

Westminster United Church
Advent 1, 2023

✠ You are invited to stand as you are able

Announcements/Life and Work of the Church

✠ **Introit:** VU 10 x2 Prepare the Way of the Lord

✠ **Procession of Christ Candle**

Land Acknowledgement

Affirming Vision Statement & Lighting of the Affirming Candle

Lighting of Peace Candle

✠ **Advent Candle Lighting – Hope** (Read by Betty Sidlick and Cameron Lockerbie))

In this season of Advent, we remember that Christ is coming to bring us hope.

For those of us bound by bitterness and anger

Christ is coming to bring us hope.

For those of us feeling trapped and misunderstood

Christ is coming to bring us hope

For those of us burdened with ceaseless worry

Christ is coming to bring us hope

For those of us whose lives feel out of control

Christ is coming to bring us hope

Candle Lighting

In this season of Advent, as we look forward to Christmas, we take time to celebrate and to remember. On this, the first Sunday, as we light the first candle, we celebrate hope. Hope for a better world and better tomorrow. We also remember that we are God’s instruments of hope here on earth and its up to us to spread the message of hope.

Closing Prayer

Most merciful God, we thank-you for the hope that shines like a star at night. With your promise, we can look forward to a better tomorrow. Fill our hearts with the love that hope brings to all humankind during times of darkness. In your name, O Lord, we pray Amen.

✠ **HYMN:**

PRAYER OF ADORATION & CONFESSION (PCC Worship Planner)

One: Creator God, You made the heavens and the earth.

All: In Jesus Christ, you brought hope into a world full of fear and despair.

One: You sent your Spirit to enliven our hope and guide us on the way.

All: Now we wait in anxious times for the world to be made new.

One: We confess that waiting is difficult, and we struggle to see hope.

All: We are impatient with each other and quick to criticize.

One: We are impatient with you God, waiting for a sign of your kingdom come.

All: We are quick to seek our hope in the things and certainty.

One: Forgive us, O God.

All: Teach us to give up cautious faithfulness, so that we can offer you our whole lives, and commit to following Jesus into the future you are creating.

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

THE LORD'S PRAYER (VU 918)

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

One: God of grace, you speak words of hope in the midst of anxious times.

All: Send your Holy Spirit to open our ears to that hope.

One: Give us wisdom to read our own times and lives through the lens of your grace,

All: and transform our thoughts and ways as we encounter your Living Word, Jesus Christ. Amen.

SCRIPTURE READINGS: (Read by Marg McCulley)

Isaiah 64:1-9

New Living Translation

64 ^[a]Oh, that you would burst from the heavens and come down!

How the mountains would quake in your presence!

² ^[b]As fire causes wood to burn

and water to boil,

your coming would make the nations tremble.

Then your enemies would learn the reason for your fame!

³When you came down long ago,

you did awesome deeds beyond our highest expectations.

And oh, how the mountains quaked!

⁴For since the world began,

no ear has heard

and no eye has seen a God like you,

who works for those who wait for him!

⁵You welcome those who gladly do good,

who follow godly ways.

But you have been very angry with us,

for we are not godly.
We are constant sinners;
how can people like us be saved?
⁶We are all infected and impure with sin.
When we display our righteous deeds,
they are nothing but filthy rags.
Like autumn leaves, we wither and fall,
and our sins sweep us away like the wind.
⁷Yet no one calls on your name
or pleads with you for mercy.
Therefore, you have turned away from us
and turned us over^[c] to our sins.
⁸And yet, O LORD, you are our Father.
We are the clay, and you are the potter.
We all are formed by your hand.
⁹Don't be so angry with us, LORD.
Please don't remember our sins forever.
Look at us, we pray,
and see that we are all your people.

One: This is the witness of Israel.
ALL: Thanks be to God for the Word.

Psalm 80 (VU 794 Part 1)

Part One (1-7, 18-19)

Your face, God, shine on us and give us peace.

Shepherd of Israel, hear us,
you who lead Joseph like a flock,
you who are enthroned amidst the cherubim.
Shine forth before Ephraim, Benjamin and Manasseh;
stir up your might, come and save us. R

Your face, God, shine on us and give us peace.

God of hosts,
how long will you be angry with your people's prayer?

**You have fed us with the bread of weeping,
and given us tears in plenty to drink.**

You have made a mockery of us to our neighbours,
and our enemies laugh us to scorn.

Let your hand rest on the one at your right hand,
on the one you have made strong for yourself.

**Then we will never forsake you;
give us life, and we will call on your name.**

Your face, God, shine on us and give us peace.

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

ALL: Thanks be to God.

ANTHEM: "Seeking"

Mark 13:24-27, 32-33
New Living Translation

²⁴ "At that time, after the anguish of those days,

the sun will be darkened,

the moon will give no light,

²⁵ the stars will fall from the sky,

and the powers in the heavens will be shaken.^[a]

²⁶ Then everyone will see the Son of Man^[b] coming on the clouds with great power and glory.^[c] ²⁷ And he will send out his angels to gather his chosen ones from all over the world^[d]—from the farthest ends of the earth and heaven.

One: This is the witness of the Church.

ALL: Thanks be to God.

SERMON

✠HYMN: VU 341 Fairest Lord Jesus

MINUTES FOR MISSION “What did Jesus Do? (Read by Cameron Lockerbie)”

The question “What would Jesus do?” often shortened to the acronym “WWJD,” has graced wrist bands, T-shirts, and bumper stickers since the 1990s. And while it might sound like an overused cliché, it’s a question that can lead our spirit and, by extension, our lives to profound transformation.

What did Jesus do? He crossed a lot of boundaries. In fact, when we think about the boundaries that separate people—things like money, gender, education, culture, religion, and class—Jesus crossed them all, inspiring hope, inclusion, and compassion.

In the same way, our generosity through [Mission and Service](#) breaks down walls that divide and builds bridges that draw us together.

Your generosity supports organizations like hospitals, counselling centres, drop-in circles, and homeless shelters that are there when people need them most. Your gifts sustain education programs that teach farming skills, provide job training, and help remove obstacles so children can remain in school. Your generosity stands up for victims of human trafficking, ensures workers and children know their rights, and advocates for those persecuted because of their sexual orientation, gender, or beliefs. It fosters anti-racism, supports healing and reconciliation, and deepens spiritual practice.

Through [Mission and Service](#), the arms of your generosity stretch wide, reaching into schools, camps, hospitals, shelters, prisons, and churches.

Mission and Service is one of our church’s best answers to the question “What would Jesus do?” Thank you for your support.

Invitation to the Offering

Offertory (Offering Gathered with Reflection)

✠Doxology VU 236 vs1 Now Thank We All Our God

✠Offertory Prayer (PCC Worship Planner)

One: God of hope, we thank you for the light you shine into our lives as we wait on the coming of the Christ Child this year.

All: We offer you our gifts, knowing you can do with them more than we can ask or imagine.

One: Bless what we offer as tangible signs of your love at work in a world on edge,

All: and as symbols of the hope we share in Jesus Christ, our Lord and Friend. Amen.

✠A NEW CREED (VU 918)

Sacrament of Holy Communion

(Tune: O Come, O Come, Emmanuel)

One: May God be with you one and all,
All: And also with your spirit.
One: Lift up your hearts now to our God.
All: We lift our hearts to You, O gracious God!
One: Rejoice! Rejoice! Let us thank God
All: It's right to give God thanks and praise!

Great Thanksgiving Prayer (*tune: Good King Wenceslus*)

One: Blessing, honour, glory, power unto God Almighty!
All: Praise to You, eternal Lord, Father of all mercy.
You who made creation shine, land and sky and sea
Placed us here to care for all: gifted, loved, enjoyed and free.

Long ago You made us Lord, made us in Your image,
But through sin we broke the form, of our Lord within us.
Grasping for our selfish wants, oppression of our neighbours
Prophets called us to account, yet again we turned away.

Still Your love came shining through, from heaven You did send us.
Christ to take on human flesh, here to live among us.
He did suffer for our sin, died a death most cruel.
Raised to life He reigns in heaven, as it brightest jewel.

Prayer for Transformation (*concluding with a song of praise to the tune of Angels We Have Heard on High*)

One: Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of hosts, all praise be given!
All: All Your glory fills the earth; all Your power fills the heavens!
Glo-ria in excelsis Deo! Glo-ria in excelsis Deo!

One: Blessed is the King who came, bringing love and light divine.
All: Blessed is the King who comes, in the Bread and in the Wine.
Glo-ria in excelsis Deo! Glo-ria in excelsis Deo!

Breaking of Bread & Pouring of Wine
Distribution

Post Communion Prayer

One: Lord, now in Your mercy Your servants release,
As Your Word has promised, Oh, Grant us Your peace.
All: Our eyes, Your salvation and mercy behold,
Prepared for the nations as prophets foretold.
One: A light to the Gentiles, by whom we now see
The glory of Isr'el the Promised One be.
All: Who lives now and ever, the heaven's bright Son,

With Father, and Spirit, eternally One.

✠**CLOSING HYMN:** VU 291 All Things Bright and Beautiful

✠**BENEDICTION/COMMISSIONING**

✠**CHORAL AMEN VU 967**

✠**SENDING FORTH HYMN** VU 424 May the God of Hope Go With Us

POSTLUDE: