

# **Westminster United Church**

## **October 29, 2023**

✝ You are invited to stand as you are able

### **Announcements/Life and Work of the Church**

✝ **Introit: VU 402 “We Are One” vs1**

#### **✝ 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 & Lighting of the Affirming Candle

“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."

"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** (Psalm 134:1-8)

One: I will bless the LORD at all times; his praise shall continually be in my mouth.

**All: My soul makes its boast in the LORD; let the humble hear and be glad.**

One: O magnify the LORD with me, and let us exalt his name together.

**All: I sought the LORD, and he answered me, and delivered me from all my fears.**

One: Look to him, and be radiant; so your faces shall never be ashamed.

**All: This poor soul cried, and was heard by the LORD, and was saved from every trouble.**

One: The angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear him, and delivers them.

**All: O taste and see that the LORD is good; happy are those who take refuge in him.**

One: Come, let us worship!

✠ **OPENING HYMN: VU 331 The Churches One Foundation**

**PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

One: O holy, and merciful God,

**All: We have sinned against You in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone.**

One: We have not loved You with our whole heart.

**All: We have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.**

One: We have often turned away from You to seek our own desires.

**All: Even when we have done no evil, we have also not undertaken to do good.**

One: Free us from our neglect, indifference and harm.

**All: By your grace, forgive us; through your love, renew us; and in your Spirit, lead us; so that we may live and serve you in newness of life.**

## **WORDS OF ASSURANCE**

### **PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE**

#### **THE LORD'S PRAYER VU 959**

### **PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION**

### **SCRIPTURE READING (Read by Debi Hoefling):**

#### **1 John 3:1-3**

#### **New Living Translation**

3 See how very much our Father loves us, for he calls us his children, and that is what we are! But the people who belong to this world don't recognize that we are God's children because they don't know him. <sup>2</sup> Dear friends, we are already God's children, but he has not yet shown us what we will be like when Christ appears. But we do know

that we will be like him, for we will see him as he really is. <sup>3</sup> And all who have this eager expectation will keep themselves pure, just as he is pure.

One: This is the witness of the Church.

**All: Thanks be to God.**

**ANTHEM: Spirit of God**

**Gospel Reading:**

**Matthew 22:34-46**

**New Living Translation**

The Most Important Commandment

<sup>34</sup> But when the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees with his reply, they met together to question him again. <sup>35</sup> One of them, an expert in religious law, tried to trap him with this question: <sup>36</sup> “Teacher, which is the most important commandment in the law of Moses?”

<sup>37</sup> Jesus replied, “‘You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind.’<sup>[a]</sup> <sup>38</sup> This is the first and greatest commandment. <sup>39</sup> A second is equally important: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’<sup>[b]</sup> <sup>40</sup> The entire law and all the demands of the prophets are based on these two commandments.”

Whose Son Is the Messiah?

<sup>41</sup> Then, surrounded by the Pharisees, Jesus asked them a question: <sup>42</sup> “What do you think about the Messiah? Whose son is he?”

They replied, “He is the son of David.”

<sup>43</sup> Jesus responded, “Then why does David, speaking under the inspiration of the Spirit, call the Messiah ‘my Lord’? For David said,

<sup>44</sup> ‘The Lord said to my Lord,

Sit in the place of honor at my right hand

until I humble your enemies beneath your feet.’<sup>[c]</sup>

<sup>45</sup> Since David called the Messiah ‘my Lord,’ how can the Messiah be his son?”

<sup>46</sup> No one could answer him. And after that, no one dared to ask him any more questions.

One: This is the Good News of Jesus Christ.

**All: Praise to Christ, the Living Word.**

**SERMON:**

**✠HYMN: VU 506 Take My Life and Let it Be**

**MINUTES FOR MISSION “Empowering Women of the Past, Present and Future” (Read by Sharon Clay)**

In India, various social and cultural factors have resulted in limited access to theological education for women in comparison to men.

The Rev. B. Silpa Rani is actively encouraging women to pursue theological education and engage in leadership roles.

When Silpa started her first degree in Theology, she spent two years as the only woman in a class of 16. Now, years later, as she works on

her doctoral dissertation, she has seen a gradual increase in the enrolment of women in theological programs. While this is encouraging, Silpa recognizes that there is still a long journey forward. While she seeks to empower modern women, she is also working to shed light on the experiences of women and minorities of the past.

Silpa is the recipient of a theological education scholarship, which has paved her way forward to eventually join the faculty at Bishop's College, Kolkata. Currently, she is exploring the unique identity of the Qumran community within the context of the Dead Sea Scrolls. She is actively researching to identify the women, children, and minority groups of the society, drawing parallels between the Qumran context and contemporary Indian context.

Your [Mission and Service \(opens in a new tab\)](#) gifts provide support to leaders like Silpa, who are actively working to empower women and change the world.

## **Invitation to the Offering**

### **Offertory (Offering Gathered with Reflection Music)**

**✠Doxology VU 544 “In Gratitude and Humble Trust”**

#### **✠Offertory Prayer**

One: Blessed are you, God of all creation; through your goodness we have these gifts to share.

**All: Accept and use our offerings for your glory and for the service of your kingdom. We pray in the name of Jesus. Amen.**

**✠A NEW CREED VU 918**

**✠CLOSING HYMN: VU 232 Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee**

**✠BENEDICTION/COMMISSIONING**

**✠CHORAL AMEN “AMEN!”**

**✠SENDING FORTH HYMN MV 209 “Go Make a Difference” vs.2**

**POSTLUDE:**