

October 8th Thanksgiving Service

Announcements/Life and Work of the Church

✠ **Introit** VU 402 vs 1 We Are One

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

Leader: Our help is in the name of our God, who made heaven and earth.

People: Amen.

Leader: Sing to the Lord with thanksgiving. Make music upon the harp. How good it is to celebrate God's presence and sing praise throughout each day!

People: How good it is to sing praise and give honour to our God!

Leader: Our God rebuilds the people of earth. The wandering ones are gathered together, the broken-hearted are healed, the hungry are fed, the prisoners are freed, the blind are given sight, the lonely are befriended.

People: How good it is to sing praise and give honour to our God!

Leader: All of nature sings aloud God's goodness—clouds, rain, grass, creatures great and small. Our God creates and sustains our world with his ever-growing, never-ending love.

People: How good it is to sing praise and give honour to our God!

Leader: Grace and peace be yours in abundance through the knowledge of God and of Christ Jesus our Lord.

People: Amen.

✠OPENING HYMN VU 516 Come, Ye Thankful People Come

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Leader: Loving God, we gather today rich in blessing, too often believing that we merit the wealth and comforts that we enjoy. Forgive us, our God, for

comfortably closing our eyes to the faces of the poor that stare blankly in our direction.

People: With stomachs full of grain and meat, too often we offer token gestures to the hungry in our world and we feel we have done enough. Forgive us, God, for keeping a distance between "us" and "them," for closing our ears to the cries of the hungry

All: Lord, have mercy on us.

Leader: With hands tightly clasping our treasures on earth, too often we fail to reach out to our oppressed brothers and sisters around this world. Forgive us for clinging to our own possessions rather than to you. Unite us with hearts of thanksgiving that we may work to insure freedom and justice for all.

All: Amen

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

Leader: Hear what our God has to say to all people:
"The Redeemer will come to Zion, to those... who repent of their sins." (Isaiah 59:20)

All: *As Your forgiven children we commit to follow your command Lord which is:*
"Love each other as I have loved you."

Thanksgiving Litany *(Paul Hesselink)*

Leader:
Let us give thanks to the Lord, our rock, our fortress, and our deliverer. Let us remember his mercy, for he is gracious and compassionate.

People:
**We thank you for calling us to faith in Christ,
for putting your Spirit within us,**

**for giving us the mind of Christ,
for gathering us into your church.**

Leader:

We thank you, Lord, for extending your grace to us,
for calling us to a life of gratitude,
for calling us to service in your kingdom.

All: Thanks be to God!

Leader: Let us give thanks to the Lord, for he satisfies the thirsty, he fills the hungry with good things, and he heals the afflicted. Let us celebrate his abundant goodness.

***People:* We thank you, gracious Father, that you provide for all our needs,
for the food on our tables,
for the clothes on our bodies,
for the beds we sleep in,
and for the dwellings that shelter us.**

Leader: We praise you for all your gifts that go beyond our basic needs,
for the things that make our work easier,
for the conveniences of modern life,
for the beauty and pleasure that you bring into our lives.

All: Thanks be to God! Amen.

Leader:

Let us give thanks to the Lord for the people he has given us.
For parents and grandparents, for sons and daughters,
for brothers and sisters, for husband and wife—
for all those who reflect to us the human dimension of your love,

Leader: For neighbors and colleagues, for friends both far away and nearby—for all those who share the joys and sorrows of our daily lives,

Leader: For those who serve us in restaurants, in repair shops, in stores, in schools, in hospitals—for all those who make our lives more comfortable,

Leader: For the family of God, for the church universal, and for those who worship with us and minister to us in this church,

People: For those who are weak and destitute, for those who need protection and support, for those who need healing and nurturing, for all those to whom we minister,

All: We give you thanks, O Lord. Amen.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

THE LORD'S PRAYER (VU 959)

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

SCRIPTURE READINGS (Read by Debi Hoefling)

Psalm 16

Psalm 16

A psalm^[a] of David.

- ¹ Keep me safe, O God,
for I have come to you for refuge.
- ² I said to the LORD, "You are my Master!
Every good thing I have comes from you."
- ³ The godly people in the land
are my true heroes!
I take pleasure in them!
- ⁴ Troubles multiply for those who chase after other gods.
I will not take part in their sacrifices of blood
or even speak the names of their gods.
- ⁵ LORD, you alone are my inheritance, my cup of blessing.
You guard all that is mine.
- ⁶ The land you have given me is a pleasant land.
What a wonderful inheritance!

⁷ I will bless the LORD who guides me;
even at night my heart instructs me.
⁸ I know the LORD is always with me.
I will not be shaken, for he is right beside me.
⁹ No wonder my heart is glad, and I rejoice.^[b]
My body rests in safety.
¹⁰ For you will not leave my soul among the dead^[c]
or allow your holy one^[d] to rot in the grave.
¹¹ You will show me the way of life,
granting me the joy of your presence
and the pleasures of living with you forever.^[e]

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

ALL: Thanks be to God.

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18
New Living Translation

¹⁶ Always be joyful. ¹⁷ Never stop praying. ¹⁸ Be thankful in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you who belong to Christ Jesus.

One: This is the witness of the Church.

ALL: Thanks be to God.

ANTHEM: How Great Thou Art w/ Majesty

SERMON: "A Life of Thanksgiving"

✠**HYMN:** VU 560 O Master, Let Me Walk With Thee

MINUTES FOR MISSION "Geeta's Story" (Read by Sharon Clay)

When Geeta's husband died, she not only lost her life partner but also her home. Because she was no longer married her in-laws wouldn't allow her to stay in their multi-generational residence.

Geeta is just one of an estimated 72 million women in India who are not married—nearly double the entire population of Canada. In India, most women are expected to marry and live with their husband and his family. Unmarried women, even those who are widowed, are often seen as dishonourable. Like Geeta, they may suffer abuse.

Fortunately, Geeta was able to flee to her parents' home with her two younger children, but many parents will not allow their newly single daughters to return. While Geeta and her younger children stayed with her parents, her in-laws stole her jewellery, changed the locks, and kept her two older children from her. That's when she turned to [Mission and Service](#) partner Astha Sansthan's Association of Strong Women Alone (ASWA) for help.

ASWA supports thousands of single women from low-income backgrounds in Rajasthan to defend their rights. The organization has also shared their advocacy methods and experiences with other groups across India.

Thanks to ASWA's help, Geeta's in-laws ultimately had to give back her jewellery, unlock her home, and return her older children to her care.

Today, Geeta is living peacefully with her children in her part of the house.

Your generous support of [Mission and Service](#) provides life-saving advocacy. It is one way your gifts address crushing inequality and help build a better world for all. Thank you!

Invitation to the Offering

Offertory (Offering Gathered with Reflection Music)

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

✠ **Offertory Prayer**

✠ **A NEW CREED (VU 918)**

✠ **CLOSING HYMN:** VU 236 Now Thank We All Our God

†BENEDICTION/COMMISSIONING

†CHORAL AMEN!

†SENDING FORTH HYMN VU 481 (Abridged) Sent Forth by God's Blessing*

*Sent forth by God's blessing our true faith confessing, the people of God from this dwelling take leave.

Our faith ever sharing, in love ever caring embracing God's children of each tribe and race.

POSTLUDE:

Our Call to Worship, Prayer of Confession and Assurance Of Pardon come from Reformed Worship Magazine.