

## **WUC Full Order of Worship Sunday, January 21<sup>st</sup>, 2024**

### **Announcements / Life and Work**

### **Introit “Joy to the World”(VU 59 vs 3)**

### **Opening Prayer**

Loving God, for you alone our souls wait in silence. You are our shelter in the storm, our hope in times of trial. When our courage falters, be our rock and our fortress. When all hope seems lost, lift us up in the arms of your salvation, that we might lift up others. Be our true home, O God, that silent place in our souls where prayers are answered and peace is found. Amen.

### **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**

Wait for the Lord. Our souls wait in silent longing.

**God alone is our rock and our salvation!**

Wait for the Lord. God is our fortress against the storm.

**God alone is our rock and our salvation!**

Wait for the Lord. God is our refuge and our strength.

**God alone is our rock and our salvation!**

**Opening Hymn ‘For the Healing of the Nations’ (VU 677)**

**Prayer of Confession**

Holy God, we would rather proclaim death to our enemies, than see them forgiven and redeemed. Forgive our hardness of heart, O God, and our reluctance to see your divine image in those who hate and despise us. Teach us to love our enemies, that our lives may proclaim your truth — that love is stronger than hate, and mercy is greater than vengeance. We ask this in the name of the Prince of Peace. Amen.

**Words of Assurance**

Do not be afraid. God is with you! That is good news. You do not have to go through life alone, wondering if anyone cares about you or knows your heart. God knows and God loves you. Rejoice for thus it is, has always been, and will continue to be. God’s love for you is eternal.  
AMEN.

**Prayers of the People**

**The Lord’s Prayer (VU 959)**

**Scripture (Read by Sharon Clay)**

**Jonah 3:1-5**

**New Living Translation**

Jonah Goes to Nineveh

3 Then the Lord spoke to Jonah a second time: <sup>2</sup> “Get up and go to the great city of Nineveh, and deliver the message I have given you.”

<sup>3</sup> This time Jonah obeyed the Lord’s command and went to Nineveh, a city so large that it took three days to see it all.<sup>[a]</sup> <sup>4</sup> On the day Jonah entered the city, he shouted to the crowds: “Forty days from now Nineveh will be destroyed!” <sup>5</sup> The people of Nineveh believed God’s message, and from the greatest to the least, they declared a fast and put on burlap to show their sorrow.

One: This is the Good News of Jesus Christ.

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

## **Psalm 62:5-12**

### **New Living Translation**

<sup>5</sup> Let all that I am wait quietly before God,  
for my hope is in him.

<sup>6</sup> He alone is my rock and my salvation,  
my fortress where I will not be shaken.

<sup>7</sup> My victory and honor come from God alone.  
He is my refuge, a rock where no enemy can reach me.

<sup>8</sup> O my people, trust in him at all times.

Pour out your heart to him,  
for God is our refuge. *Interlude*

<sup>9</sup> Common people are as worthless as a puff of wind,  
and the powerful are not what they appear to be.

If you weigh them on the scales,  
together they are lighter than a breath of air.

<sup>10</sup> Don’t make your living by extortion  
or put your hope in stealing.

And if your wealth increases,  
don’t make it the center of your life.

<sup>11</sup> God has spoken plainly,  
and I have heard it many times:  
Power, O God, belongs to you;  
<sup>12</sup> unfailing love, O Lord, is yours.  
Surely you repay all people  
according to what they have done.

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

**All: Thanks be to God.**

**ANTHEM: "Psalm of Quietness"**

**Mark 1:14-20**

**New Living Translation**

<sup>14</sup> Later on, after John was arrested, Jesus went into Galilee, where he preached God's Good News.<sup>[a]</sup> <sup>15</sup> "The time promised by God has come at last!" he announced. "The Kingdom of God is near! Repent of your sins and believe the Good News!"

The First Disciples

<sup>16</sup> One day as Jesus was walking along the shore of the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon<sup>[b]</sup> and his brother Andrew throwing a net into the water, for they fished for a living. <sup>17</sup> Jesus called out to them, "Come, follow me, and I will show you how to fish for people!" <sup>18</sup> And they left their nets at once and followed him.

<sup>19</sup> A little farther up the shore Jesus saw Zebedee's sons, James and John, in a boat repairing their nets. <sup>20</sup> He called them at once, and they also followed him, leaving their father, Zebedee, in the boat with the hired men.

One: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**All: Thanks be to God for the Word.**

**REFLECTON**

## **Hymn: “Like the Murmur of a Dove’s Song” (VU 205)**

### **Minutes for Mission “Providing Tuition Assistance for Refugees” (Read by Chris White)**

Hamdan wants to become a doctor someday. As the oldest son, this young teenager dreams big amidst the daily struggles that he and his family face.

Hamdan’s family came to Lebanon several years ago to escape the war in Syria. They can barely afford their monthly rent, food, household expenses, clothing, and medical needs. While his father works in a produce shop, his mother stays at home to care for the family’s four children and two other family members. This family of eight lives on the father’s pay and a small income supplement they receive from the UN. Like Hamdan, many children in Lebanon are at risk of losing their education because an economic crisis—intensified by the COVID pandemic and the devastating 2020 explosion in Beirut—has plunged their families into poverty. When parents can’t pay school tuition, children face an unstable future. The Middle East Council of Churches (MECC) assists Lebanese students and Syrian refugees ages 8–13 with tuition and fees to secure their education and prevent them from becoming a lost generation.

One thing Hamdan’s parents don’t have to worry about anymore is his education. With tuition assistance provided by MECC to Hamdan and his siblings, they can continue to study until graduation and gain entrance into a university—giving Hamdan a chance to achieve his dream.

Your support through Mission and Service helps remove barriers for teenagers like Hamdan so they can work toward their dreams. Thank you.

### **Invitation to the Offering**

## **Offertory**

**Doxology “Your Work, O God Needs Many Hands” (VU 537)**

## **Offertory Prayer**

God of life and freedom, we celebrate the revelation of Jesus as the Christ who makes all creation new.

**Accept all we offer you this day and make us new in Him, who is Lord for ever and ever. AMEN.**

**A New Creed (VU 918)**

**Closing Hymn “Will You Come and Follow Me” (VU 567)**

## **Benediction / Commissioning**

As the disciples walked with Christ so long ago, walk with Christ in your hearts and spirits. Feel the power of the Holy Spirit guiding your path. Know the love of God which is poured out for you and rejoice. Go in peace and may God’s peace go with you.

**Choral Amen (VU 974)**

**Sending Forth Hymn “Halle, Halle, Halle” (VU 958)**

**Postlude**