

April 14th, 2024 Full Order of Service
Chaplain George Koopmans

✝ You are invited to stand as you are able

Announcements/Life and Work of the Church

✝ **Introit:** (VU 164 vs 1) “The Day of Resurrection”

✝ Opening Prayer

**God of the heavens and the earth,
with joy we praise you,
we thank you, we honour you.**

**Because you have made us like yourself,
made us to be creative in your world,
we praise you.**

**Because you have freed us through Jesus
freed us to be people of light and love,
we thank you.**

**Because your Spirit is present with us,
present to guide and renew,
we honour you.**

**God of the heavens and the earth,
with joy we praise you,
we thank you, we honour you for ever. 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 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

✠ Opening Hymn: (VU 348) “O Love, How Deep”

Prayer of Confession (VU 928A)

Holy and gracious God,
gathered as your people responding to your call,
we confess

the self that is not aware of sinning;
the heart that is too hardened to repent;
the pride that dares not admit it is wrong;
the righteousness that knows no fault;
the callousness that has ceased to care;
the blindness that can see nothing but its own will.

God, in your healing love, forgive us;
through our Saviour, Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

THE LORD'S PRAYER (VU 959)

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

SCRIPTURE READINGS (Read by Chris White)

Psalm 122

A song of ascents. Of David.

- ¹ I rejoiced with those who said to me,
“Let us go to the house of the LORD.”
- ² Our feet are standing
in your gates, Jerusalem.
- ³ Jerusalem is built like a city
that is closely compacted together.
- ⁴ That is where the tribes go up—
the tribes of the LORD—
to praise the name of the LORD
according to the statute given to Israel.
- ⁵ There stand the thrones for judgment,
the thrones of the house of David.
- ⁶ Pray for the peace of Jerusalem:
“May those who love you be secure.
- ⁷ May there be peace within your walls
and security within your citadels.”
- ⁸ For the sake of my family and friends,
I will say, “Peace be within you.”
- ⁹ For the sake of the house of the LORD our God,
I will seek your prosperity.

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

ALL: Thanks be to God.

Hebrews 12:1-3

12 Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, ² fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. ³ Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

One: This is the witness of the Church.

ALL: Thanks be to God.

Anthem: Because He Lives

Luke 24: 13-35

On the Road to Emmaus

¹³ Now that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles^[a] from Jerusalem. ¹⁴ They were talking with each other about everything that had happened. ¹⁵ As they talked and discussed these things with each other, Jesus himself came up and walked along with them; ¹⁶ but they were kept from recognizing him.

¹⁷ He asked them, “What are you discussing together as you walk along?”

They stood still, their faces downcast. ¹⁸ One of them, named Cleopas, asked him, “Are you the only one visiting Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?”

¹⁹ “What things?” he asked.

“About Jesus of Nazareth,” they replied. “He was a prophet, powerful in word and deed before God and all the people. ²⁰ The chief priests and our rulers handed him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified him; ²¹ but we had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel. And what is more, it is the third day since all this took place. ²² In addition, some of our women amazed us. They went to the tomb early this morning ²³ but didn’t find his body. They came and told us that they had seen a vision of angels, who said he was alive. ²⁴ Then some of our companions went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but they did not see Jesus.”

²⁵ He said to them, “How foolish you are, and how slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken! ²⁶ Did not the Messiah have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?” ²⁷ And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.

²⁸ As they approached the village to which they were going, Jesus continued on as if he were going farther. ²⁹ But they urged him strongly, “Stay with us, for it is nearly evening; the day is almost over.” So he went in to stay with them.

³⁰ When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them. ³¹ Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him, and he disappeared from their sight. ³² They asked each other, “Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?”

³³ They got up and returned at once to Jerusalem. There they found the Eleven and those with them, assembled together ³⁴ and saying, "It is true! The Lord has risen and has appeared to Simon." ³⁵ Then the two told what had happened on the way, and how Jesus was recognized by them when he broke the bread.

One: This is the Good News of Jesus Christ.

ALL: Praise to Christ, the Living Word.

SERMON: "Open Our Eyes Lord"

✠HYMN: "Open My Eyes Lord"

(Lyrics on PowerPoint)

MINUTES FOR MISSION "Supporting a Rights-Based Approach to Growing Food" (Read by Debi Hoefling)

The Association of Economic and Social Development Santa Marta (ADES), a Mission and Service partner, is located in an area of Central America that is very vulnerable to climate change. This hot, dry region regularly experiences drought. Mining projects have also negatively affected the environment and the people in the region. ADES and other community organizations decided to act to protect the community's right to a healthy environment.

An example of how ADES has responded is a three-year agroecology project co-funded by the Manitoba Council for International Cooperation and The United Church of Canada Foundation, along with Mission and Service. Agroecology benefits the land and water because it recycles nutrients back into the soil. It also reduces production costs, lessening the financial burden on rural farmers.

In this project, ADES works closely with the community to grow food in a rural region of El Salvador, promoting sustainable agriculture that protects biodiversity, maintains the integrity of the land, and upholds rural culture.

At the centre of the project is the Dora Alicia Sorto School Farm, where rural families, mainly led by women, learn about agroecology. The school provides training, technical expertise, and seeds indigenous to the region. It focuses on preserving the surrounding environment and on upholding gender and human rights as part of its approach to food security.

Your gifts to [Mission and Service](#) help support ADES' agroecology project. Thank you for your generosity!

Invitation to the Offering

Offertory accompanied with reflection music

✝ **Doxology (537 vs2) "Your Work, O God Needs Many Hands"**

✝ **Offertory Prayer**

✝ **A NEW CREED (VU 918)**

✝ **CLOSING HYMN: : (VU 179) Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Give Thanks**

✝ **BENEDICTION/COMMISSIONING**

✝ **CHORAL AMEN: VU 974**

✝ **SENDING FORTH HYMN (VU 958 2X) "Halle, Halle, Halle"**

POSTLUDE: