

Westminster United Church
Resurrection Sunday
March 31, 2024

✝ You are invited to stand as you are able

Announcements/Life and Work of the Church

✝ **Introit:** (VU 164 vs1) “The Day of Resurrection”

Easter Lenten Reading

Proclamation

The light which the world tried to extinguish cannot be put out. Today we light the candles again, proclaiming the transforming power of God. As the light returns, we give thanks that God’s transforming love has been, is now, and will ever be at work within us. Today we celebrate: new life, new joy, new possibilities. Christ is alive and living among us!

As we light the candles, we acknowledge that there is still pain and suffering in the world, but we place our trust in God and in the way shown by Jesus Christ. In the midst of darkness, there is light. In the pain of death, there is life. In the face of what appear to us to be overwhelming odds, God is at work in us and in the world, working for justice and peace, compassion and love, and life abundant. Christ is risen; Christ is risen in us, for wherever we gather in his name, he is there.

(All candles are re-lit.)

All: Alleluia, Christ is risen; Christ is risen indeed!

✝ 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 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 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

"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."

✠ Call to Worship

One: Christ is risen!

All: He is risen indeed! Hallelujah!

One: Jesus said, "I am the living One;

I was dead, and now I am alive for evermore." (Revelation 1)

All: Let us give thanks to the Lord, for he is good!

One: His faithful love endures forever!

All: This is the day that the Lord has made;

let us rejoice and be glad in it. (PSALM 118)

✠ Opening Hymn: (VU 155) "Jesus Christ Is Risen Today "

Prayer of Adoration & Confession

One: God of Resurrecting power, you lift our hearts with joy when we see the tomb is empty.

All: God of Resurrecting hope, you fill us with excitement when we hear that Christ is risen.

One: God of Resurrecting love, you embrace us with courage when we trust in the power of new life that you promise in the Risen Christ.

All: We offer you all glory, honour and praise with hearts overflowing in Jesus' name.

One: God of Resurrecting joy, we confess it's not easy to sustain Easter hope.

All: We let discouragement, fear and frustration to settle in and we let anger and anxiety turn our hearts away from you.

One: Resentment and disappointment cling to us and we forget your great mercy and love.

All: Forgive us. Restore within us the joy and hope you promise us in Christ, our Risen Lord. Amen.

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

THE LORD'S PRAYER (VU 959)

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

SCRIPTURE READINGS:

Isaiah 25:6-9

⁶ In Jerusalem,^[a] the LORD of Heaven's Armies
will spread a wonderful feast
for all the people of the world.

It will be a delicious banquet
with clear, well-aged wine and choice meat.

⁷ There he will remove the cloud of gloom,
the shadow of death that hangs over the earth.

⁸ He will swallow up death forever!

The Sovereign LORD will wipe away all tears.
He will remove forever all insults and mockery
against his land and people.

The LORD has spoken!

⁹ In that day the people will proclaim,
"This is our God!

We trusted in him, and he saved us!
This is the LORD, in whom we trusted.
Let us rejoice in the salvation he brings!"

One: This is the witness of Israel.

ALL: Thanks be to God for the Word.

ANTHEM: "He Is Alive"

Gospel Reading:

John 20:1-18

The Resurrection

20 Early on Sunday morning,^[a] while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and found that the stone had been rolled away from the entrance. ² She ran and found Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved. She said, “They have taken the Lord’s body out of the tomb, and we don’t know where they have put him!”

³ Peter and the other disciple started out for the tomb. ⁴ They were both running, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. ⁵ He stooped and looked in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he didn’t go in. ⁶ Then Simon Peter arrived and went inside. He also noticed the linen wrappings lying there, ⁷ while the cloth that had covered Jesus’ head was folded up and lying apart from the other wrappings. ⁸ Then the disciple who had reached the tomb first also went in, and he saw and believed— ⁹ for until then they still hadn’t understood the Scriptures that said Jesus must rise from the dead. ¹⁰ Then they went home.

Jesus Appears to Mary Magdalene

¹¹ Mary was standing outside the tomb crying, and as she wept, she stooped and looked in. ¹² She saw two white-robed angels, one sitting at the head and the other at the foot of the place where the body of Jesus had been lying. ¹³ “Dear woman, why are you crying?” the angels asked her.

“Because they have taken away my Lord,” she replied, “and I don’t know where they have put him.”

¹⁴ She turned to leave and saw someone standing there. It was Jesus, but she didn't recognize him. ¹⁵ "Dear woman, why are you crying?" Jesus asked her. "Who are you looking for?"

She thought he was the gardener. "Sir," she said, "if you have taken him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will go and get him."

¹⁶ "Mary!" Jesus said.

She turned to him and cried out, "Rabboni!" (which is Hebrew for "Teacher").

¹⁷ "Don't cling to me," Jesus said, "for I haven't yet ascended to the Father. But go find my brothers and tell them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'"

¹⁸ Mary Magdalene found the disciples and told them, "I have seen the Lord!" Then she gave them his message.

One: This is the Good News of Jesus Christ.

ALL: Praise to Christ, the Living Word.

SERMON: Rev. Heather Carlson

✝ **HYMN: (VU 158) "Christ Is Alive"**

Invitation to the Offering

Offertory

✠ **Doxology (537 vs2) “Your Work, O God Needs Many Hands”**

✠ **Offertory Prayer**

One: God of Resurrecting Grace, we offer our gifts with grateful hearts,

All: recognizing how much you have given us in Christ, and what that gift has cost.

One: Empower these gifts to spread the hope and joy we celebrate today

All: Heal the world you love, in the name of your greatest gift, Jesus Christ. Amen.

✠ **A NEW CREED (VU 918)**

“We Remember You “performed by the WUC Choir

Sacrament of Holy Communion (Rev. James Murray, Trinity-St. Andrew’s United Church, Renfrew, ON, *adapted*)

One: May the Father, Son and Holy Spirit be with us!

All: God is here among us on this day of resurrection!

One: Let us open our hearts to God.

All: We open ourselves to God’s Spirit of new life.

One: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

All: It is right to give, and live, our thanks and praise.

One: A few short days ago we recalled when Jesus gathered with friends sharing in what we have come to call “The Last Supper.”

All: Today we are a new community, rooted in the resurrection.

One: Out of chaos and fear God brings beauty and hope.

All: Out of despair and death the Spirit creates courage and new life.

One: And so, with the risen Christ, who makes all things new by the power of his resurrection, we join in the song of a new day, to sing your praise.

(Melody "Hymn To Joy" 232 VU)

One: We give thanks to you Creator, maker of the heavens and earth.

You have formed us in your image, breathed in to us holy breath.

All: With your people on the earth and all the company of heaven. Now we lift your holy name and join in their unending hymn.

**Holy, Holy God of power, heaven and earth are full of Thee
Bless-ed is the one you sent, we sing Hosanna mightily!
Holy are you, and most bless-ed is your Son, Lord Jesus Christ.
Through your Spirit you anointed Him to be our saving grace.**

One: Born in manger, preaching Kingdom, suffered on the cross, did he.

Died, but death was not the end, for resurrection set him free!

**All: You delivered us from evil, from our slavery to sin,
Life has triumphed over death, in Jesus your love makes us kin.**

In remembrance of these acts, we give ourselves in thanks and praise.

Holy, living sacrifices, we proclaim faith's mysteries:

“Christ has died and Christ is risen, Christ will come again one day.”

Pour your Holy Spirit on us, gathered in this place today.

One: Breathe your Spirit on these gifts of broken bread and filled cup,

Make them be for us the body and the blood of Jesus Christ.

All: Source of grace and fount of blessing let your light upon us shine

teach us how to love each other lift us to the joy divine.

Through your Son, our Saviour Jesus, With the Holy Spirit’s power,

May the Church that you created honour you in every hour.

Ever singing march we onward victors in the midst of strife joyful music leads us sunward in the triumph song of life.

Distribution of the bread and cup

Prayer after communion

All: Christ be with us; Christ within us;

Christ behind us; Christ before us;

Christ beside us; Christ to win us.

Christ to comfort and restore us.

Christ beneath us, Christ above us,

Christ in quiet, Christ in danger,

Christ in hearts of all that love us,

Christ in mouth of friend and stranger

wherever we go in your name. Amen

✠CLOSING HYMN: (VU 468) “Let Us Talents and Tongues Employ”

✠BENEDICTION/COMMISSIONING

✠CHORAL AMEN : VU 974

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

POSTLUDE: