

May 12th

Mother's Day

Worship Leader: Marg McCulley

✝ 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 (Ministry Matters)

O Lord, Easter had such an impact on our lives. We walked the by-ways with Jesus, ate with him and wept at the Crucifixion. Easter morn dawned brightly in our lives at the news of the Resurrection and we sang songs of great joy. Watch over us, gentle God, as we pray and work to do your will. Keep our hearts open to your loving word and ways. 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.”

✠ Call to Worship (Ministry Matters)

L: Today is Ascension Sunday when we celebrate Christ’s return to God.

P: We look up in wonder as he is lifted from us into heaven!

L: But this is not a time to gaze upward. There is work to be done.

P: Jesus has entrusted the ministry of God’s love to us.

L: Let’s get to work!

P: Let’s make our hearts ready for the task ahead with prayer and praise!

L: Amen

P: AMEN!

✠ Opening Hymn: (VU 213) “Rejoice, The Lord Is King”

Prayer of Confession (Ministry Matters)

Lord, we are impatient! We want everything right now, instantly! We don't want to wait for anything. We rush our holidays, our celebrations, our very lives and then wonder why our spirits are exhausted and depressed. Slow us down, Lord. Help us to enjoy the process of waiting for the wondrous things you offer us. Let us feel the power and beauty of praising you and singing your praises. Clear away our "high gear" mentality and place us on paths of peace and hope. Forgive our arrogance and impatience. Help us to overcome those traits which pull us away from you and from appreciating all that you have done for us. As we listen to the scriptures this day in which the disciples witnessed Jesus' ascension to you, let our hearts be at peace knowing that you have taught us what we need to know to serve God joyfully in this world. Inspire us and give us delight for what is to come. AMEN.

WORDS OF ASSURANCE (Ministry Matters)

Forgiveness and love have been poured out upon you, to offer hope to all nations. You are called and blessed to be messengers of God's good news to all people. AMEN.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE THE LORD'S PRAYER (VU 959)

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

God of resurrection and life we pray that as we hear the words you have provided for our learning and faithful work, we ask that the message given to us today be clear for our lives as we go forward.

Scripture Readings (Debi Hoefling)

Acts 1:1-11

The Promise of the Holy Spirit

1 In my first book^[a] I told you, Theophilus, about everything Jesus began to do and teach **2** until the day he was taken up to heaven after giving his chosen apostles further instructions through the Holy Spirit. **3** During the forty days after he suffered and died, he appeared to the apostles from time to time, and he proved to them in many ways that he was actually alive. And he talked to them about the Kingdom of God.

4 Once when he was eating with them, he commanded them, “Do not leave Jerusalem until the Father sends you the gift he promised, as I told you before. **5** John baptized with^[b] water, but in just a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.”

The Ascension of Jesus

6 So when the apostles were with Jesus, they kept asking him, “Lord, has the time come for you to free Israel and restore our kingdom?”

⁷ He replied, “The Father alone has the authority to set those dates and times, and they are not for you to know. ⁸ But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

⁹ After saying this, he was taken up into a cloud while they were watching, and they could no longer see him. ¹⁰ As they strained to see him rising into heaven, two white-robed men suddenly stood among them. ¹¹ “Men of Galilee,” they said, “why are you standing here staring into heaven? Jesus has been taken from you into heaven, but someday he will return from heaven in the same way you saw him go!”

One: This is the witness of the Church.

All: Thanks be to God.

Psalm 47 (VU 771) Refrain 2

Praise to God who reigns above! Hallelujah!

Clap your hands, all you peoples,
cry out to God with shouts of joy!

**For the Most High is to be feared,
reigning in might, over all the earth. R**

Praise to God who reigns above! Hallelujah!

God has subdued the peoples around us,

set nations at our feet,
 **and has chosen for us a heritage,
 the pride of Jacob, beloved of God.**
God has gone up with shouts of triumph,
 has gone up with a fanfare of trumpets.
For God reigns over all the earth!
 Sing praises with your utmost skill. R

Praise to God who reigns above! Hallelujah!

