

February 4th Full Order of Service

Reverend Kristy Reimers-Loader

Announcement/Life and Work

✠ Introit “Will You Come and Follow Me” (VU 567 vs 3)

✠ Opening Prayer

Lord of heaven and earth,
grant that we may hear the message of Jesus,
and receiving the message He proclaimed,
**may it become so much a part of us
that we are moved to spiritual reflection,
to faithful intention, and to loving action
in the world you have so graciously given to be our
home. 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."

CELEBRATIONS

✠ Call to Worship

Hallelujah! How good it is to sing praises to our God!

how pleasant it is to honour him with praise!

The Lord rebuilds Jerusalem; he gathers the exiles of Israel.

He heals the broken-hearted and binds up their wounds.

Let all who love the Lord come and worship

We come with praise and thanksgiving! Amen.

OPENING HYMN “A Mighty Fortress Is Our God” (VU 262)

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Merciful Lord, grant to your faithful people pardon and peace,

**that we may be cleansed from all our sins
and serve you with a quiet mind;**

we ask this through Jesus Christ
our Lord and Saviour forever. **Amen.**

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

THE LORD’S PRAYER (VU 959)

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Wisdom calls from the Scriptures!

May the Word of God enlighten us!

SCRIPTURE READINGS

ISAIAH 40:21-31

New Living Translation

²¹ Haven't you heard? Don't you understand?

Are you deaf to the words of God—
the words he gave before the world began?

Are you so ignorant?

²² God sits above the circle of the earth.

The people below seem like grasshoppers to
him!

He spreads out the heavens like a curtain
and makes his tent from them.

²³ He judges the great people of the world
and brings them all to nothing.

²⁴ They hardly get started, barely taking root,
when he blows on them and they wither.

The wind carries them off like chaff.

²⁵ "To whom will you compare me?

Who is my equal?" asks the Holy One.

²⁶ Look up into the heavens.

Who created all the stars?

He brings them out like an army, one after another,

calling each by its name.

Because of his great power and incomparable strength,

not a single one is missing.

²⁷ O Jacob, how can you say the LORD does not see your troubles?

O Israel, how can you say God ignores your rights?

²⁸ Have you never heard?

Have you never understood?

The LORD is the everlasting God,
the Creator of all the earth.

He never grows weak or weary.

No one can measure the depths of his understanding.

²⁹ He gives power to the weak
and strength to the powerless.

³⁰ Even youths will become weak and tired,
and young men will fall in exhaustion.

³¹ But those who trust in the LORD will find new

strength.

They will soar high on wings like eagles.
They will run and not grow weary.
They will walk and not faint.

One: This is the witness of Israel.

All: Thanks be to God for the Word.

Anthem: “Be Still My Soul”

MARK 1:29-39

New Living Translation

Jesus Heals Many People

²⁹ After Jesus left the synagogue with James and John, they went to Simon and Andrew’s home. ³⁰ Now Simon’s mother-in-law was sick in bed with a high fever. They told Jesus about her right away. ³¹ So he went to her bedside, took her by the hand, and helped her sit up. Then the fever left her, and she prepared a meal for them.

³² That evening after sunset, many sick and demon-possessed people were brought to Jesus. ³³ The whole town gathered at the door to watch. ³⁴ So Jesus healed many people who were sick with various diseases, and he cast out many demons. But because the demons knew who he was, he did not allow them to speak.

Jesus Preaches in Galilee

³⁵ Before daybreak the next morning, Jesus got up and went out to an isolated place to pray. ³⁶ Later Simon and the others went out to find him. ³⁷ When they found him, they said, “Everyone is looking for you.”

³⁸ But Jesus replied, “We must go on to other towns as well, and I will preach to them, too. That is why I came.” ³⁹ So he traveled throughout the region of Galilee, preaching in the synagogues and casting out demons.

One: This is the Good News of Jesus Christ.

All: Praise to Christ, the Living Word.

SERMON:

HYMN: “Jesus Christ Is Waiting” (VU 117)

MINUTES FOR MISSION “Lessons of Racism Learned When Young”

The following is an excerpt from a [blog](#) written by Adele Halliday. Your [Mission and Service](#) gifts support anti-racism programs and initiatives like the ones Halliday develops as the United Church’s Anti-Racism and Equity Lead to help all of us be in deeper, more equitable relationships with one another.

The name calling started when she was about three years old. They were racial slurs, and names, and taunts. My child, my own flesh and blood, was being ostracized for having Black skin. The people slinging the insults? Other children on the playground....

She may not have necessarily always understood the particular terms that they used, but she knew that they were related to her Blackness and her racial identity. And this deeply wounded her tender heart....

Despite all of our intentional modelling, teaching, and proactive actions, our child is still already developing internalized racism and inferior notions of herself.

The children who were taunting her were offering explicit and overt notions of racism, but they were children! They had not even started primary school! And yet, the children had already learned behaviour (at home, or elsewhere in society) that Whiteness is superior. And, they had the audacity to vocalize that to an innocent little child....

This is in part why I am so deeply committed to dismantling racism in all its forms—racism is damaging and destructive for all people in society. It reinforces negative notions for people of colour. I live it in a particular way because of my own racial identity, as a Black person who has lived with racial injustice my entire life.

The systemic nature of racism is something that cannot be ignored.... This effort to overcome racism is a continuous effort. And I am committed to this work for the long haul.

I hope that you will be too.

INVITATION TO THE OFFERING

As we bring our gifts to God's table,
may those with plenty
share according to their ability,
and may those with little

receive according to their need.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

OFFERTORY (Offering gathered with reflection)

✠DOXOLOGY (VU 537)

OFFERTORY PRAYER

God of compassion and forgiveness,
**receive our offering this day, and make us one with him
who is our peace,**
Jesus Christ our Saviour. **Amen.**

A NEW CREED (VU 918)

**✠CLOSING HYMN: "Jesus' Hands Were Kind Hands" (VU
570)**

✠BENEDICTION/COMMISSIONING

✠CHORAL AMEN (VU 974)

✠SENDING FORTH HYMN "Halle, Halle, Halle" (VU 958)

POSTLUDE: