

April 21 Full Order of Service  
Rev. Dr. Cruickshank

✝ You are invited to stand as you are able

## **Announcements/Life and Work of the Church**

✝ **Introit:** (Vu 412 vs 1) “This Is The Day”

### **✝ Opening Prayer**

God of love, we come trusting that your love has the power to defeat evil in the world.

Jesus shows us that your love defeats even the power of death.

You are with us through the darkest valleys so that we are not afraid.

We worship you with glad hearts, praising you in the name of the Risen Lord, praying with the breath of your Spirit in us.

Renew our strength and courage to face whatever each day holds, so our lives will bring you honour and glory now and always. 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**

Leader: God our Shepherd offers us abundant life.

**Cong: God, you are with us!**

L: God our shepherd leads us by still waters.

**C: God, restore our souls!**

L: God our Shepherd walks with us through every dark valley.

**C: God, we will not be afraid!**

**All: God our Shepherd, we praise you for your goodness and mercy with us every day.**

**✝ Opening Hymn: (VU 325) “Christ Is Made the Sure Foundation”**

## **Prayer of Confession**

God of love, we confess that too often we let the events around us shatter our trust in your love.

When terror strikes and innocents fall, we wonder if your love can defeat violence. When truth gets lost among misleading claims, we wonder if love can prevail over lies.

Forgive us, God, when we lose our trust in the power of your love so soon after it raised Jesus from death's grip.  
Amen.

## **WORDS OF ASSURANCE**

God so loved the world that God sent God's only son to redeem us.

Jesus so loved his Father that he humbled himself to come to earth to save us.

We are promised eternal life, by God's grace and love.  
Thanks be to God!

## **PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE**

### **THE LORD'S PRAYER (VU 959)**

## **PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION**

God of green pastures and still waters, quiet our hearts and minds as we listen to the Scriptures.

By your Spirit, deepen our understanding so that we come to know you more fully, and follow your Word more faithfully.

## **SCRIPTURE READINGS (Read by Marilyn Taylor)**

### **Acts 4: 5-12**

<sup>5</sup> The next day the rulers, the elders and the teachers of the law met in Jerusalem. <sup>6</sup> Annas the high priest was there, and so were Caiaphas, John, Alexander and others of the high priest's family. <sup>7</sup> They had Peter and John brought before them and began to question them: "By what power or what name did you do this?"

<sup>8</sup> Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them: "Rulers and elders of the people! <sup>9</sup> If we are being called to account today for an act of kindness shown to a man who was lame and are being asked how he was healed, <sup>10</sup> then know this, you and all the people of Israel: It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified but whom God raised from the dead, that this man stands before you healed. <sup>11</sup> Jesus is

“the stone you builders rejected,  
which has become the cornerstone.”<sup>[a]</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved.”

One: This is the witness of the Church.

**ALL: Thanks be to God.**

### **Psalm 23 (VU p. 747 sung)**

- 1 The Lord's my Shepherd, I'll not want;  
he makes me down to lie  
in pastures green; he leadeth me,  
the quiet waters by.
  
- 2 My soul he doth restore again;  
and me to walk doth make  
within the paths of righteousness,  
even for his own name's sake.

3 Yea, though I walk in death's dark vale,  
yet will I fear no ill;  
for thou art with me; and thy rod  
and staff me comfort still.

4 My table thou has furnished  
in presence of my foes;  
my head thou dost with oil anoint,  
and my cup overflows.

5 Goodness and mercy all my life  
shall surely follow me,  
and in God's house for evermore  
my dwelling-place shall be.

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

**ALL: Thanks be to God.**

**John 10: 1-10**

**The Good Shepherd and His Sheep**



**10** “Very truly I tell you Pharisees, anyone who does not enter the sheep pen by the gate, but climbs in by some other way, is a thief and a robber. <sup>2</sup>The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. <sup>3</sup>The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. <sup>4</sup>When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice. <sup>5</sup>But they will never follow a stranger; in fact, they will run away from him because they do not recognize a stranger’s voice.” <sup>6</sup>Jesus used this figure of speech, but the Pharisees did not understand what he was telling them.

<sup>7</sup>Therefore Jesus said again, “Very truly I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. <sup>8</sup>All who have come before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep have not listened to them. <sup>9</sup>I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved.<sup>[a]</sup> They will come in and go out, and find pasture. <sup>10</sup>The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.

One: This is the Good News of Jesus Christ.

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

**ANTHEM:** “Jesu, Joy of Man’s Desiring”

**SERMON:** “Sheep Stuff”

✝ **HYMN:** (VU 365) “Jesus Loves Me”

**MINUTES FOR MISSION “Building and Strengthening Community Through Art” Read By Sharon Clay**

*We would like to share a wonderful thank-you letter we received from Bissell Centre, a Mission and Service partner located in Edmonton. We're sharing it with you with deep gratitude and thanks for your generosity.*

Thank you to the wonderful people of The United Church of Canada. It’s with gifts like yours that we’re able to meet people facing poverty and houselessness where they’re at. We look forward to collecting and sharing more stories with you, like this one about Jon:

Jon is one of the community members at Bissell Centre, and has a passion (and talent) for art. In fact, he’s been named Bissell’s artist in residence. His work has been commissioned by Bissell to provide an authentic, community-made element to our event advertising, our annual impact reports, and several donor thank-you gifts. His pieces often feature powerful imagery drawn from his Indigenous heritage and always in a spirit of celebration. His art was the focal point of the event

poster for Bissell's celebration of National Indigenous Peoples Day [in 2022]. Inspired by the love and support he has received, Jon wanted a way to give back. He designed, organized, and now facilitates a weekly art program called "Good Art." In the workshops he guides people to express themselves in a healthy way through art that means something to them. Folks are encouraged to share about the art they make at the end of each workshop as way to build and strengthen community. Your support provided a space for this to happen, and your gifts are having a palpable impact in the lives of Edmontonians facing poverty and homelessness. Thank you very much United Church of Canada. Shared with gratitude for your gifts through [Mission and Service](#). Thank you for your generosity.

## **Invitation to the Offering**

"The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want": the words of the Psalm celebrate God's overflowing goodness and mercy in our lives.

We offer God our gifts so that God's goodness and mercy will keep flowing into this world God made. Amen.

**Offertory accompanied with reflection music**

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

**✝Offertory Prayer**

God of the tender heart, we thank you for the care your offer to us as our Shepherd.

Bless the gifts we offer so they will spread your abundant love to lives in need of caring.

Bless our lives so that we may care for the world, as we follow Jesus, day by day. Amen.

**✝A NEW CREED (VU 918)**

**✝CLOSING HYMN: “We Walk By Faith” lyrics on PP**

**✝BENEDICTION/COMMISSIONING**

Go in joy, knowing God rejoices over you. And care for others, knowing God rejoices over them, too!

May the blessing of God who made us, the Christ who mends us, and the Spirit who gives us life, be with you now and always. Amen.

**✠CHORAL AMEN: VU 974**

**✠SENDING FORTH HYMN (VU 958 2X) “Halle, Halle,  
Halle”**

**POSTLUDE:**