God reigns over all the nations,
and sits in holiness enthroned.
 **The nobles of the nations assemble
 with the people of the Everlasting God.**
For earth's defenders belong to God,
 to God the highly exalted. R

Praise to God who reigns above! Hallelujah!

One: This is the witness of the ancient song-writers.
ALL: Thanks be to God.

Luke 24:44-53

⁴⁴ Then he said, "When I was with you before, I told you that everything written about me in the law of Moses and the prophets and in the Psalms must be fulfilled." ⁴⁵ Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures. ⁴⁶ And he said, "Yes, it was written long

ago that the Messiah would suffer and die and rise from the dead on the third day. ⁴⁷ It was also written that this message would be proclaimed in the authority of his name to all the nations, ^[a] beginning in Jerusalem: 'There is forgiveness of sins for all who repent.' ⁴⁸ You are witnesses of all these things.

⁴⁹ "And now I will send the Holy Spirit, just as my Father promised. But stay here in the city until the Holy Spirit comes and fills you with power from heaven."

The Ascension

⁵⁰ Then Jesus led them to Bethany, and lifting his hands to heaven, he blessed them. ⁵¹ While he was blessing them, he left them and was taken up to heaven. ⁵² So they worshiped him and then returned to Jerusalem filled with great joy. ⁵³ And they spent all of their time in the Temple, praising God.

One: This is the witness of the Church.

ALL: Thanks be to God.

SERMON

✠HYMN: (VU 661) "Come to My Heart"

Minutes for Mission "Educating Future Leaders" (Read by Maureen Oster)

Mission and Service does a surprising amount of development in your local church, recruiting new ministers and funding theological schools. It even shapes the hymn books you sing from every service. Another important way Mission and Service supports local ministry: by providing academic bursaries for students studying to become ministers and theological leaders.

“The church has a lot to offer in terms of witness to the community and supporting people who are struggling,” explains the Rev. Dr. Jennifer Janzen-Ball, the United Church’s Executive Minister for Theological Leadership.

“The money is really helpful,” she says, “but the other thing that is so important to students is realizing that people throughout the church cared enough to donate to Mission and Service.”

The Rev. Alexa Gilmour received one of these bursaries when she was still a ministry candidate. “I was a single parent, and I knew I couldn’t get through without support,” Gilmour says. “I felt blessed by God through people who donated and who, by giving, encouraged me on my journey. I have tremendous gratitude for that important role the church played in my life at that time.”

Janzen-Ball wants you to know that your gifts do matter.

“They matter both tangibly in peoples’ lives in a real way but also in intangible ways because they signal the support of the wider community,” she says. “The care of people who are strangers to one another—the importance and impact of that can’t be overstated.

“Giving to [Mission and Service](#) is an opportunity to support future and current leaders. Those gifts make a significant difference.”

A more detailed video, [A Deeper Look: Educating the Ministers of Tomorrow\(opens in a new tab\)](#), is available on YouTube.

Invitation to the Offering

We are blessed by God living safely here in Canada. We have been given much. Let us also bless others by our offering given in faith and love.

Offertory

✠Doxology (VU 532 vs 2)

✠Offertory Prayer

As we have been blessed by God we return a portion of that which we have been given in love, with love. We pray that God will use our gift to bless others. Amen

✠A NEW CREED (VU 918)

✠CLOSING HYMN: (VU 672) "Take Time to Be Holy"

✠BENEDICTION/COMMISSIONING (Ministry Matters)

As Christ has loved you and prayed for you, go now in peace, bringing Christ's loving words to all you meet. Know that Christ is with you in all that you do. AMEN.

✠CHORAL AMEN (VU 974)

✠SENDING FORTH HYMN (VU 958 X2) "Halle, Halle"

POSTLUDE: