

April 7th, 2024 Full Order of Service
Rev. Kristy Reimers Loader

✝ You are invited to stand as you are able

Announcements/Life and Work of the Church

✝ **Introit:** (VU 164 vs 3) “The Day of Resurrection”

✝ Opening Prayer

Scripture tells us “God is light and in him there is no darkness at all.”

We come to witness this light.

Those who walk in the light of the Lord will have fellowship with him.

May we walk in the light of the Lord forever.

✝ 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

The early church was blessed with unity, love, and charity,
Let us gather as they did, believing we are of one heart and soul.

The apostles testified to the resurrection of Jesus and great grace was with the whole company of believers,
May the grace of God be with us as we worship.

All that we have—our peace and our possessions, are blessings we are meant to share; all honour and glory, all praise and worship be unto our Saviour,
Thanks be to God, forever and ever. Amen.

✠ **Opening Hymn: (VU 25) “Lo, He Comes With Cloud Descending”**

Prayer of Confession

Most merciful God,

we confess that we often stray from your path of righteousness,

when we do what we shouldn't do, and we fail to do what we should.

We ask your forgiveness for our moments of weakness.

Let our resolve to better serve you and our brothers and sisters be strengthened,

And grant us your courage for the days to come. 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 (Read by Anna-Marie Hancock)

ACTS 4:32-35

The Believers Share Their Possessions

³² All the believers were united in heart and mind. And they felt that what they owned was not their own, so they shared everything they had. ³³ The apostles testified powerfully to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and God's great blessing was upon them all. ³⁴ There were no needy people among them, because those who owned land or houses would sell them ³⁵ and bring the money to the apostles to give to those in need.

One: This is the witness of the Church.

ALL: Thanks be to God.

Psalm: 133 (VU 856) "Behold, How Pleasant"

Behold how pleasant, how good it is!

Behold how pleasant, how good it is!

1 How pleasant and harmonious
when God's people are together:
fragrant as precious oil
when running fresh on Aaron's beard.

Behold how pleasant, how good it is!
Behold how pleasant, how good it is!

2 How pleasant and harmonious
when God's people are together:
fresh like the morning dew
that falls on Zion's holy hill.

Behold how pleasant, how good it is!
Behold how pleasant, how good it is!

3 How pleasant and harmonious
when God's people are together:
there is where God bestows
the blessing, life for evermore.

Behold how pleasant, how good it is!
Behold how pleasant, how good it is!

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

ALL: Thanks be to God.

1 JOHN 1:1-2:2; JOHN 20:19-31

Introduction

1 We proclaim to you the one who existed from the beginning,^[a] whom we have heard and seen. We saw him with our own eyes and touched him with our own hands. He is the Word of life. **2** This one who is life itself was revealed to us, and we have seen him. And now we testify and proclaim to you that he is the one who is eternal life. He was with the Father, and then he was revealed to us. **3** We proclaim to you what we ourselves have actually seen and heard so that you may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. **4** We are writing these things so that you may fully share our joy.^[b]

Living in the Light

5 This is the message we heard from Jesus^[c] and now declare to you: God is light, and there is no darkness in him at all. **6** So we are lying if we say we have fellowship with God but go on living in spiritual darkness; we are not practicing the truth. **7** But if we are living in the light, as God is in the light, then we have fellowship with each other, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, cleanses us from all sin.

⁸ If we claim we have no sin, we are only fooling ourselves and not living in the truth. ⁹ But if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness. ¹⁰ If we claim we have not sinned, we are calling God a liar and showing that his word has no place in our hearts.

2 My dear children, I am writing this to you so that you will not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate who pleads our case before the Father. He is Jesus Christ, the one who is truly righteous. ² He himself is the sacrifice that atones for our sins—and not only our sins but the sins of all the world.

Jesus Appears to His Disciples

¹⁹ That Sunday evening^[a] the disciples were meeting behind locked doors because they were afraid of the Jewish leaders. Suddenly, Jesus was standing there among them! “Peace be with you,” he said. ²⁰ As he spoke, he showed them the wounds in his hands and his side. They were filled with joy when they saw the Lord! ²¹ Again he said, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I am sending you.” ²² Then he breathed on them and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit. ²³ If you forgive anyone’s sins, they are forgiven. If you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.”

Jesus Appears to Thomas

²⁴ One of the twelve disciples, Thomas (nicknamed the Twin),^[b] was not with the others when Jesus came. ²⁵ They told him, “We have seen the Lord!”

But he replied, “I won’t believe it unless I see the nail wounds in his hands, put my fingers into them, and place my hand into the wound in his side.”

²⁶ Eight days later the disciples were together again, and this time Thomas was with them. The doors were locked; but suddenly, as before, Jesus was standing among them. “Peace be with you,” he said. ²⁷ Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here, and look at my hands. Put your hand into the wound in my side. Don’t be faithless any longer. Believe!”

²⁸ “My Lord and my God!” Thomas exclaimed.

²⁹ Then Jesus told him, “You believe because you have seen me. Blessed are those who believe without seeing me.”

Purpose of the Book

³⁰ The disciples saw Jesus do many other miraculous signs in addition to the ones recorded in this book. ³¹ But these are written so that you may continue to believe^[c] that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing in him you will have life by the power of his name.

One: This is the Good News of Jesus Christ.

ALL: Praise to Christ, the Living Word.

SERMON:

✝HYMN: “We Walk by Faith” by Marty Hagen (Lyrics on PowerPoint)

MINUTES FOR MISSION “United Church Camps- But Make Them Year Round!” (Read by Marg McCulley)

On a windy weekday morning in February, you might expect a camp to be quiet, anxiously awaiting the hustle and bustle that summertime will bring. But on the escarpment in Lincoln, ON, Cave Springs Camp is anything but quiet.

A Nature School for youth operates daily on the lower floor of the new Conference Centre. Staff take bookings for weddings, corporate events, and birthdays, and in the afternoon a youth group will arrive to enjoy the year-round facilities.

Cave Springs Camp hasn't always been this way. Not so long ago, programming would only run in the summertime, with some bookings into the fall if weather permitted.

Program Director Lance Wright enthusiastically expresses his deep gratitude for the people who have made year-round facilities and programs possible. Looking outside on a February weekday, Lance can see children at the Nature

School experimenting with the wind instead of hiding from it indoors on a phone or computer. Lance's passion for creating lifelong memories and inspiring faith and self-confidence shines through his work to build a caring and dynamic community atmosphere.

From the vibrant colours of spring to the warm sunshine of summer, the crisp air of fall, and the magical snow-covered landscapes of winter, Cave Springs Camp provides an ever-changing backdrop for people of all ages to appreciate outdoor activities and adventures.

Your generosity through Mission and Service is helping children, teens, and adults to reconnect with nature at any time of the year. Thank you.

Invitation to the Offering

Just as the members of the early church laid what they had at the apostles' feet to be distributed to each as any had need, **Let us be inspired by their great love and charity for those who live in need in our community and abroad in the world.**

Offertory

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

✠ **Offertory Prayer**

God of grace, you have freed us from our sins and brought us together in a great assembly of joyful worshippers seeking to follow in the example set for us by your Son.

Accept all we offer you this day as a token of our thanksgiving for all that we have received through his life, his death, and in his glorious resurrection.

Strengthen and encourage us, we pray, that, following his example, we may strive for ever greater acts of charity and love in the new life you have given us, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

✠A NEW CREED (VU 918)

✠CLOSING HYMN: (VU173) “Thine is the Glory”

✠BENEDICTION/COMMISSIONING

✠CHORAL AMEN : VU 974

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

POSTLUDE: