

January 28th Full Order of Service

Announcement/Life and Work

Introit “Will You Come and Follow Me”(VU 567 vs1)

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

One: Listen, Christ is teaching.

All: We sit at the feet of our teacher.

One: Listen, the teachings of Christ set the captives free.

All: We sit at the feet of our teacher.

One: Listen to Christ's teaching, full of power and authority.

All: We sit at the feet of our teacher.

One: Together let us worship God, as we gather in the Name of our Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer. Amen.

✠ **OPENING HYMN "I Am the Light of the World" (VU 87)**

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

One: We think we know so much, O God, and with our meager knowledge we presume to judge others.

All: We arrogantly announce our own opinions without a compassionate thought. We shut others out because of our faulty judgment and our blindness. Forgive us, God, for our foolishness and our stubbornness.

One: Help us, merciful God. Remind us again of Your great love and presence in our lives. Quiet our hearts, O God, and speak Your love. And I invite each of us now to enter into a moment of silence for self-reflection and private confession . . .

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

One: Hear the promise of the Savior's teachings: be at peace with God, with yourself, and with one another. And be assured, you are forgiven.

All: Amen.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

THE LORD'S PRAYER (VU 959)

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

SCRIPTURE READINGS (Read by Judy Taylor)

Old Testament

Good News Translation

Deuteronomy 18: 15 & 18

¹⁵ Instead, he will send you a prophet like me from among your own people, and you are to obey him.

¹⁸ I will send them a prophet like you from among their own people; I will tell him what to say, and he will tell the people everything I command. ¹⁹ He will speak in my name . . .”

One: This is the witness of Israel.

All: Thanks be to God for the Word.

Epistle

Good News Translation

1 Corinthians 8: 1b-3

It is true, of course, that “all of us have knowledge,” as they say. Such knowledge, however, puffs a person up with pride; but love builds up. ² Those who think they know something really don't know as they ought to know. ³ But the person who loves God is known by him.

One: This is the witness of the Church.

All: Thanks be to God.

ANTHEM: “Let Your Will Be Done”

Gospel

Good News Translation

Mark 1:21-28

²¹ Jesus and his disciples came to the town of Capernaum, and on the next Sabbath Jesus went to the synagogue and began to teach. ²² The

people who heard him were amazed at the way he taught, for he wasn't like the teachers of the Law; instead, he taught with authority.

²³ Just then a man with an evil spirit came into the synagogue and screamed, ²⁴ “What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Are you here to destroy us? I know who you are—you are God's holy messenger!”

²⁵ Jesus ordered the spirit, “Be quiet, and come out of the man!”

²⁶ The evil spirit shook the man hard, gave a loud scream, and came out of him. ²⁷ The people were all so amazed that they started saying to one another, “What is this? Is it some kind of new teaching? This man has authority to give orders to the evil spirits, and they obey him!”

²⁸ And so the news about Jesus spread quickly everywhere in the province of Galilee.

One: This is the Good News of Jesus Christ.

All: Praise to Christ, the Living Word.

SERMON: “The Spiritual Way of Humbleness”

✠HYMN: “Love Divine, All Loves Excelling” (VU 333)

MINUTES FOR MISSION “Making a Home for Refugees: ChrisAnn Alvarez’s Work (Read by Judy Taylor)

Imagine being forced to leave your home.

Set adrift, hoping to find a place to land, somewhere safe so you can rebuild your life.

“There’s this huge misconception that refugees choose to be refugees,” says ChrisAnn Alvarez, Refugee Support at The United Church of Canada. “It’s not a choice. It’s something they’re forced into.”

It's a reality that is faced by millions of refugees, and it's a reality that is becoming more and more prominent. More people are displaced today than ever before: 117.2 million, says the UN Refugee Agency.*

That's the equivalent of three Canadas.

There are many causes: human conflict, climate change, human rights violations, and more.

We can help.

Your gifts provide food, water, sanitation, and social support to people forced to flee their homes. Mission and Service creates educational and confidence-building programs in refugee camps.

Mission and Service also helps refugees find new homes.

"Congregations form sponsorship groups together to sponsor the refugee," Alvarez explains. "What Mission and Service allows is for them to sponsor through their own congregation."

She tells one story of a sponsor who renovated their basement after it flooded and immediately planned to sponsor a refugee in the new space.

"Who thinks like that?!" Alvarez exclaims with wonder and awe. "It's just so beautiful!"

The refugee stayed with his sponsors for years, and they became an adopted family to one another. "The sponsor told me, 'We have no kids, so this was an unexpected blessing,'" Alvarez recalls, tearing up.

"That's one example of someone opening their home in their home, in their heart, and allowing themselves to be transformed."

When we help protect one refugee from persecution, death, or years in a refugee camp, we save the world for that one person—and just maybe for ourselves, too.

INVITATION TO THE OFFERING

OFFERTORY (Offering Gathered with Reflection Music)

DOXOLOGY (VU 537)

OFFERTORY PRAYER

A NEW CREED (VU 918)

✠CLOSING HYMN: “Jesus Christ is Waiting” (VU 117)

✠BENEDICTION/COMMISSIONING

✠CHORAL AMEN (VU 974)

✠SENDING FORTH HYMN “Halle, Halle, Halle” (VU 958)

POSTLUDE: