobilizing communities to share ideas and best practices has been key to the work. Since its inception, 1,500 community groups have been established, with 25–40 people in each group and representatives from each forming associations. The groups discuss a variety of justice-related topics. Building climate resiliency by preparing for, recovering from, and adapting to drastically changing weather patterns is a priority.

Weather extremes due to climate change coupled with companies promoting seeds that only produce a single crop increasingly put people at risk.

“The majority of farmers are poor. They can’t buy seeds, but companies have created seeds that force farmers to have to purchase them each year,” says Chembe. “Groups discuss how they can save and share seeds, what they can plant with longer or shorter rains, and if there are traditional methods that can increase food production,” he says, adding, “We are grateful for the United Church’s support. The church has really been there

for many years, helping us build awareness and resiliency. It's been a real partnership."

Your gifts through [Mission and Service](#) support long-term, life-changing work through committed partners like Women for Change. Thank you.

Invitation to the Offering

One: The Lord has been good to us.

All: With open hands and joyful hearts we will share what we have been given, to give glory to God, and to serve our brothers and sisters.

Offertory (Offering Gathered with Reflection Music)

Doxology VU 544 "In Gratitude and Humble Trust"

Offertory Prayer

One: Loving God, may our offering be for a blessing to our brothers and sisters.

All: May it fulfill in some measure your purposes in the world. In Jesus' name, Amen.

A NEW CREED VU 918

✝CLOSING HYMN: “He’s Got the Whole World In His Hands”
Lyrics on PP

✝BENEDICTION/COMMISSIONING

✝CHORAL AMEN: “AMEN!”

✝SENDING FORTH HYMN: MV 209 “Go Make a Difference”
vs.2

POSTLUDE: